

# BREAKING CHAINS



On January 16th we will commemorate a wondrous event in the life of Peter, one of Christ's disciples. After Jesus had suffered on the cross, rose from the dead, ascended into heaven, and sent the Holy Spirit upon them at Pentecost, the disciples went forth to all the nations and preached the Gospel. But not everyone wanted to hear about Jesus. There were still some who did not understand Who He was and were so afraid of losing power to His disciples that they actively persecuted them and many became martyrs rather than deny their love for Christ. Here is a scripture account of what happened to Peter during these persecutions:

*"About that time Herod the king laid violent hands upon some who belonged to the church. He killed James the brother of John with the sword; and when he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to arrest Peter also. This was during the days of Unleavened Bread. And when he had seized him, he put him in prison and delivered him to four squads of soldiers to guard him, intending after the Passover to bring him out to the people. So Peter was kept in prison, but earnest prayer for him was made to God by the church. The very night when Herod was about to bring him out, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and sentries before the door were guarding the prison; and behold, an angel of the Lord appeared, and a light shone in the cell; and he struck Peter on the side and woke him, saying, "Get up quickly." And the chains fell off his hands. And the angel said to him, "Dress yourself and put on your sandals." And he did so. And he said to him, "Wrap your mantle around you and follow me." And he went out and followed him; he did not know that what was done by the angel was real, but thought he was seeing a vision. When they had passed the first and the second guard, they came to the iron gate leading into the city. It opened to them of its own accord, and they went out and passed on through one street, and immediately the angel left him. And Peter came to himself, and said, "Now I am sure that the Lord has sent his angel and rescued me from the hand of Herod and from all that the Jewish people were expecting."*

*Acts of the Apostles 12: 1-11*

## HOW MIGHTY IS OUR GOD!

How happy Peter must have been to find his chains had fallen off and that he was free to make disciples of all the nations, including us!

We know that God created Peter for this very important task. In like manner, He made each of us for our own special task that no one else can perfectly fulfill. Many things can happen in our lives that make it difficult for us to be the best that we can be. When this happens to us or to someone we know, we must remember to pray, as the people of the Church prayed for Peter while he was imprisoned, and God will hear our prayers.

## DO YOU SEE THE POWER OF PRAYER?

Scripture tells us that it was due to the pious prayers of the church members that Peter's chains fell miraculously from his wrists and he was rescued by the angel from prison! Those believers who knew of this miracle kept those very chains and noted that those who venerated them were healed of their afflictions. The chains originated in Jerusalem but were transferred to Constantinople during the fifth century. One was eventually sent to Rome where it is kept in a church dedicated to the Apostle Peter and is brought out every year on this date for public veneration.

We can thank God for sending the angel to free St. Peter from his chains so that he could spread the Gospel. We can ask Him to free us from the things that keep us from fulfilling our duty as His disciples too! So on this day when we venerate the chains of St. Peter, let's ask ourselves what it is that keeps our own soul shackled?

- Could we be enslaved by empty commitments that bring us no closer to Christ?
- Do "friends" keep us in bad company and unable to freely express our Christian values?
- Have we formed habits that are less than befitting a true Christian?
- What would it take to make us free to become all that God created us to be?

Today would be a good day to ask the intercession of St. Peter, as well as your own Angel Guardian and pray, as the Church prayed for Peter, so that whatever it is that chains your soul and perhaps the souls of those you love, might be broken and you may be free in Christ to do YOUR special task!

- Written by Lynne Wardach

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A RECIPE from ByziMom.com  
for JANUARY 16

## CHAINS OF ST. PETER SOUP



Little ones in our home always LOVED this feast. Why? Because it meant home-made noodle soup with pasta "chains" that the children could make and eat! First, we would read the scripture story together then, as we made the chains, we would discuss how God sent the angel to save Peter. Many things can happen in our lives that make it difficult for us to be the best that we can be. When this happens to us or to someone we know, we must remember to pray, as the people of the Church prayed for Peter while he was imprisoned, and God will hear our prayers. We can thank God for freeing Peter from his chains so that he could spread the Gospel, and ask Him to free us from the things that keep us from fulfilling our duty as His disciples too!

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### Ingredients

- 2 1/2 cups flour,
- 1/2 cup water (or optional egg, beaten) and a dash of salt.
- Broth of your choice: chicken, beef, vegetable, tomato, etc.; brought to a boil, with or without added vegetables as desired.

### Preparation

Any broth can be used to make this soup, with whatever additions your family likes! Place your broth into a stockpot and bring it to a low boil and then turn it down and allow it to simmer while you make your pasta chains.

In a mixing bowl, combine the flour, salt, and water (and egg, if using) and mix together well to form a dough. Knead it well and roll it out with a rolling pin onto a floured board to about 1/4 inch thickness. Use a pizza cutter to cut the dough into thin strips then cut across them in order to make them into two-inch long links. Now we can make the chains!

Take two of your strips and make an X with them. Take the bottom strip and wrap it around the top one and pinch the link closed, over the top strip. Then turn your chain 90 degrees and place another strip in an X on top of the pinched link. Wrap the bottom strap around the top one and pinch that closed and turn your chain 90 degrees and, lay down another strip (to for another X) and wrap the bottom strip around it and pinch it closed. Repeat for as long as you like to make a chain!

These can be placed onto a floured baking sheet and gently lowered into the hot broth. Cook these in the broth for about 3-5 minutes at a gentle simmer until they float. Enjoy your soup!

FIND THIS RECIPE AND MORE LIKE IT IN LYNNE WARDACH'S NEW EBOOK, COOKING CONNECTIONS ON THE GIFT-SHOP PAGE AT BYZIMOM.COM!