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Christ has Ascended!

What are bricks traditionally made of?

Clay and water.

How were bricks traditionally hardened?

They were hardened with fire.

What is the point in all this?

Well, at The First Eccumenical Council of the Orthodox Church, St. Spyridon squeezed a brick with his bare hand and the brick became a lump of clay with fire coming from the top and water falling from the bottom.

This simple miracle, clearly professed the True Triune Godhead. God is One in Essence as is the brick, but God is also three Persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, as the brick is fire, clay and water.

At the time of the First Eccumenical Council, the year 325, our Orthodox Christian Church needed to clarify some very essential matters of our Faith. The most essential matter being that Jesus Christ is of the same essence and honor as God the Father. So, in 325, St. Constantine the Great Emperor called together 318 God-bearing Fathers from all parts of the world at the First Ecumenical Council in Nicaea of Bithynia. This is an ancient city in modern-day Western Turkey, surrounded on all sides, 3 miles in distance, by 10 meter tall walls, double ditches, over 100 towers and only 3 gates.

Now, such an event, in such a legendary city as Nicaea may seem to witness to magnitude and grandeur, right? Quite the contrary, the only reason our Church has maintained the truth is because we have a tradition of humility. The Emperor St. Constantine himself chose to sit through the council on a chair not the emperor's throne. The Ultimate Example of this is found in Jesus Christ Himself, Who, even though He is God, became man was crucified, buried, resurrected and ascended with human flesh into heaven. The First Eccumenical Council is commemorated, today, the Sunday after the Ascension, in order to reiterate the facts set forth at the council. Jesus Christ accomplished the aforementioned dispensation for our salvation and ascended with flesh into heaven, but He is still of the same essence and honor as God the Father.

Thereby, in imitation of our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ, no man can ascend to the theological heights of heaven without first being humbled. Basic humility begins with fear and

love of God. No one can skip basic steps and become a great theologian. Every Saint of The First Eccumenical Council and every Saint of our Church started from the very bottom. Then He Who Ascended into heaven gently lifted up the Saints' humanity with Him once He knew they truly feared and loved Him.

Of all the great theological heights achieved during the First Eccumenical Council, the simply miraculous squeezing of a brick into clay, water and fire most clearly displayed the truth. This action cut to the core of what I am trying to say without saying a word. Even though St. Spyridon had acquired great wisdom, in his true humility God allowed Him to display Theology. Just as Jesus Christ said in the Gospel of St. John, "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free (8:32)."

May God bless us all,

Fr. Dean