

Artoclasia And Phanouropita
Re-Catechism 4
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Artoclasia

The Orthodox Church in addition to its Liturgies, Sacraments, and various Prayers such as the Hours, Morning (Orthros) and Evening (Vespers), also has special services known as blessings. This evening, I will be speaking to you about two of these blessing services, the one first that of the Artoclasia and the second that of the Phanouropita.

Artoclasia is a Greek Compound word from **artos** meaning bread, and **klasis** meaning breaking. Together, the term means “breaking of bread”. The artoclasia is a service traditionally held at the end of the Vesper Service of a Major Feast, or at the end of the Orthros (Matins) Service. Out of economia, it is now often held at the end of The Divine Liturgy.

Five round loaves of bread, together with wine and oil are offered by individual faithful as a sign of devotion for personal or family anniversaries, and other occasions bearing close connection with the experience of the Orthodox. For example, an Artoclasia could be offered on the anniversary of the patron saint of a village or region. We often times see in church different Region Associations bringing an Artoclasia with their village and town flags and banners. However, the most popular use of the Artoclasia is for personal Namedays. If for example your name is Constantine or Helen, you will bring an Artoclasia to either the Vesper Service or Liturgy service of Sts Constantine and Helen. If your name is Nick, you will bring an Artoclasia on the Feast of St. Nicholas. In this way, we ask our Patron Saints to bless us, and intercede for us to our Lord. We honour them and they in tern give us direction on our journey to salvation through their example and prayers. There is a connection between the Church militant (that is all of us living and striving for heaven) and the Church triumphant (all of those who made it to heaven) through the offering and sharing of this bread.

On a deeper level, the blessed bread of the Artoclasia has been considered from ancient times to bring about personal sanctification and to help the individual against bodily infirmities and illness ‘if taken with faith’. It is offered as a request for God to bless the loaves, made of wheat, and to multiply them in all regions of the world; and to sanctify all the faithful who partake of them. The oil and wine offered along with the 5 loaves are also blessed. Oil symbolizes healing and health for our bodies and souls, and wine the spiritual transformation. In the Greek tradition the oil and wine are offer to the church to be used for the lighting of the oil lamps, and the making of Holy Communion. However, in some non-Greek Orthodox Churches, such as the Romanian and Slavonic Orthodox, the oil and wine are also offered and consumed by the people who will dip their bread into the oil and wine before eating it.

Many years ago, I actually experienced this at the Romanian Monastery of the Holy Transfiguration in Ellwood City, which is under the Orthodox Church in America. We attended the Hours, Orthros and Liturgy that morning and had not eaten anything. We were in church standing for about 4 hours. So believe me when I say that we were hungry. The five loaves used there were tiny, the size of dinner roles, and were broken and offered to the parishioners on a tray with two small bowls filled with oil and wine. There were a dozen nuns, and a dozen visitors. The sister came around and everyone took a piece of bread and dipped in both the oil and wine, and she came around again and again, until the bread was gone. She came by so many times that I lost count, and still the bowl with the bread was full. And those in our group were telling her that we could not eat another bite because we were stuffed. Imagine that five dinner roles, divided between 24 people, and we were stuffed. And she smiled at us she replied, “Just like in the miracle.”

The service of the five loaves is reminiscent of the great miracle of the five loaves and two fish which is the only miracle recorded in all four of the Canonical Gospels (Matthew 14:13–21, Mark 6:31-44, Luke 9:10-17 and John 6:5-15). In this miracle, Jesus was ministering to a large crowd of

people. There were 5000 men alone, not counting the women and children. As it was getting late, the disciples approached Jesus and asked him to send the crowd away to find food. Jesus told them that they don't have to be sent away, that the disciples can feed them. Taken by surprise, the disciples replied that they only had five small barley loaves and two small fish that were supplied by a young boy. Jesus took the food, blessed it, broke it, and gave it to the disciples to distribute to the people. Everyone was fed, and all the people ate and were satisfied, which means they were full. And not only this, but there were 12 basketfuls of broken pieces left over.

