

Preparing & Offering Prosforo

❖ Prosforo represents both Jesus, the Bread of Life as well as the offering of our life to God. The Greek word for Altar bread is prosforo, which means "an offering to God." Bread represents life because it is a staff of life. Once consumed it becomes part of us. Thus, in bringing the loaf of bread to God, we are offering our life to Him as a gift of our love.

❖ Ingredients

- 5 cups flour (sifted)
- 1 1/2 cups warm water
- 2 cakes or packages of dry yeast
- 1 teaspoon salt
- Religious seal (sfrangitha)

❖ Preparation

Because Prosforo plays such an important role in each Divine Liturgy, it is important that those who prepare the Prosforo prepare themselves both physically and spiritually through fasting and prayer before they make it. When you begin, make the sign of the cross, offer the Trisagion prayer for yourself and your family and the ones for whom you are making the bread. Women should also be clean when making prosforo. It is also traditional to have an icon and lighted candle in the area where the Prosforo is being prepared as an offering of faith. Also, the Jesus Prayer may be said during preparation.

Dissolve the yeast in the warm water. Add sifted flour and salt; knead until smooth (about 20 minutes). Shape the dough into a round loaf and place into a bowl, cover it with a two white cloths or towels and let it rise.

When doubled in size, (in about 20 minutes) knead again. Cut a piece of it to see if there is an abundance of air pockets in it. This is a good sign that the dough is ready for the second rising. Divide the dough in half and put into cake pans that have been lightly floured (no grease). Put a small amount of flour on the sfrangitha. Take the sfrangitha, make the sign of the cross and impress, or press it onto the dough, leaving the it on the bread until it is ready to bake. Take a matchstick or a testing tine and pierce the outline of the cross saying the prayer: "In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen."

Let rise until it doubles in size again (about 30 minutes), remove seal and bake for about 30 minutes at 375 degrees until it is a slight, golden brown color. When it is baked, take it out and let it cool. Place in a plastic bag or foil and say a prayer of thanksgiving.

❖ Offering

Our priest asks that you bring the Prosforo before the start of Orthros, either on Saturday or by 7:30 am on Sunday. You may also prepare a list of names (living and departed) of people you want commemorated during the service. Please write the names clearly.