

SAINT SPYRIDON

A SHEPHERD OF A CHRISTIAN FLOCK

The First Ecumenical Council of the Christian Church was summoned by the Emperor Constantine in the year 326 to deal with problems of Early Church. Oh, how the roads to the city of Nicea must have looked! They were filled with some 318 leaders of the Faith. It was a sight to behold. Some of th Bishops rode on fine horses, while others trailed slowly on foot; some were garbed with robes while others had threadbear cloaks; some were vigorous and healthy, while others bore on their bodies the scars of persecution and suffering.

Among the most unusual and remarkable of Bishops was ST. SPYRIDON, the hierarch from the island of Cyprus. He had been a shepherd before becoming a Bishop, and he remained one after, including the shepherding of his Christian flock. He concerned himself with the education and Christian nuture of young and old, and the church grew under his wise leadership. St. Spyridon also distinguished himself in the awe inspiring company of the Council, where he forcefully defended the Faith and helped reconcile differences in the group.

Called a WONDER-WORKER, St. Spyridon suffered during the persecutions to the Church in the fourth century. He was arrested and taken to a prison, beaten there so fiercely that he lost an eye. Then the Roman consigned him to hard labor in the mines. There he suffered for years, and a last fell asleep in the Lord, firm in his faith in Christ. His tomb is on the island of Corfu, his body preserved even after sixteen centuries, and is still carried in solemn procession on his feastday as crowds gather to honor him.