

St. Euphrosyne of Alexandria



Commemorated on September 25

St. Euphrosyne of Alexandria was born at the beginning of the fifth century in the city of Alexandria. She was the only child in her family of illustrious and rich parents. Since her mother died early, she was raised by her father, Paphnutius, a deeply believing and pious Christian. He frequented a monastery, the leader of which was his spiritual guide.

When Euphrosyne turned eighteen, her father wanted her to marry. He went to the monastery to his spiritual guide to receive his blessing for the planned wedding of his daughter. The monk spoke with Euphrosyne and gave her his blessing, but she yearned for the monastic life.

She secretly accepted tonsure from a wandering monk, left her father's house and decided to enter a monastery in order to lead her life in solitude and prayer. However, she feared that her father would find her in a women's monastery. Calling herself Smaragdus, she went to the very same men's monastery which she had visited with her father since childhood.

The monks did not recognize Euphrosyne dressed in men's garb, and so they accepted her into the monastery. In a solitary cell, St. Euphrosyne spent 38 years in works, fasting and prayer, and attained a high level of spiritual accomplishment.

Her father grieved over the loss of his beloved daughter and more than once, on the advice of his spiritual guide, conversed with the monk Smaragdus, revealing his grief and receiving spiritual comfort. Before her death, Euphrosyne revealed her secret to her grieving father and asked that no one but he should prepare her body for burial. Having buried his daughter, Paphnutius distributed all his wealth to the poor and to the monastery, and then accepted monasticism. For ten years up to his own death, he labored in the cell of his daughter.

Troparion (Tone 1) –

As an ascetic you hid your womanhood

And your falling-asleep was an amazement, O Euphrosyne.

Though a woman, you toiled as a man,

And by your prayers you save those who honor you!

Kontakion (Tone 2) -

Desiring the life on high and forsaking all earthly pleasures,

You lived as a man among men, O Euphrosyne.

For the sake of Christ your Bridegroom,

You spurned earthly betrothal

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