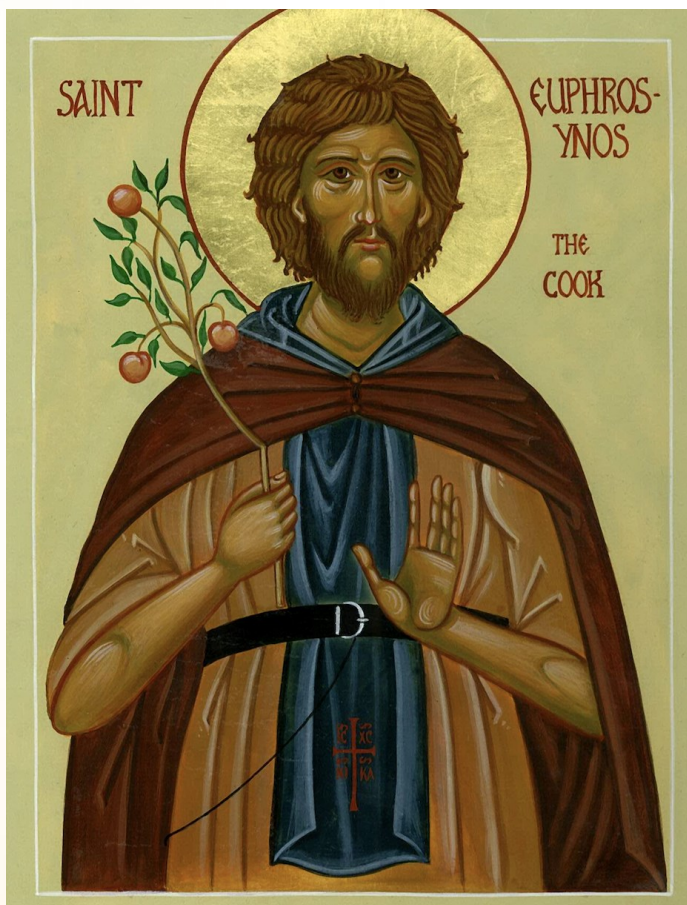


# I SPY IN MY LITTLE ICON



By Kh. Jocelyn Abyad



## St. Euphrosynos

Have you ever helped to cook a big meal with your parents? It is hard work to make food for a large group! You get sweaty and hot from the steam and the stove, splashed with sauces from bubbling liquids that stain your apron and by the end, you are exhausted from lifting, sifting and stirring all of your ingredients!

In a monastery, there is a large group of monks to cook for three times a day, every day, so the job of the cook at the monastery is a demanding job. St. Euphrosynos took on this job with humility and happiness- even when the other monks weren't very nice to him! At his monastery in Palestine so many years ago, he worked hard to serve others who didn't

even say thank you to him for his efforts. Despite all this, he kept peace and joy in his heart, always praying to God and serving others for the Lord's sake. He served for many years in this hidden, quiet way.

Then, a dream changed everything! (As we know dreams often do!) One of the monks in the monastery prayed to God to give him a glimpse of the Heavenly Paradise. That night, he was given a vision of Heaven-filled with beautiful sites and good food to eat. There among the beauty with him was none other than St. Euphrosynos! The monk was more than a little surprised to see his own humble cook in Heaven, so he struck up a conversation with him. The monk asked St. Euphrosynos for a gift to remember this dream by and the saint agreed. He carefully chose three beautiful, shiny apples for his fellow monk and the two parted ways. When the monk awoke the next morning, he was shocked to find the apples still next to him- wrapped in a cloth and filling his room with a delightful, heavenly scent!

The monk ran to St. Euphrosynos and demanded to know where he was the night before. The saint humbly answered, "I was in the same place as you, where I spend most of my time!" With this, the monk realized that St. Euphrosynos was so much more than "just" a cook- he was a man of prayer and devotion to God, so humble in his ways that he spent all his time serving with his body while his mind rested in the presence of God. The monk ran off to share the news with the rest of their community- everyone would be so surprised! But when they returned to find the saint, he was nowhere to be found. It is said that he spent the rest of his days in the wilderness, not wanting any glory for himself.

Our icon today features the three apples from this story prominently in St. Euphrosynos' hands. His other hand is held open in a gesture of both prayer and acceptance of grace. He wears the clothes of a monk- a long tunic and a loose coat or mantle over it. You might also notice that he has a leather belt on. This is both a practical help to keep his robes out of his way, but also a symbol of his willingness to serve. May we all seek to serve in the same fashion of this much beloved saint! St. Euphrosynos, pray for us!