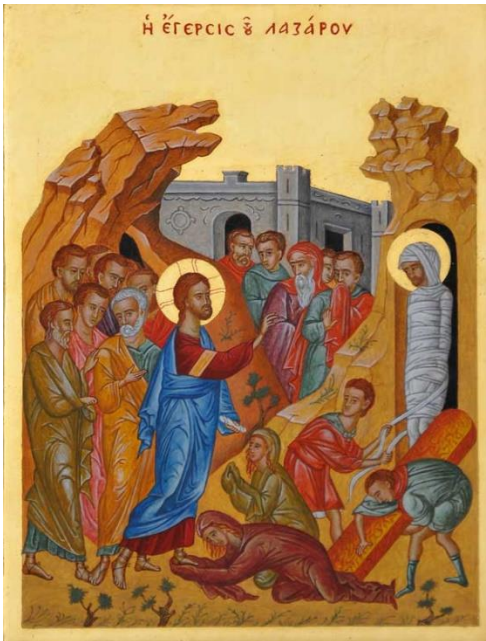


LAZARUS SATURDAY

The Meaning, The Story, Traditions and Celebrations

THE STORY



Nine days before Pascha, we celebrate Saturday of Lazarus (Λάζαρος). From the Bible, we learn the Lazarus was a beloved friend of Christ. Lazarus died and after 4 days, Christ resurrected Lazarus from the dead. The resurrection of Lazarus from the dead is the last miracle performed by Jesus before his own death and resurrection. It is also notable that He performed the miracle on the Sabbath. Some scholars believe that this miracle was "the last straw" with the civil and religious authorities that led to their decision to bring charges against Jesus, end his scandalous ministry and bring his life to an end.

The story of Lazarus - the dear friend of Jesus, the brother of Martha and Mary - is an important way to begin Holy Week. It is important because it reminds us that from death comes resurrection and from resurrection comes new life. It is a long Greek Orthodox tradition to observe Lazarus Saturday with *Lazarakia* (Λαζαράκια) - sweet bread filled with a sweet, nutty jam or marmalade or honey which is made in the shape of Lazarus as he emerged from the

tomb as well as Lazara (Λαζαρά), carols that children sing especially for the day.

The "lesson" of the Lazarakia is that, because of Jesus, even in the midst of the sorrow of death, there is the sweet joy of Life Eternal. An important side note is that it is the only time in the entire Church Year that the resurrection service of Sunday is celebrated on another day. Saturday of Lazarus and Palm Sunday have a unique place in the ecclesiastical calendar as days of joy between the Great Lent and the lament of Holy Week.

TRADITIONS



Various customs take place throughout Greece to commemorate this day. The most widespread custom for Lazarus of Saturday is the "carols of Lazarus" which reclaimed the joyous feast. The carols were exclusively almost female and were sung by girls of different ages, even married girls called "Lazarines". On the eve of the feast, lazarinnes (girls) went out into the fields outside the villages to collect flowers that would be used to

decorate their basket. The baskets were decorated with the flowers they collected and beautiful colorful ribbons. The next day dressed in local traditional costumes or a special costume, the girls carrying baskets full of Lazarakia and flowers went around the neighborhoods and sang Lazarus's carols and offered cookies. In return for this treat, the housewives gave the children eggs, money, fruits or whatever else they had.

In some parts of Greece, dolls, reed crosses, staffs were used to create the image of Lazarus. These items were decorated with multicolored fabrics, ribbons and flowers. For example: in Crete, a wooden cross was decorated with lemon blossoms and red flowers known as "maheritses. In other parts of Greece, instead of an object an actual person was adorned with flowers and greenery (kladia) and accompanied the carolers. In addition, on Saturday of Lazarus, believers often prepare palm fronds by knotting them into crosses in preparation for the procession on Palm Sunday.



THE SONGS-KALANTA

This Song Is Sung As The Lazarakia Are Being Made



The Saturday before Palm Sunday is “Saturday of Lazarus” and on this day it is a tradition to make “Lazarakia” (literally meaning “Little Lazaruses”). These are traditional small, sweet and mildly spiced bread, made only once a year. They represent the miracle of Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead. Each region of Greece has a variation of how they make them, however, most have a similar sweet tasting flavor.

