

Feast day of St. Nikephoros the Leper



The Church today venerates the memory of St. Nikephoros the Leper, who was canonized in 2012.

The venerable Nikiforos was born Nikolaos Tzanakakis in the Chania prefecture of western Crete in 1890.

He exhibited the first symptoms of Hansen's disease in his early teens, and left the large island for Alexandria to avoid being sent to a leper's colony.

He later sought shelter on the island of Chios, where as a young man he was admitted to a leper hospital in 1924, one near the cathedral of St. Lazaros. There he met Fr. Anthimos Vagianos, who was later canonized as St. Anthimos.

His love and devotion to the Church led him to be tonsured as a monk with the name Nikiforos, with many miracles later attributed to him.