

# Swieconka – Polish Blessing of the Baskets – Easter Saturday

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Swieconka(sh-vee-en-soon-kah) is one of the most enduring and beloved Polish traditions. Baskets containing a sampling of Easter foods are brought to church to be blessed on Holy Saturday. The basket is traditionally lined with a white linen or lace napkin and decorated with sprigs of boxwood (bukszpan), the typical Easter evergreen. Poles take special pride in preparing a decorative and tasteful basket with crisp linens, occasionally embroidered for the occasion, and just enough boxwood and ribbon woven through the handle. Observing the beautiful foods and creations of other parishioners is one of the special joys of the event.

While in some older or rural communities, the priest visits the home to bless the foods, the vast majority of Poles and Polish parishioners in Ireland visit the church on Holy Saturday.

## Poswiecenie Pokarmow - Blessing of Food

The Blessing of the Food is a festive occasion. The three-part blessing prayers specifically address the various contents of the basket, with special prayers for the meats, eggs, cakes & breads.

### Prayer for the Blessing of the Breads and Holiday Baked Goods

Chlebie zywy, ktory zstapiles z nieba i dajesz zycie swiatu, poblogoslaw + ten chleb i wszelkie swiateczne pieczywo na pamiatke chleba, ktorym nakarmiles sluchajacych Ciebie wytrwale na pustkowiu i ktory wziales w swoje swiete i czcigodne rece, aby go przemienic w swoje Ciało.

#### English Summary:

The blessing addresses the Bread of Life who died and rose for the life of the world, invoking Him to bless the bread and holiday baked goods in memory of the Bread which is offered at the Priest's hands which becomes His Body.

### Prayer for the Blessing of the Meats and Sausages

Baranku Bozy, Ty pokonales zlo i obmyles swiat z grzechow, poblogoslaw + to mieso, wedliny i wszelkie pokarmy, ktore bedziemy jedli na pamiatke baranka paschalnego i swiatecznych potraw, jakie Ty spozyles z Apostolami podczas Ostatniej Wieczerzy. Przez Chrystusa Pana naszego, Amen.

#### English Summary:

The blessing addresses the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world. The Lamb is invoked and asked to bless the meats and sausages, which will become the holiday meal in memory of the Paschal Lamb, as He gave to the Apostles at the Last Supper.

We ask this through Christ our Lord, Amen.

## **Prayer for the Blessing of the Eggs and Pisanki**

Chryste, nasze zycie i zmartwychwstanie, poblogoslaw + znak nowego zycia, abysmy dzielac sie nimi w gronie rodziny, bliskich i gosci, mogli sie takze dzielic wzajemnie radoscia z tego, ze jestes z nami. Pozwol nam wszystkim dojsc do Twojej wiecznej uczty w domu Ojca, gdzie zyjesz i krolujesz na wieki wiekow. Przez Chrystusa Pana naszego, Amen.

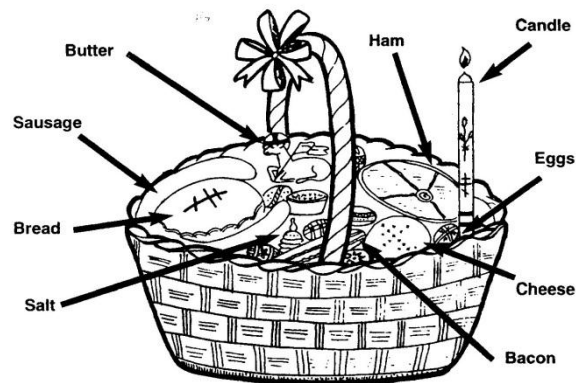
The priest then sprinkles the individual baskets with Holy Water. More traditional Polish churches uses a straw brush for dispersing the Water; others use the more modern metal Holy Water sprinkling wand. In some parishes, the baskets are lined up on long tables; in others, parishioners process to the front of the alter carrying their baskets, as if in a Communion line. Older generations of Polish migrants, descended from early 19th century immigrants, tend to bless whole meal quantities, often brought to church halls or cafeterias in large hampers & picnic baskets. Newer Polonian immigrants at Polish-language parishes along with Poles in urban Poland present the smaller arrangement of select goods described here.