Λάζαρος απενεκρώθη./Lazaros Apenekrothi
 Ανεστήθη και σηκώθη./Anestithi kai Sikothi
 Λάζαρος σαβανωμένος/Lazaros savanomenos
 Και με το κηρί ζωσμένος/Kai me to kiri zosmenos
 Λάζαρε πες μας τι είδες/Lazare pes mas ti ides
 εις τον Άδη που επήγες./Is ton Adi pu Epiges
 Είδα φόβους, είδα τρόμους/Ida fovus, ida tromus
 είδα βάσανα και πόνους/Ida vasana kai ponus.
 Δώστε μου λίγο νεράκι/Doste mu ligo neraki
 Να ξεπλύνω το φαρμάκι/Na xepolino to farmaki
 Της καρδίας, των χειλέων/Tis kardias, ton hileon
 Και μη με ρωτάτε πλέον./Kai mi rotate pleon

Lazarus became undead,
 Was resurrected and arose.
 Lazarus was shrouded
 And all tied up.
 "Tell us Lazarus, what did you see?
 When you went to Hades?"
 "I saw fears, I saw terrors
 I saw troubles and pains.
 Give me a little water
 So that I may wash off the poison
 From my heart, my lips
 And don't ask me anything else.

This song is sung as St Lazarus' arms are folded over his chest, legs cut, and cloves inserted for his eyes and hands:

Lazarus was in the tomb four days,
 when Jesus came and to the Father prayed.

‘Lazarus, come forth!’ he said,
 The Lord whom the five thousand fed.

Then Lazarus arose and many were in fear.
 Let everyone with ears now hear.



Song To Sing After Having Baked The Lazarakia @ home Or @ Church

<p>«Που 'σαι Λάζαρε που είναι η φωνή σου, που σε γύρευε η μάνα κι αδερφή σου. Ήμουνα στη γη στη γη βαθιά χωμένος, κι από τους εχθρούς εχθρούς βαλαντωμένος.</p>	<p>Where were you Lazarus, Where was your voice? Your mother and your sisters Were looking for you. "I was in the Earth Deep in the Earth buried. And among the dead Among the dead I tarried. Along came Christ and resurrected me! Along came Christ and resurrected me! Along came Christ and resurrected me!</p>
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(The last 3 sentences are sung as one raises their Lazarakia high in the air).

Through the prayers of St. Lazarus, Lord Jesus Christ have mercy on us!

Τού 'σαι Λάζαρε-Kalanda from Central Greece

«Που 'σαι Λάζαρε,
που είναι η φωνή σου,
που σε γύρευε,
η μάνα κι αδερφή σου.
Ήμουνα στη γη,
στη γη βαθιά χωμένος,
κι από τους εχθρούς,
εχθρούς βαλαντωμένος.
Βάγια βάγια των Βαγιών
τρώνε ψάρια των κολιών,
και την άλλη Κυριακή
ψυνουν το παχύ αρνί»

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=00QQRBL02DU>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oSYKJvWabbc> Another version of the Kalanda with different lyrics in Greek sung by Paidikos Horos Sholeiou Psaltikis. Lyrics are provided

THE RECIPE

The recipe for Lazarakia is basically a raisin bread. Ta Lazarakia, to be "traditional" must be "Lenten" (i.e. there are no eggs, butter or milk in the recipe). The Lazarakia are usually decorated with cloves for eyes and are shaped with the arms crossed over the chest to resemble the funeral winding sheet (shroud) wrapped around the dead for burial. The yeast bread is sweetened with sugar and often (but not always) has a filling made of ground nuts and raisins, cinnamon and sugar, honey or marmalade.

Lazarakia-yields about 15 pcs

- 4 cups all-purpose, unbleached flour
- 1/2 cup olive oil
- 3/4 cups sugar
- 1 packets active dry yeast (2 1/2 teaspoons)
- 1 cup lukewarm water, or more as needed
- A pinch of salt
- Whole cloves for decoration
- Honey for the top to give it shine
- 1 tablespoon cinnamon

For the filling

- 1 cup raisins
- 1/4 cup ground walnuts



In a cup place the lukewarm water, add the cinnamon and stir. Add the yeast and stir until it is dissolved.

In a deep bowl, place the flour and create a well in the center. In the center, place the olive oil, sugar and the liquid mixture from step 1. Knead until you have a non-sticky dough. If necessary, use flour on your hands so that the dough does not stick on your hands as you are kneading it.

Place the dough in a large bowl greased with a little olive oil, turn to coat the dough and cover with plastic wrap or a clean kitchen towel and allow it to rise for an hour.



In the meantime, prepare the filling. Process the raisins, walnuts in a food processor, until chopped as finely as preferred. You can also chop by hand-you have more control of how fine you want the raisins and walnuts.

Once the dough has risen, take a small amount of dough and roll it out with your hands and flatten it. Place 1 tablespoons of the filling in the center and fold over the dough to cover the filling. See link below for step by step instructions.