Throughout his time on earth, Jesus performed various miracles involving food. He blessed wine at the wedding of Canan at the beginning of his ministry, and again at the last supper with the institution of Holy Communion at the end of his ministry. He fed multitudes with bread, once with five loaves of bread and two fish, and again with seven loaves of bread and a little fish. In both cases, those fed numbered in the thousands and were full and satisfied. He again blessed and broke bread at the last supper and at Emmaus after his Resurrection. He blessed the sea to team with fish when calling his disciples (Luke 5:1-11), and cooked for them a fish breakfast after his resurrection where he commands Peter to "feed his sheep" (John 21: 1-22).

Food is what sustains the body, and Jesus while on Earth was concerned with the whole human being: the body, and the soul. He gave value to our body, (our temples), as well as to our soul. That is why Jesus healed the sick, and fed the hungry as well as preached for repentance, righteousness, and salvation. But not only this, Jesus recognized that more than bodily sustenance occurs when taking a meal with others. He knew that through sharing food we also share of ourselves with others, and have communication with them. We listen to their joys, their worries, concerns, ideas and we get to know them. Likewise, we share our feelings and thoughts with them and they get to know us. Food sparks or instigates communication. Is it any wonder then that Christ chose food, the bread and wine through which to forever communicate and unite with us? In the same way, the body of the Church uses food on many occasions to bless us and

have us bond with each other.

The Early Church took Jesus' example of feeding people to heart, quickly established the Agape meals where after the faithful received the body and Blood of Christ, they would gather and share a common meal. This meal signified the brotherhood and communion that was established between them by their common faith, and in partaking of the same Lord. The service of Artoclasia has its beginnings in these Agape meals of the very early Christian communities. These Agape meals served a charitable purpose at that time by providing meals to the poorer members from among them. This is why today, the breads or artoi are not taken home but are shared among all the people.

Christ has been repeatedly designated as the Bread of Life, and also as "the Bread, which came from heaven" reminding us of the Manna which fed the Israelites for 40 years in the desert after escaping bondage from Egypt. In the Didache of the Holy Apostles, bread also symbolizes the Church of Christ, which has spread all over "as the wheat on the mountains and which was gathered by Christ into one body" (Didache). Thus, bread has been given a mystical meaning according to which it constitutes the essence of the spiritual life of the Christian.

As these elements of bread, wine and oil, are found repeatedly in scripture, the Orthodox Church uses them repeatedly at various occasions. The Artoclasia is one of many breads that are used in the Church for blessing. In addition there is the Lagana on Clean Monday, Kiria Sarakosti during Lent, Tsoureki at Easter, Christopsomo at Christmas, Vasilopita on the Feast of St. Basil the Great, New Year's Day, and St. Phanourios Cake on the Feast of St. Phanourios. Traditionally, all these breads were brought to the church to be blessed by the priest before being consumed. However, the queen of all breads for the Orthodox Christian is the Prosporo, as that special bread will be miraculously changed into the body of Christ during the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist.

So that is what Artoclasia is all about. What do you need to do if you decide to make bring an offering of Artoclasia to Church. The first thing you need to do is prepare yourself. You should be at peace with yourself. If you are not, then go for Confession first, to clean your soul. You should be physically clean. Nails cut short, hands washed, hair tied back or wrapped up in a mandili. You should then clean your work space and make sure the materials you are using are washed properly. You collect your ingredients, and pray the following prayer.

Prayer before preparing the Artoklasia bread

”Lord, please help us prepare this Artoklasia which I am about to begin and bring it to completion according to Your will so that we can pray for the well-being of our loved ones whose names we are about to offer and so that we can share the blessing of these five loaves with the faithful who join us in asking for Your great mercy and Divine grace. Amen”

After the prayer you follow the recipe and bake your five loaves. They can be any size, but keep in mind in large parish you want to share them with many people so they should be on the bigger side. They can be Lenten or non-Lenten depending on what season it is on the Liturgical Calendar. They can have different ingredients depending on the customs of various orthodox regions. But they are **not** stamped with the seal for the Prosphoro. You can decorate the top of your Artous with either crosses (which is the most common decoration), designs of grape leaves and grapes or even designs of wheat stocks as are done in some monasteries.

I have provided some recipes for you that I found on the internet. You can also look to Greek Cookbooks, and other people who you know for good recipes. After you bake you bread you write on a list of paper the names who you are praying for. Traditionally, the name of the celebrant goes first on the list. The name of the baker goes second on the list, and then you list everybody else. If you buy your arto from a bakery, which in my mind doesn't constitute a true offering, but some people have no other option. If that is the case, you do not need to write the name of the baker on the list.

