



St. Euphrosyne September 25th

Saint 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 igumen 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 igumen conversed with the daughter and gave her his blessing, but St Euphrosyne yearned for the monastic life. She secretly accepted tonsure from a wandering monk, left her father's house and decid-

ed to enter a monastery in order to lead her life in solitude and prayer. She feared, however, that in a women's monastery her father would find her. Calling herself the eunuch 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. Here 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 the igumen, he conversed with the monk Smaragdus, revealing his grief and receiving spiritual comfort. Before her death, the nun Euphrosyne revealed her secret to her grieving father and asked that no one but he should prepare her body for burial.