



## THE STORY BEHIND THE VASILOPITA

January 1



Did you know a coin in a cake is linked to one of the Church's greatest Saints?

Each New Year, Orthodox Christians bake and share the Vasilopita (in Greek, Βασιλόπιτα), a special sweet bread or cake made in honor of Saint Basil the Great, Archbishop of Caesarea in the 4th century. But this beloved tradition comes from a story of humility, generosity, and a miracle.

According to tradition, a cruel ruler once demanded an unjust tax from the people of Caesarea. To protect the poor, Saint Basil asked the faithful to bring what they could: coins, jewelry, anything of value. But when the tyrant saw their peaceful unity, he was moved and canceled the demand.

Now faced with returning all the treasures, Saint Basil was at a loss. How could he return each item to its rightful owner? So, he prayed and baked the coins and jewels into loaves of bread. When each family received one, they miraculously found exactly what they had offered. From this act, the tradition of the Vasilopita, the "Saint Basil's bread," was born.

Today, a coin is placed in the bread before baking. The one who finds it is blessed. We believe that generosity brings grace and that Saint Basil continues to intercede for us. The cutting of the Vasilopita brings joy, gratitude, unity, and a spirit of giving, just like Saint Basil taught.

Send us your questions at: [religioused@goarch.org](mailto:religioused@goarch.org)

Follow us    @goarchDRE

Subscribe at: [religioused.goarch.org](http://religioused.goarch.org)



GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA  
DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION