

APPLES FROM PARADISE

The path of righteousness that leads one to sainthood is varied. God accepts those who serve Him best, regardless of their background. One such example is a humble monk known throughout eternity as simply “EUPHROSYNOS THE COOK.”

It seems that his parents were pious, but poor, and when they passed away, Euphrosynos sought refuge in a Mt. Athos monastery. He was of pure and simple spirit, enriched through devout prayers. Because of his lack of any formal education, he was put to work in the monastery kitchen. While others may have felt that such labor was menial and demeaning, Euphrosynos was grateful for this opportunity to be of faithful service to the monastic community.

One night the abbot of the monastery had a dream that placed him in Paradise. In this beautiful garden setting stood one lone monk: Euphrosynos the cook! In the dream, he explained to the abbot about the Kingdom of Heaven, and he placed a branch with three apples on it in the abbot’s hand. When he awoke from the dream, he found the apple-laden branch still in his hand! The astonished abbot rushed to the kitchen and asked Euphrosynos where he had been during the night. Mysteriously, he replied: “I was where you were, Father.” The abbot shared his dream with the other monastics, who now had a new-found respect and admiration for the Cook. Their attention, however, caused Euphrosynos to feel uncomfortable and retired into the desert, where he spent the rest of his life alone.

Through the example of St. Euphrosynos, may we learn that we are to live humbly, serving our brothers and sisters with joy and gladness until the day when we will achieve the reward of the “fruit” of our earthly labors.