

# November 14: St. Philip vs the Serpent Gods

After the Ascension and Pentecost the apostles were sufficiently filled with the light and enthusiasm of the Holy Spirit and they began to go forth and preach to all the nations. It was important that they spread the wonderful news of the coming of Christ, especially to those who had no idea He had come, and were steeped in idolatry and sin. St. Philip, it is said, traveled to Syria along with his sister, Miriamne and the apostle Bartholomew. There, in the city of Heliopolis, there was a pagan temple where many people who came to worship a certain serpent-god were bitten by venomous snakes. In Jesus name, the three healed many of those who were bitten, including the wife of the city magistrate, saving their lives and converting them to Christ. Upon hearing of the conversion of his wife, the magistrate ordered all three of the holy missionaries to be crucified and as they hung upon their crosses, a terrible earthquake befell the city. At first, Philip rejoiced at the misfortune of his persecutors to have provoked the wrath of God. At once, an angel appeared to him, telling him of God's displeasure with his attitude. Because he had rejoiced, he would not be allowed to enter paradise for forty days after his imminent death. Grief stricken and ashamed of himself, Philip began to entreat God for the safety of the people of the city and the earthquake stopped. Then he turned to his sister and to Bartholomew and related to them what he had seen and heard from the angel. He begged them to spread the word among his brother disciples to pray and fast for his soul for forty days after his impending death. Seeing how the earthquake halted at St. Philip's words, the magistrate became afraid of them and ordered the three to be taken down from their crosses at once. Miriamne and Bartholomew were set free, but Philip was found to have already died. Once they were set free, Bartholomew baptized all present who were converted after witnessing the miraculous events, then he and Miriamne

buried the body of the Apostle Philip, and fled to Armenia where they continued to preach.

On the eve of St. Philip's feast day, we remember the pesky snakes that were the cause of his martyrdom, and bake a batch of St. Philip's Snakes to eat for a treat, in anticipation of the 40-day fast which will begin the next day.

This recipe is my mom's and it makes a wonderfully rich and delicious cookie. It has been shared on my facebook page for several years now and some of those who follow me have used it , but some have shared some different "serpent" recipe ideas! Some have made snakes out of bread dough and cinnamon sugar, some have made cheese crackers that look wonderfully scary and very serpent-like. Some are savory, some are sweet, but they all remind us of St Philip and to get ready to prepare for the 40 days before the coming of the Savior!,

### **St. Philip's Snakes**

3 eggs

1/4 tsp salt

1/2 cup sugar

1-1/2 tsp vanilla

3/4 cup butter

1/4 cup milk

1Tbsp baking powder

4 cups flour

Cream butter and sugar together. Add eggs and vanilla. Add baking powder and flour along with the milk and mix gently, just until a soft dough forms. Take a golf ball-size piece and roll it between your palms to make a rope. Coil the rope to form the shape of a snake ( my children often tie the rope into a knot), and place it on a greased baking sheet. Press one end of the coil with your thumb and flatten to make the head of the snake. Repeat until all of your snakes are made. If you wish, you can press 2 currants, or chocolate chips onto the head for eyes and use a bit of dough, or a strip of marachino cherry for his tongue. (Cutting a "fork" into the tongue makes our little serpents look very realistic, and so fun).

Bake these at 350 degrees for about 12-15 minutes. When completely cooled, you can choose to glaze them with green-tinted powdered sugar glaze, or drizzle them with melted chocolate to look like the real thing.



Allison (9) and Matthew (8). With the St. Philip's Snakes that they made!