PROSFORO (Church Bread) 2 loaves

Approx. 6 to 8 cups sifted flour
2 cups warm water (105* - 110*)
3/4 to 1 tsp. salt
2 pkgs. dry yeast (I always Quick Rise Yeast)

1 Religious Seal

In a small bowl, mix yeast, 1/2 cup warm water (105*-110*) w/pinch of sugar. Cover and let rise for 15 minutes.
In large bowl of mixer, add some of the sifted flour, salt and remaining 1 1/2 cups warm water (105* to 110*) & the risen yeast. Beat with mixer...adding flour as needed until the dough all gathers together. Knead until velvety smooth for 8 minutes, adding a bit of flour when the dough starts sticking to the bowl.
Place dough in UNgreased bowl, cover with damp towel and let rise 1 hour or until doubled. SEE NOTE* Remove bowl from oven, place dough on counter, punch down and knead by hand for a couple of minutes. Divide dough in half, shape into round loaves and put in round cake pans that have been FLOURED ONLY. Brush top of loaves with flour so the seal doesn’t stick.

Dip seal in flour and stamp bread. PRESS DOWN REALLY HARD. (TIP: say the Lord’s prayer while pressing the seal down. This is about the length of time that it takes to get a good seal). Prick with toothpick 4 to 8 times outside the seal area. Let rise approximately 15 to 20 minutes.

Place pans in 350* oven and bake for 40-45 minutes until the crust is light golden brown.

*NOTE: I turn the oven on to 200*...heat for ONE MINUTE...turn off...put the dough in oven to rise for approximately one hour.

PRAYER: After the bread has been baked, the following prayer may be said in unison by the family:

Dear Lord, this bread that we have baked represents each one of us in this family and in our congregation. We are offering ourselves to You, our very life, in humble obedience and total commitment to You. We place ourselves on Your holy altar through this bread to be used by You in any way that You feel will help enlarge Your kingdom. Accept our gift and make us worthy to receive the greater gift that You will give us when You consecrate this bread and give it back to us as Your Precious Body. Amen.