While you list the names there is a prayer that you say,

”Lord, shed Your Divine grace and mercy upon your servants, (names).”

You need to purchase or provide a small bottle of Olive Oil, and a small bottle of dry red wine.

The whole Artoclasia, the five loaves, oil and wine together with the names, is brought to the Church before the service begins, either the before the Vespers of the Feast or before the Liturgy of the Feast. Either five candles or one large candle is placed on the top bread and at our church, we give them to the gentlemen at the back who will bring it up and set it up for you. After the service, you can take it to cut it either with a knife or clean hands and distribute the bread to the people.

The Service

The Service of the Artoclasia, begins with a series of prayers and petitions and the beautiful Hymn to the Virgin, the Theotikon is sung, “Rejoice, O Virgin Theotokos, Mary full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb for you have born the Saviour of our souls.” The priest then reads the blessing of the bread oil and wine as follows:

O Lord Jesus Christ our God, Who didst bless the five loaves in the wilderness and didst satisfy the five thousand therewith, Thyself bless these loaves, this wheat, wine and oil, and multiply them in this city, in the houses of those who celebrate this feast and in all thy world, and sanctify the faithful who partake of them. For it is Thou Who dost bless and sanctify all things, O Christ our God, and unto Thee do we ascribe glory, together with Your Father who has no beginning, and Your all-holy, good and life-giving Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

After the blessing, the participants sing the Troparion hymn is sung: “Rich men have turned poor and gone hungry, but those who seek the Lord shall never be deprived of any good things.” (“Πλουσιοι επτωχευσαν και επεινασαν, οιδε εχζητουντες τον Κυριον; ουκ ελαττοθησονται παντος αγαθου”) Then the priest reads the dismissal and the service ends.

Great-martyr Phanourios the Newly Appeared of Rhodes, the Miracle-Worker

The second blessing service that I will address this evening is the service of St. Phanourios. (Point out where his icon is in the Church.) Before I continue I must confess, that I have a huge respect and soft spot if you will, for St. Phanourios. He has been most gracious in our lives, and I only pray that he will continue to support us when we need his assistance. St. Phanourios truly is a worker of wonders in our lives today. So let me begin by telling you about the saint himself. St. Phanourios lived during the persecutions of the early church, however, he is a relatively speaking newly discovered Saint, who ironically, he was discovered by Muslims.

Around 1500 AD on the island of Rhodes, a group of Muslims were pillaging a ruined church for building materials. While digging through the ruins they came across many icons all of which were damaged and undergoing various stages of rot and decay. However, they also discovered one icon that was not damaged. In fact, it was in immaculate condition and looked as if it was newly painted. Giving this find no importance, they discarded the icon on the pile of rubble with the other ones. Now while the Muslims were pillaging the ruined church, a group of hidden Orthodox monks were spying on their doings, and saw them discard the intact icon. When the pillagers left, the monks went and retrieved it from the garbage pile, and were amazed by what they saw.

They beheld a clearly painted figure of a young saint with the name “Phanourios” inscribed on the icon, but what was painted around this figure had them kneel in reverence. Drawn about the saint were twelve distinct frames in each of which Phanourios was shown enduring a cruel form of torture. The images were so detailed and real that it suggested that the artist had most likely been an eye-witness to the atrocities.

The illustrations show the saint being beaten on the head and mouth with rocks most likely to force him to deny his faith; being throw to the

ground and beaten with sticks and clubs; in prison; having his completely naked body being ripped apart with some sort of iron implement by Roman soldiers; in prison praying to God; before magistrates; naked again with executioners burning his body with torches; being tortured through mechanical means; and finally being tied to an apparatus that rotates to crush his bones..

These horrors depicted on his icon bore witness to Phanourios's sainthood as they conveyed that he was truly an indestructible instrument of God. Also, the icon which was centuries old and had miraculously survived any harm, also bore witness that this martyr had divine grace. Based on these evidences, the Archbishop of Rhodes at the time, Milos was his name, petitioned the Patriarch to convene a synod, which later officially proclaimed Phanourios a saint.

