5 Δεκεμβρίου 2012

Th

horos the Leper

In l ες γλώσσες

Fr. Nikephoros (in the world, Nicholas) was born in a village of Chania, in Serikari. His parents were simple and pious villagers, who while he was still a small child, died and left him an orphan. Thus, at the age of thirteen he left his home, traveled to Chania and began to work in a barbershop. There he started to show the first signs of Hansen's disease (i.e. leprosy). At that time, lepers were exiled to the island of Spinaloga, because leprosy was a transmissible disease and was treated with fear and horror. Nicholas, when he was sixteen years old and when the signs of his disease began to be more visible, to flee from enclosure on Spinaloga fled with a boat for Egypt. There he remained working in Alexandria, again in a barbershop, however the signs of his disease became even more evident, especially on his hands and face. Due to the suggestions of a cleric he fled to Chios where there was a home for lepers, in which was a priest, Fr. Anthimos Vagianos, later St. Anthimos of Chios.

Nicholas reached Chios in 1914 at the age of 24. At the leper home in Chios, where there was a grouping of many beautiful little homes, was a chapel of St. Lazaros, where was preserved the wonder-working icon of Panagia of Ypakoe (Obedience). In that place was opened the stadium of virtues for Nicholas. Within two years St.

Anthimos discerned that he was ready for the angelic schema and tonsured him a monk with the name Nikephoros. The disease progressed and evolved in the absence of suitable medicines, and brought many great changes (the medicine was found later, in 1947).

Fr. Nikephoros lived with indiscriminate, genuine obedience, with austere fasting, working in gardens. He also compiled in a catalogue the miracles of St. Anthimos, which he had seen with his own eyes (many took the place of healing of the demon-possessed).

There was a unique spiritual relationship between St. Anthimos and monk Nikephoros, who “did not separate himself from him by even a step”, as mentioned by Fr. Theoklitos of Dionysiou in his book “St. Anthimos of Chios”. Fr. Nikephoros prayed for endless hours at night, performing countless prostrations, not offering a word to anyone nor spoiling his heart on anyone, and was the head chanter of the church. Because of his illness, however, slowly he lost his eyesight and most of the hymns were chanted by others. (περισσότερα…)