

I SPY IN MY LITTLE ICON



By Kim Fritzges



St Tryphon

Our icon this month is of St Tryphon of Campsada. You may find icons identifying him as Trypho, Trifon, or Triphon. Tryphon comes from the Greek word *tryphe* which means softness or delicacy. He is venerated as a holy martyr and holy unmercenary. A holy unmercenary is a saint who would not accept payment for prayers or good works they did. He was born in the third century in Campsada, Phrygia which is now Turkey. From a young age Tryphon was able to cast out demons, heal animals, and cure diseases all through the grace of God.

In our icon we see Tryphon holding a bird with various birds around him. He seems to be a young man in his 30s with a beard. Tryphon is typically holding a bird, usually a falcon, or holding a cross and a scythe. A scythe is a sharp hand tool that was used for harvesting grains. Often Tryphon wearing a red cape will be on a white horse with a falcon on his shoulder or on his hand.

This iconography is from a dream that the Tsar's falconer, Tryphon Patrykiev had when he lost one of the tsar's

falcons. He hunted for three days to find the falcon, after praying to St. Tryphon, who was his patron saint for help, fell asleep and having his dream of St Tryphon on the white horse with the falcon, he woke to find the missing falcon perched in a tree. He is a patron saint of birds and also one of the patron saints of Moscow, Russia.

He is shown with the scythe in some icons based on his saving the grain fields from a plague of locusts in a village. As a result, he is a patron saint of gardeners and winegrowers. He is sought out in prayer to prevent rodents and locust infestations.

St Tryphon suffered a martyr's death in the year 250 in Nicea under the persecution of the emperor Decius. Tryphon was arrested, interrogated, and tortured, while confessing his faith. He was beheaded.

Tryphon's feast day is celebrated on February 1 and February 14 on the old calendar.

TROPARION TONE 4

Your holy martyr Tryphon, O Lord,

through his suffering has received an incorruptible crown from You, our God.

For having Your strength, he laid low his adversaries, and shattered the powerless boldness of demons,

Through his intercessions, save our souls!

KONTAKION TONE 8

By the power of the Trinity you destroyed polytheism to the ends of the earth,

and you were honored by Christ, all-glorious Tryphon;

having conquered tyrants through Christ the Saviour,

you received your crown of martyrdom and the gift of divine healing, for you are invincible.

Special thanks to Ikonen-Mautner for the permission to use the icon of St Tryphon. My apologies for the very top being cut off, they links were both short.