Soon, a church was built on the site of the ruins where the icon was found in honour of St. Phanourios. The icon is still enshrined within its walls, and the church after 500 years still stands today. Many people of Rhodes, who venerated the icon throughout the centuries, testify that it is the source of many miracles. The most famous of these miracles is that of three priests from Crete.

During the rule of the Venetians, the isle of Crete had a Latin bishop, so if Orthodox men wished to obtain ordination, they had to go to Cythera, an island off the southern coast of the Peloponnis.

Three deacons from Crete, therefore, traveled to Crythera to be ordained priests by the hierarch there. When returning to their own country, their ship was captured by pirates, who took them to Rhodes, and sold them as slaves. Understandably, the newly consecrated priests greatly lamented their misfortune, for they were not only captives, lost to their homeland, they were also lost to their calling to serve Christ's church as priests.

When in Rhodes, they were each sold to different masters, yet somehow, each separately heard of the Greatmartyr Phanourios, and the

wonders he performed. So they each began to fervently pray to the saint, to deliver them from their bondage. And this they each did without knowing that the others were doing the same thing.

St. Phanourios heard their prayers and actually appeared to the masters of the captive priests, commanding them to let the servants of God go free or else he would petition God to bring dreadful destruction upon them. The masters, thinking the matter sorcery, instead of freeing their captives, made their torments more difficult.

St. Phanourios appeared to the priests and told them to take heart, the following day he would, by all means, free them. He then appeared to the masters a second time and, reproaching them with severity, said: "If by tomorrow you have not set your servants at liberty, you shall behold the power of the true God!" After saying this, he vanished from their midst. And, then it is said God acted with vengeance! Everyone in those masters' houses was afflicted with blindness and paralysis, being tormented with the most dreadful pains, the least with the greatest.

The bedridden masters soon called their captive priests to their beds, and asked if they were able to heal them; and the priests answered: "We shall ask God. Let His will be done."

But the saint appeared to the masters again on the third night and said to them: "If you do not send to my house letters of emancipation for the Lord's priests, you shall have neither the health, nor the sight which you desire." And then each one composed a letter of release for his own slave, and these letters were left before the icon of saint Phanourios.

It is said that even before the messengers returned from the Church, all those who before were afflicted were healed. Thus, amazed at what had just happened, they set the priests free and dispatched them to their homeland. The priests each year after their safe return honoured the memory of the holy St. Phanourios and piously celebrated it. Soon the Saint became as honoured in Crete, as in Rhodes.

The Holy Orthodox Church commemorates the holy, glorious and right-victorious Great-martyr Phanourios the Newly Appeared of Rhodes, the Miracle-Worker on August 27.

Although most of us have seen the service of offering a cake only in relation to St. Phanourios, in fact, it is the tradition of our Church to offer bread in this way for any Saint to whom the faithful wish to beseech intercessory prayers, especially on the day of the Saint's commemoration. We see this with the Vassilopita on the Feast of St. Vasilios. and for all the other Saints, and holidays, with the offering of the Artoclasia which I spoke about earlier.

However, only for St. Phanourios is a special cake or sometimes single bread made. Why is this the case? Some say that the cake offered to St. Phanourios was requested by the saint, himself, as a supplication to God to be merciful to his sinful mother who died outside baptism. However, there is no historical evidence that this is actually the case. The offering made in honour of St. Phanourios is for the health and sanctification of those who pray to him for assistance. In other words, the names we give with the cake are among the living. It is not an offering for the dead. What our offering of the Phanouropita is is a testimony to others of the Saint's activity in our life.

Saint Phanourios, the saint who was lost for centuries in the ruins of a church, has become the patron saint of things lost. To this day his name is invoked when prayers are asked for the recovery of lost items. The Phanouropita is a testimony that we have lost something and have asked St. Phanourios' help to find it, whether it is something insignificant like a book, to something very significant like a lost wedding ring. St. Phanourios can be asked to help find things like jobs, homes, and people. He can even reveal pregnancies. So when we see someone offer a Phanouropita, one of two things is happening. They are need to find something and are asking the saint for help, or they have already found it and are saying thank you.

