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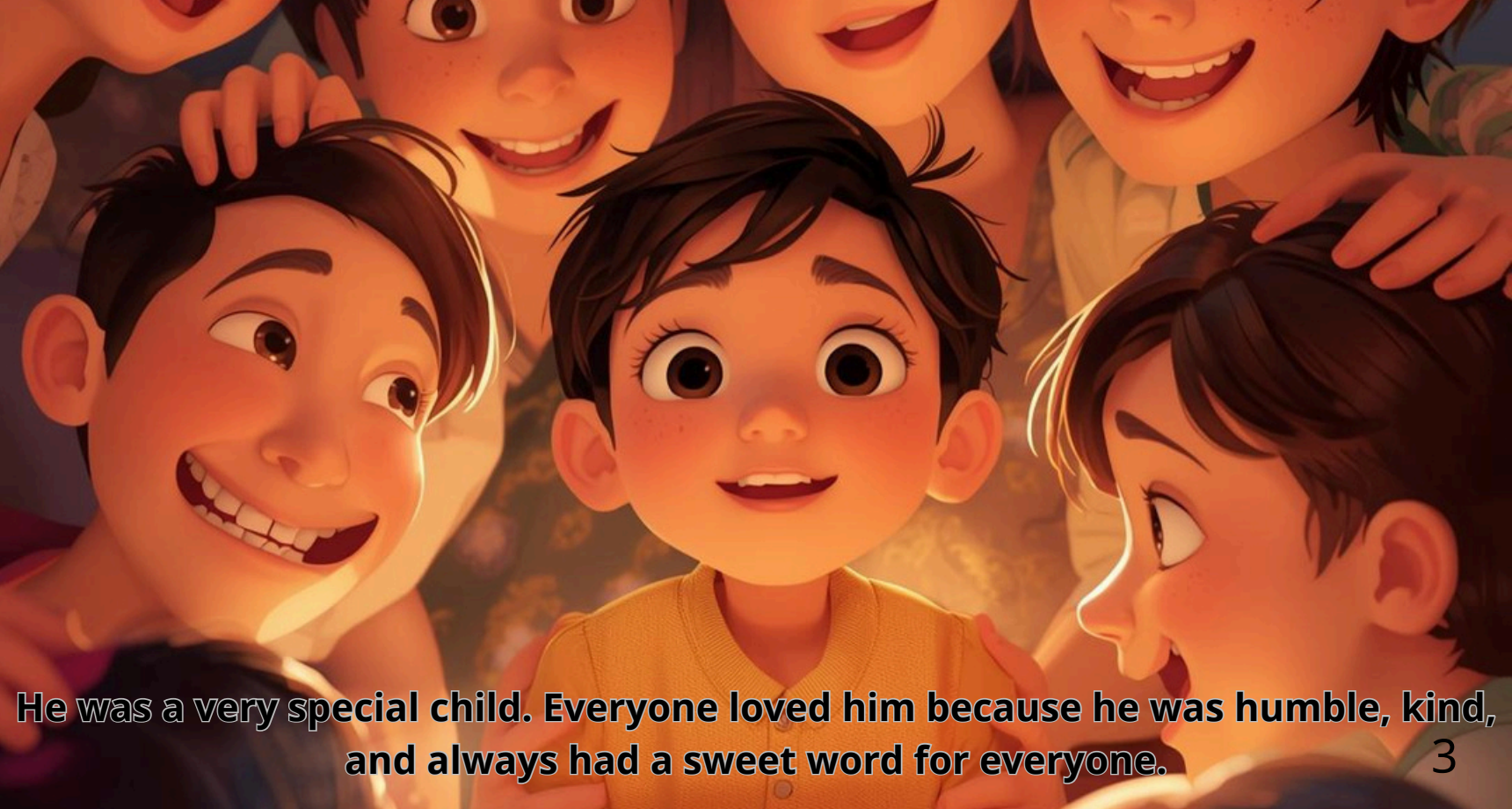
Saint Nikephorus the Leper

A Life of Kindness

Ἡ ΓΑΡ ΔΥΝΑ
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✕

Once upon a time, in a beautiful village called Sirikari in Crete, a boy named Nikolaos was born.

