

*"The wealthy have become poor and gone hungry but those who seek the Lord shall not lack any good thing"*

Service of the Artoklasia

**Blessing the Five Loaves :** This is the service where we offer the sweet bread known as Artoklasia. It is a service of thanksgiving and gratitude. An attentive reading of the text of the service reveals that in our thanksgiving and offering of bread, we seek what is needful, living water and the bread of life. We seek not riches that are transitory but spiritual nourishment -according to our Orthodox Faith. The word Artoklasia is derived from two Greek words, : "άρτος" meaning "wheat bread" and "κλάω" which means "break". In offering Artoklasia we are offering, blessing and breaking bread. This service has its roots in the communal Agape Meals of the first Christian years.

Saint Symeon of Thessaloniki says that Artoklasia was received from the Lord Himself, in the miracle of the **Feeding of the Five Thousand** (Matthew 14:15-21), (Mark 6:30-44) and (John 6:1-14). Wine and oil are often offered with the Artoklasia.

It is customary to offer the Artoklasia during Vespers, in the all night vigils of monasteries, as well as in parishes, on the Eve of Feast Days of our Lord, the Feast Days of the Panagia, as well as other Feast Days. By "oikonomia" this service is served in Parishes after the end of Matins or the end of Divine Liturgy.

As it is festive, the Orthodox Church general avoids Artoklasia during Great Lent. There are many regional recipes for the Artoklasia, they are all proper and correct.

# Artoklasia

## Ingredients

- |                                |                            |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 5 pkgs. dry yeast              | 5-6 lbs. flour             |
| 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ c. sugar       | 2 tsp. salt                |
| 2-3 c. water                   | 1 tsp. cloves              |
| 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ c. warm water  | $\frac{1}{2}$ c. olive oil |
| 1 T. honey (optional)          | 3 tsp. cinnamon            |
| 1 T. powdered sugar (optional) |                            |

## cooking instructions

1. Dilute yeast in 1  $\frac{1}{2}$  c. warm water with 1 tsp. of sugar. In 2-3 minutes it should begin to bubble.
2. Mix sugar, salt, cinnamon and flour in large bowl. Add water, oil, and yeast. Knead until soft dough is formed (add more flour or water as needed).
3. Let the dough rise in a warm place for 1 hour - covered until it rises and almost doubles in size.
4. Punch down and let it rise again and then divide into 5 equal-sized loaves.
5. Knead each loaf and place in a greased cake or pie pan. Let loaves rise for 1 hour or so in a warm place until double in size.
6. Bake at 350 degrees for 35-45 minutes or until golden brown.
7. Optional: brush tops while warm with honey and sprinkle with powdered sugar.