There is no unique service specifically written for the Phanouropita. As I said, bread has traditionally been offered in commemoration of any saint on their feast day, so there is a generic service to bless bread offered in honor of a Saint. What changes in the service is the name of the saint, and the Apolytikion and Kontakion prayers.

I have provided for all of you a booklet with recipes and the prayers for these two services. I have baked a small Artoclasia and Phanouropita, and ask that if you have not written your names on the list to please do so now, and Father I ask if you can please do these services in English for us and then we will all partake of the bread and cake and continue with our Q. and A.

The Service to Bless Bread.

If the blessing takes place during the Divine Liturgy, immediately after the Prayer behind the Ambon the choir chants the Apolytikion and Kontakion of the Saint.

(For St. Phanourios it is as follows):

Apolytikion (Fourth Tone) [2]

A heavenly song of praise is brightly sung on the earth;
the hosts of the Angels keep an earthly festival now in splendour and
radiant joy;
from on high, they praise with hymns thy sufferings and struggles;
and below, the Church doth laud the heavenly glory
thou foundest by thy contests and pains, O glorious Phanourios.

Glory...Both now...

Kontakion (Third Tone) [3]

From a vile captivity,
thou didst deliver the Lord's priests,
and, O godly-minded one,
didst break their bonds by divine might;
thou didst bravely shame the tyrants'
audacious madness,
giving joy unto the Angels, O thou Great Martyr.
O Phanurius most glorious,
we all revere thee
as a true warrior of God.

Priest: Let us pray to the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

The priest then stands in the midst of the Beautiful Gates, turned slightly towards the Icon of Christ, and censes the bread as he says the following:

Prayer

O Lord, Jesus Christ, the Heavenly Bread, the munificent Bestower of the food that abides unto eternity, the Giver of good things, Who through Elias didst cause miraculous sustenance to gush forth, the Hope of the hopeless, the Help of the helpless, and the Salvation of our souls: Bless these gifts and those who have offered them unto You, to Your glory and in honor of the Saint [Name of the Saint]

Grant, O Good One, unto those who have prepared these gifts [names of the living are inserted here] all Your earthly and Heavenly good things. Gladden them in joy with Thy countenance, and show them the paths to salvation. Be swift to fulfill the requests of their hearts and their every wish, guiding them to the doing of Your commandments, that in gladness and

rejoicing they may forever hymn and glorify Your most honorable and majestic Name, by the intercessions of the Most blessed Theotokos, of the holy, glorious [Name of the Saint] and of all Thy Saints. Amen.

The Choir then chants "Blessed be the Name of The Lord..." (Psalm 33), with sweet melody, and the rest of Divine Liturgy.

But if the blessing is to take place outside of the Divine Liturgy, the order is as follows:

Priest: Blessed is our God, always, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages.

Reader: Amen.

Priest: O Heavenly King

Reader: Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal : have mercy on us Thrice.

Sources:

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Orthodox Life., Holy Trinity Monastery, Jordanville, New York.,
No.4.1982., pp. 11-12 & 20)

Recipes

Fanouropita (Lenten)

1 cup of sugar
1 cup vegetable oil
2 cups orange juice
3/4 cup light or dark raisins
3/4 cup chopped walnuts
1 teaspoon baking soda
1 teaspoon vanilla
4 cups flour

Beat sugar and oil together until creamy yellow. Dissolve baking soda in orange juice and pour slowly into sugar mixture. Add other ingredients and pour into a 9" x 13" greased pan. Bake at 350 F for 45-50 minutes or until an inserted toothpick pulls out cleanly. Cut into squares for serving after it's blessed at the Church by the parish priest.

Fanouropita (Lenten)

- * 1 c orange juice
- * 1/2 cp brandy
- * 2 tbs unsalted butter
- * 1/2 tsp salt
- * 2 c golden raisins
- * 3/4 c sugar
- * 1/2 c honey
- * 1 tbs ground cinnamon
- * 1/2 tsp ground cloves
- * 2 c all-purpose flour
- * 2 tsp double-acting baking powder
- * 1/2 tsp baking soda
- * 2 tbs grated orange peel

Procedure:

1. In a large, heavy bottomed saucepan, combine all ingredients listed from orange juice to cloves.

2. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat, and simmer for exactly ten minutes -- any longer, and you'll have a good caramelized smelling door stop instead of a cake.

