



Where do Ukrainian Easter Eggs come from?

The beautiful “*pysanky*” are an ancient celebration of Christ’s Resurrection.

Pysanky comes from the Ukrainian word *pysaty*, which means “to write.” The eggs are so named because their intricate designs of beeswax wax and special dyes are not painted but “written” onto the egg.

Easter eggs are a pre-Christian practice. Before Christianity came to the Ukraine in 988, pagan Ukrainians heralded the coming of spring with their intricately-decorated and colorful *pysanky*.

When the followers of Christ arrived in Ukraine and discovered this ancient practice, they did not ban the existence of the symbolic little eggs. They saw the beauty and meaning in them, and joyfully adopted the custom. They enriched the *pysanky* by incorporating Christian symbols and colors that represented their faith.



The Ukrainians would make *pysanky* and bestow them as special gifts. Children and godchildren received *pysanky*, and unmarried maidens and eligible young men in the community exchanged the delicate treasures each spring. People gave the intricate eggs to their priests as a sign of admiration and thanks. They left *pysanky* in the cemetery on the grave sites of beloved family members who had died.

The custom became so deeply ingrained in the Catholic culture of Ukraine that no external force could obliterate it. When Stalin banned the making of *pysanky* in an attempt to stamp out Christianity, the undaunted Ukrainians responded by hiding in closets in the dead of night and secretly writing the eggs in the dim light of a sputtering candle.

The vibrant *pysanky* remind us of Christ's ultimate triumph over evil and death. This ancient symbol of the Resurrection is a good way to keep in mind just what Easter is about. In your Easter decorations this year, include a set of 6 wooden *pysanky* Easter Eggs, hand-painted in Ukraine. Colorful, delightful, and expressive, these eggs proclaim the mystery of the Resurrection wherever they are placed. Get your set today from The Catholic Company!