## **English Summary:**

The blessing addresses Christ, our Life and Resurrection. It asks Him to bless the eggs, the sign of new life; asks Him to remember our family, those near as well as guests, especially those who wait in the hope of being with Him. We wait to accompany Him to His Father's house, where he lives and reigns for ever and ever.

We ask this through Christ our Lord, Amen.

## A Traditional Polish Swieconka Basket



### Basket Contents and Symbolism:

- Masło / Butter : This dairy product is often shaped into a lamb (Baranek Wielkanocny), reminding us of the goodness of Christ that we should have toward all things.
- Chleb / Easter Bread: A round rye loaf topped with a cross, symbolic of Jesus, the Bread of Life.
- Chrzan / Horseradish : Symbolic of the Passion of Christ still in our minds, but sweetened with some sugar because of the Resurrection. (May be white or pink [w/grated red beets].)
- Jajka / Eggs and Pisanki: Indicate new life and Christ's Resurrection from the Tomb.
- Kielbasa / Sausage: A spicy sausage of pork products, indicative of God's favor and generosity.
- Szynka / Ham: Symbolic of great joy and abundance. (In addition to the large ham cooked for the Easter Meal, often a special small ham, called the Szynka Wielkanocny) is purchased specially for Swieconka basket.)
- Slonina / Smoked Bacon: A symbol of the over abundance of God's mercy and generosity.
- Sol / Salt: So necessary an element in our physical life, that Jesus used its symbolism: "You are the salt of the earth."
- Ser / Cheese: Shaped into a ball, it is the symbol of the moderation Christians should have.
- Holy Water: Holy water is used to bless the home, animals, fields and used in religious rituals throughout the year.
- A candle, often marked like the Paschal Candle lit during the Easter Vigil, is inserted into the basket to represent Christ, Light of the World.
- A colorful ribbon and sometimes sprigs of greenery are attached.
- The linen cover is drawn over the top and is ready for the trek to the blessing.

# Swieconka dla Dzieci (For Kids: Print & Color)

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## Basic Catholic Prayers: Polish / English

### **ZNAK KRZYŻA**

W imię + Ojca i Syna i Ducha Świętego.  
Amen.

### **MODLITWA PANSKI**

Ojciec nasz, któryś jest w Niebie, świeć się imię Twoje; przyjdź Królestwo Twoje; bądź wola Twoja, jako w niebie, tak i na ziemi. Chleba naszego powszedniego daj nam dzisiaj; i odpusz nam nasze winy, jako i my odpuszczamy naszym winowajcom; i nie wódz nas na pokuszenie, ale nas zbaw ode Złego.

### **POZDROWIENIE ANIELSKIE**

Zdrowas Maryjo, łaski pełna Pan z Toba, błogosławionas Ty między niewiastami i błogosławiony owoc żywota Twojego, Jezus. Święta Maryjo, Matko Boża, módl się za nami grzesznymi teraz i w godzinie śmierci naszej. Amen.

### **SKŁAD APOSTOLSKI**

Wierzę w Boga, Ojca wszechmogącego, Stworzyciela nieba i ziemi. I w Jezusa Chrystusa, Syna Jego Jedyne, Pana naszego, który się poczył z Ducha Świętego, narodził się z Maryi Panny. Umęczon pod Ponckim Pilatem, ukrzyżowan, umarł i pogrzebion. Zstąpił do piekieł. Trzeciego dnia zmartwychwstał. Wstąpił na niebiosa, siedzi po prawicy Boga, Ojca wszechmogącego. Stamtąd przyjdzie sędzić żywych i umarłych. Wierzę w Ducha Świętego, święty Kościół powszechny, świętych obcowanie, grzechów odpuszczenie, ciała zmartwychwstanie, żywot wieczny. Amen.

### **CHWAŁA OJCU**

Chwała Ojcu i Synowi i Duchowi Świętemu, jak była na początku, teraz, zawsze i na wieki, wieków.  
Amen.

### **SIGN OF THE CROSS**

In the name of the + Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

### **OUR FATHER**

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name,  
Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen.

### **HAIL MARY**

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

### **APOSTLE'S CREED**

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

### **GLORY BE**

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning is now and ever shall be, world without end.  
Amen.