Carefully roll the dough with your hands. After rolling, press the top and bottom to close the dough so that the filling does not spill. Using some of the remainder dough, roll out a strip (lourida) to make the head and hands. Take a small amount of the strip and create the head. Take another strip a little longer and place it around the neck, bring it to the front and cross it over to make the hands. At the bottom, with a knife, cut the dough to make the feet.

Use the whole cloves for his eyes and mouth. Place on a baking pan covered with wax paper. Continue with the rest of the dough, making sure to place them at least two inches apart.

Brush with a little honey diluted with water or with olive oil to get the glossy effect. If desired, sprinkle with sesame seeds.

Bake in a preheated 350-degree oven for about half an hour or until lightly golden brown. This web site shows how they are made step by step.

<https://evgegeorge.weebly.com/-sigmatauetanu-epsiloniotadeltaiotakappa942-epsilonkappapialpha943deltaepsilonupsilonsigmaeta/20>

This video shows how they are made and the traditional songs that are sung during this time
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qsbo1U88PX0>

CELEBRATIONS FOR SATURDAY OF LAZARUS THROUGHOUT GREECE

KOS – On the island of Kos girls who are engaged make this holy bread or “Lazaroudia” into the size of a small child, and fill it with ground walnuts, almonds, figs, raisins, honey, extra spices and send it to the groom. The older children in Kos, recreate Lazarus’ image and place it on a special structure and decorated with rosemary. The children visit the sheep sheds (στάνες) singing the carols where the shepherds give them eggs, cheeses and mizithres to take with them and make the “Lambropites”.

MAINLAND GREECE – In Central Greece, Thessaly, Macedonia and Thrace the custom of “Lazarines” or “Lazaritses”, is practiced where female participants go from home to home with baskets full of flowers and small lazarakia and sing carols to their neighbors. In the olden days, this was also informally known as a “nyfo-pazaro” meaning it was an opportunity for single girls to come out and become known as candidate brides.

TRIKALA – In Trikala there is an annual competition of Lazarines. The girls dress up, have decorated baskets with flowers, and sing songs to honor the day. The three most beautiful baskets, three most rare traditional songs and the best three total appearances (basket and singing) are awarded.

KOZANI – In Kozani, the Lazarines gather in one home and begin celebrating until late in the night. After the celebration, they visit the local priest, the mayor and then go directly to the Church of the Panagia. In Lefkopigi they also go from door to door and exchange their lazarakia for eggs. When they fill up their baskets, they gather in the square and engage in traditional dance and song.

RHODES – On Rhodes and particularly on Ialysos, children go from home to home singing “Lazaro”, and collect money for their local churches. The same tradition is practiced on the island of Crete as well as in Epirus, where these visits are also accompanied by the ringing of bells.

CYPRUS – In Cyprus, children traditionally wear yellow flowers all over their heads and when other carolers begin singing to them, they lie down on the ground and pretend to be dead, much like Lazarus. (This is still practiced today at Orthodox funerals in Greece where they cover the whole body in flowers). When the carolers yell “Lazarus, come forth”, the young actors rise... and the game continues at another home!

https://youtu.be/O_XqvUV1Cpk

SKYROS – On the island of Skyros strangely Lazarus is depicted on a large slotted ladle spoon. «Σιδεροχουλιάρα» The spoon is dressed in infant type of clothing. A white daisy is placed in each of the holes, a red clove is used for the mouth for the mouth and to form the face. They tie a wooden stick cross-legged to make the hands. The children go from home to home, singing the carols, and the housewives give them eggs, money or whatever they had.



LEFKADA – In the Ionian, and particularly in Lefkada, children go out caroling on this day and while one child holds a wooden swallow, all the others hold decorated baskets in which they gather eggs. <https://youtu.be/yAeDan-esal>



KERKIRA – In Kerkira, where Easter week is greatly celebrated, a man wears a red shirt and around his waist he ties colorful ribbons. He then parades like this from home to home, holding up a cane that has a depiction of Lazarus' face carved on its head. He is accompanied by musicians who play carols that sound more like serenades. A long time ago, people were obligated to buy a decoration that adorned his cane (such as fake jewelry, etc), for if they hung it over their beds, it would bring them good fortune. Unfortunately, this tradition is only practiced in the Old Quarter of Corfu town, but nonetheless is a tradition that has recently been once again revived. In the village of Episkepsi (Northern Corfu), you can experience a custom unique to Corfu and perhaps to all Greece. In the evening, the local choir followed by crowd of villagers and visitors go from house to house playing and singing the Lazarus carols. They are offered food and drinks and the feast goes on all night.

<https://youtu.be/ObU0FnCuzuQ> Kalanda Lazarou Kerkiras

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