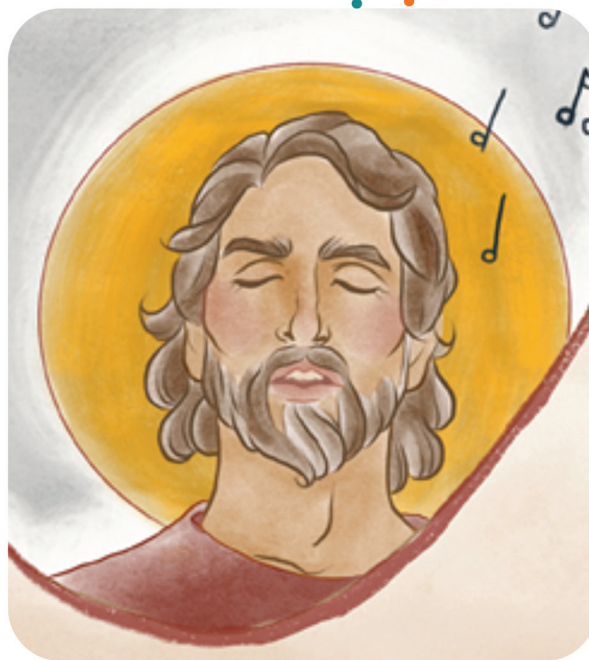


# Saint Romanus

## THE MELODIST

Back in the fifth century, in Constantinople, there lived a Syrian monk named Romanus who was the sacristan in the temple of Hagia Sophia. Romanus loved to pray and spent many hours alone in prayer and service to God. Once, on Christmas Eve, he was asked to read the Kathisma verses during the services and did such a poor job that another cantor had to be called in to take his place. He was so ashamed of his poor performance that he mourned all night as he could not sleep. In the morning, he got up early and went to pray before the icon of the Theotokos and pour out the troubles of his heart. To his surprise, she appeared before him in a vision in which she handed him a paper scroll, commanding him to eat it. When he did so he was given the ability to understand music! To his surprise, he began to understand composition, musical theory and hymnography in a way he was never able to do before! This boosted his confidence so much so that he returned to the Church where there was an All-Night-Vigil, and Romanus sang his first Kontakion,



*“Today the Virgin gives birth to perfect essence, and the earth offers a cave to the inaccessible. The angels sing His glory with the shepherds; the wise men journey with the star, for there is born for us an Infant Child, God eternal!...”*

From then on, Romanus wrote many hymns, which we continue to sing to this day, called Kontakia. His musical talent and service to the church were rewarded as he was ordained a heirodeacon. He served as a choirmaster for the Church for the rest of his life, composing nearly a thousand hymns, eighty or so of which we still use to this day. His feast is on October 1st.

*-Written by Lynne Wardach*



ST. ROMANUS THE MELODIST'S

# Kontakia Kookies

*Whip up a batch on the feast of St. Romanus, October 1st! You can even make up a batch of these musical scrolls whenever YOU have the urge to sing and then eat them after the Liturgy as your reward!*

*You can use any favorite sugar cookie recipe, but we like these best.*

## For the Dough:

- 4 cups sifted all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup (2 sticks) butter, softened
- 2 cups sugar
- 2 large eggs
- 2 teaspoons vanilla or any other favorite flavor extract

**Directions:** Combine dry ingredients into a bowl. In a separate bowl, beat butter and sugar until pale and fluffy, (about 2 minutes), then add in the eggs and vanilla and continue to beat until well combined. Gradually add in the dry ingredients to form a dough, and refrigerate at least 1 hour or overnight.

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Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Let dough stand at room temperature just until soft enough to roll, (about 10 minutes) then roll it out on a lightly floured work surface to about 1/4-inch thick. You can add more flour as needed to keep the dough from sticking. Using a pizza cutter or a sharp knife, or a cutter, cut the dough into squares. These are your scrolls! Transfer each to a parchment-lined baking sheet. Roll out the scraps, and repeat with the remaining dough. Chill cookies until very firm, about 15 minutes, then bake 15-18 minutes and let cool completely on a wire rack.



## Decorate with Royal Icing:

- 4 cups confectioner's Sugar
- 2 large egg whites
- 1 tsp water

Combine in a mixing bowl and beat until smooth and glossy. Using a small knife or spatula, spread over the entire top face of each cooled cookie and allow it to dry until set. Tint the remaining icing with a bit of food coloring and scoop it into an icing bag with a medium round tip.

*(NOTE: if you don't have an icing bag and tip, just scoop the icing into a plastic storage bag and snip off the tip of one corner! Works perfectly!)*

With your tinted icing, draw a musical staff (Five lines!) across each cookie, add a key signature, and a few notes and there you have it! St. Romanus' Scrolls!

**EAT THESE FOR SOME MUSICAL INSPIRATION,  
BUT BE PREPARED!  
YOU HAVE TO SING FOR YOUR TREATS!**