

## Saint Euphrosynos the Cook

There was a monk within the abbey  
Who could hardly read a book  
Or paint, or copy manuscripts  
So they made this monk the cook.

The Abbot came and said to him  
"My slow and simple brother,  
There's not much here that you can do;  
You shall make food for the others."

So this one thing he learned quite well,  
This making of the food.  
And despite his lack of intellect,  
His meals were quite good.

When travelers saw the table set,  
They'd gaze with hungry looks.  
The monks would comment, "He made this.  
Euphrosynos, the cook."

One day, after a lecture,  
Of high and mighty words,  
Euphrosynos crept to the woods  
To be among the birds.

He did not understand the things  
The Abbot often spoke.  
And the others made good fun of this  
With laughs and snarls and jokes.

Occasionally, the Abbot too  
Would even roll his eyes.  
He'd say, "Don't even bother,  
Just go and make your pies!"

But Euphrosynos was faithful  
And served them without hate  
For the ways they often talked of him  
As they cleaned and licked their plates.

Euphrosynos found solace  
Among the forest trees,  
And often he'd see angels' wings  
Glinting in the breeze.

He prayed to God his simple prayers.  
He'd pray in love and light.  
And oftentimes devotion  
Would take him through the night.

He'd hurry back and find his pots and pans  
And make a meal.  
All the while his heart a flame  
With faith and hope and zeal.

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One night the righteous Abbot too  
Did pray to God in truth.  
He prayed that he'd see heaven  
And taste eternal fruit.

He asked that God might give him  
A glimpse of paradise  
That God would take away the scales  
That sheathed his aging eyes.

He dreamed of a great garden,  
Of wondrous flowers and greens,  
Of trees that touched a perfect sky,  
Of crystal flowing streams.

A midst this Holy beauty  
A single figure stood,  
Yet first he only recognized  
The cassock and the hood.

But as he wandered closer,  
He got a better look.  
And to his great astonishment  
He saw it was the cook.

"Euphrosynos!" he said in shock  
"Where is this place we are?"  
The saint only smiled and raised his hand,  
Pointing toward the Morning Star.

But the light from God was too intense  
And the Abbot hit the ground.  
And when he rose, he looked about  
But the Lord could not be found.

Euphrosynos remained there  
And lent to him his hand  
Then bid the Abbot, "eat some food  
It will help your legs to stand."

The Abbot looked around himself;  
He saw the fruitful trees  
And chose some golden apples  
Kissed by the heavenly breeze.

Euphrosynos reached up and took  
A branch with good supply.  
He laid them on the Abbot's lap  
Then turned and said good-bye.

At midnight bell the Abbot woke  
To make his way to prayer,  
But as he tried to raise himself  
He felt a burden there.

The apples from his vision  
Were laying on his chest,  
The fruit from Jesus' garden,  
He'd been given during his rest.

He remembered sweet Euphrosynos  
And all the light and sound.  
Then after prayer he called the brothers  
And bid them gather 'round.

He described for them his heavenly dream  
And showed the shining gold.  
With awe they asked from whom it came,  
All eager to be told.

The Abbot said that one of them  
Had given him the bough,  
That they had met in paradise  
And escaped this life somehow.

It could be Peter, Luke or John  
Or Philip, Mark, or James . . .  
It could be Basil, Cyril, Menas  
. . . they listed all their names.

The Abbot raised his hand and said  
"You vain and silly men.  
'Tis none of you of which I speak  
For you retain your sins.

"This monk of which I'm speaking,  
He left us after prayer.  
His took his holy personage  
And journeyed over there.

"He went out to the Forest  
To seek his silent nook.  
The monk of which I'm speaking  
Is Euphrosynos, the cook.

"So let us all learn from this man  
Where wisdom really lies.  
It's not to read or write or sing  
Or avert our pious eyes.

"To truly become holy men  
The answer lies out there,  
In our meek and lowly brother  
Who spends his time in prayer.

"This meek and lowly brother,  
Who can hardly read a book,  
Who only lives to serve us,  
Euphrosynos, the cook."