3. Set pot in cold water to cool mixture completely.

4. Sift into cooled syrup flour, baking powder and baking soda.

5. Beat vigorously for eight to ten minutes (Takes muscles! We use a wooden spoon for this.) or until batter is smooth and bubbly.

6. Stir in orange peel.

7. Turn into well greased 7 " fluted pan or 8" loaf pan.

8. Sprinkle with 1/2 cup sesame seeds (optional; skip if you like).

9. Bake for 1 to 1 1/2 hours, until a knife inserted in the center comes out clean.

10. Sprinkle with 1/4 cup brandy and cool cake in pan. Bring to church to have blessed, and then share with parishioners or the poor.

(Posted: Indiana Listserv by Matanna@AOL.COM)

Prayer before preparing the Artoklasia bread

"Lord, please help us prepare this Artoklasia which I am about to begin and bring it to completion according to Your will so that we can pray for the well-being of our loved ones whose names we are about to offer and so that we can share the blessing of these five loaves with the faithful who join us in asking for Your great mercy and Divine grace. Amen"

RECIPES

Bread for Artoclasia (small loaves)

2 packages compressed or dry yeast

1/2 cup water

3/4 cup sugar

1 tsp. salt

1 1/2 cups water

1/4 cup oil (salad, corn, etc.)

5 1/2 to 6 cups all-purpose flour
1 tsp. cinnamon honey powdered sugar

Dilute yeast in 1/2 cup water. Add sugar, salt and stir. Add remaining 1 1/2 cups water and oil.

Add 3 cups flour mixed with cinnamon and stir until batter is smooth. Add remainder of flour until dough is soft but firm. Knead until bubbles appear on the surface of dough and it is smooth and satiny in appearance.

Divide dough into 5 equal parts and place in 5-inch round pans. Let rise in pans until almost double in bulk. Bake in 400-degree oven for approximately 15 minutes, or until tops are golden brown. Remove from pans and cool on racks for 10 minutes. Brush tops lightly with honey. When cool, sprinkle powdered sugar on top.

www.goarch.org/archdiocese/departmen...

Recipe for 5 (8 inch large) Artoklasia bread loaves (Lenten)

2 packages of dry yeast	1/2 cup vegetable oil
12 - 14 cups all-purpose flour	1 teaspoon cinnamon
1 1/2 cups sugar (optional)	1 teaspoon aniseed
3 teaspoons salt	honey (optional)
2 1/2 - 3 cups lukewarm water	3/4 cup confectioner's sugar

Preparation of the Artoklasia bread

Dissolve yeast in 1/2 cup of the 2 1/2 - 3 cups lukewarm water. Add sugar and salt and stir well. Add remaining water, oil, cinnamon and 6 cups flour and stir the mixture until creamy. Slowly add enough of the remaining flour to make medium consistency dough.

Divide dough into 5 parts; shape into round loaves and place and 5 round

slightly oiled pans. Cover with towels and let rise in warm place until doubled in bulk (about 1 hour). Bake loaves in hot oven (about 350° F) for about 45 minutes or until brown. Remove from oven and let cool.

Boil aniseed in 1 cup water and brush the tops of loaves with the liquid or lightly brush the loaves with honey. Sprinkle with confectioner's sugar.

Recipe for 5 (8 inch large) Artoklasia bread loaves (non-Lenten)

6 packages of dry yeast	6 large beaten eggs
20 to 25 cups all-purpose flour	1/2 cup butter
3 cups sugar	2 cups corn oil
5 teaspoons salt	2 ½ cups milk
5 cups lukewarm water	

Preparation of the Artoklasia bread

Dissolve yeast in the lukewarm water and stir 3 cups of flour. Heat the sugar, milk and salt, butter and oil and stir well. Add to the flour mixture and mix well. Add the beaten eggs. Continue adding flour until dough can be kneaded. Knead dough until smooth and elastic. Let it rise until it doubles in size.

Divide dough into 5 parts; shape into round loaves and place into five 8 inch round, slightly oiled pans. Let the loaves rise again and then bake them in a hot oven (about 350° F) for about 45 minutes or until brown. Remove from oven and let cool.

Prayer while listing the names

”Lord, shed Your Divine grace and mercy upon your servants, (names)”

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