



## St. Spyridon at the 1st Ecumenical Synod

Miracles constitute irrefutable testimony of the sanctity of the person who works them. What follows will show what zeal for the faith the Saint had. When Constantine the Great was the emperor of Rome, and the first Christian emperor, and Plaulinus and Julian were consuls, **in 325 in Nicaea the famous synod of the Holy Fathers took place.** This council aimed to depose Arius, who with impiety, called the Son of God a creature, and to proclaim that the Son was

of the same essence (homoousios) as the Father.

The first and the most well known supporters of this blasphemy were Eusebius of Nicomedia, Maris, bishop of Calcedon and Theognis, bishop of Nicaea. With the fanatic Arius at their head, these perverted creatures proclaimed the dogma that the Son of God is a creature. Those who fought in defence of the Orthodox faith, those who came into prominence by their speeches and their life were the **holy Alexander**, a simple priest, but a representative of blessed Patriarch Mitrofan, who was absent because of illness and the famous **Athanasius, deacon of the Church of Alexandria**, who would later become the ornament of the Episcopal throne. They were also strongly envied, because they did not distinguish themselves from the others by their ecclesiastic rank, but they were more powerful than them in the word of faith. Among them was equally found the **Great Spyridon**, whose life and the divine Grace that rested on him convinced more than the rhetorical skill, the powerful reasoning and the eloquence of the others. According to the will of the emperor, the philosophers were to assist in the council and they displayed their knowledge with arrogance. *They were well educated in the art of Sophist rhetoric.* One of them, a famous speaker, possessed an irresistible force of persuasion. He conversed with the bishops and supported Arius strongly. He pleaded insistently on his behalf, so that many, wishing to see which of the opposing parties would win, were urged to listen to him. There was no objection so difficult that his rhetorical ability could not remove with ease! Moreover, if his plea led him into an impasse, he would slip out like an eel *by means of specious arguments and language tricks.* **There was therefore a competition between truth and rhetorical art.**

Those who defended the truth with loyal arguments attacked the Sophist, but *he made use of the ambiguities of language, insidious arguments and misleading tricks like weapons, and he believed that like this he would win.* However, so that words would not be those that would finally win, but Christ and Truth, the victory «passed over» the learned men and «stopped» upon the simple Spyridon. As soon as the Saint, who did not know anything save «Christ, and him crucified» (1Cor.2,2), as the Apostle Paul says, saw the philosopher become heated with his sophisms, speak about Christ using offensive language and trying to denigrate the Orthodox dogmas, he drew near and asked to speak to him. Nevertheless, the pious Orthodox, who knew the simple ways of the Saint and that he was ignorant of the Greek culture, prevented him from going to oppose the Sophist. **Saint Spyridon**, however, did not let them stop him, because **he knew that the Wisdom from on high is superior to the human and ephemeral wisdom;** he approached the Sophist, then, and said to him: «In the Name of Jesus- Christ, note my words, philosopher, and listen to what I want to tell you!». The Sophist replied to him: «Speak and I will listen to you! ». Spyridon then said: «**There is only one God, Creator of heaven and earth. He created the heavenly Powers, made man from clay and created simultaneously all things visible and invisible. It was by His Word and His Spirit that heaven and earth were created, the sea flew out, the firmament stretched out, the animals were born, man was created, the most beautiful of His creatures. All the stars were created, the sun and the moon, night, day and all the rest. We know, then, that the Word is the Son of God and God Himself. We believe that, for us, He was born of the Virgin, was crucified and buried. Then he rose and raised us with Him,**

**granting us incorruptible and immortal life. We assert that He will come a second time to judge all people and examine our own works, words and thoughts. He is of the same essence (homoousios) as the Father, equal in dignity, and reigns with Him.** Don't you agree philosopher? », he asked him.

We must relate here the famous miracle of the tile. **After these words, the Saint took a tile in his left hand and held it tight.** Moreover, for a wonder! **Fire rose up immediately in the air, water poured out on the earth and the argyle of the clay remained in the hands of the Saint, symbolising in this way the life giving and indivisible Trinity.** Everybody was amazed. The philosopher did not seem to be the same person any more, to possess neither the same mind nor the same language, he that knew so well to oppose and to quarrel. He remained stunned, his soul was filled with surprise and his voice faded away. After some time of silence, he could not say anything else but: «I share the same view! ». Then the Saint said to him: «Then go on, if you agree with me, don't be in disagreement by your works! **Since you know who is the God who created all things, get up and go to church to confess the Orthodox Creed**».

At these words, the philosopher returned to the true faith and addressing himself to his disciples and to the other listeners, he said: «Until now, we fought in words and I won by means of my rhetorical skill. However, since a divine force which opposed me has manifested an ineffable and mystical power through the simple words of bishop Spyridon, I do not feel ashamed to admit that I have been defeated. I would joyfully advise then, myself as well as the others: if they are not so perverted so as to wish to change the Truth, to believe in Christ and to follow this saintly Venerable Father, whose human words are nothing else than the Words of God. »

Imagine the disgrace of the Arians at those words and the joy of the Orthodox mixed with pride! The victory of the Orthodox was so brilliant and the defeat of the heretics so bitter that almost all embraced the Orthodox faith. Only six bishops remained by the side of Arius in order to become the party of the devil, the father of lies, who is from the beginning the implacable enemy of truth.

After this manifest condemnation of the heretics, the bishops returned, filled with joy for the victory and full of admiration before the miracle, giving thanks to God for the miraculous things they had seen and for the defeat of Arius. Struck by the miracle, the emperor himself honoured the Saint greatly and saw him off, asking him to pray for him.