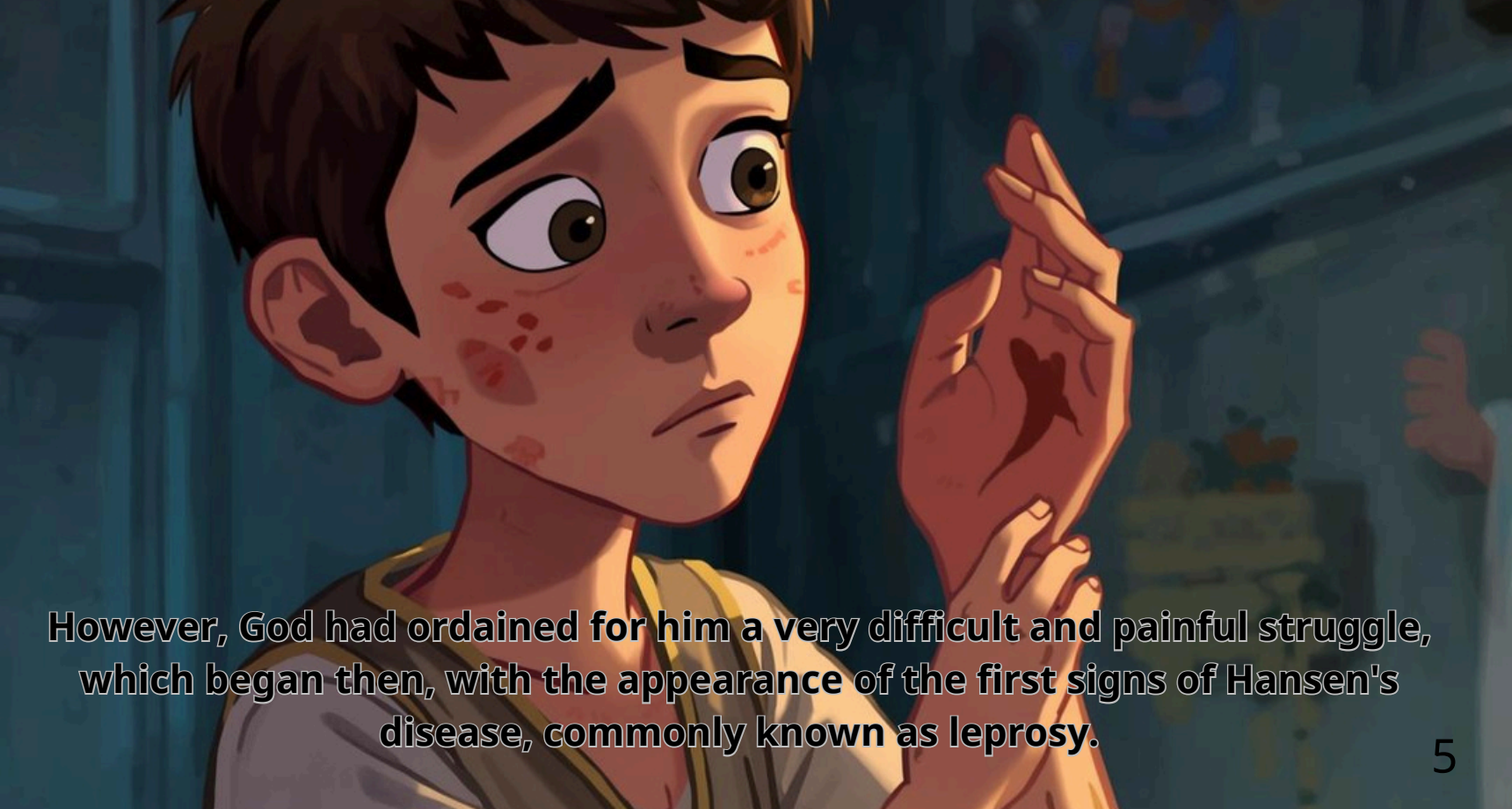




He was a very special child. Everyone loved him because he was humble, kind,
and always had a sweet word for everyone.

At a very young age, he lost both of his parents. When he turned thirteen, his grandfather sent him to work at a barbershop in Chania.





However, God had ordained for him a very difficult and painful struggle, which began then, with the appearance of the first signs of Hansen's disease, commonly known as leprosy.



Science Break!!!

What exactly is Leprosy?

It is a sickness caused by a tiny germ called *Mycobacterium leprae*.



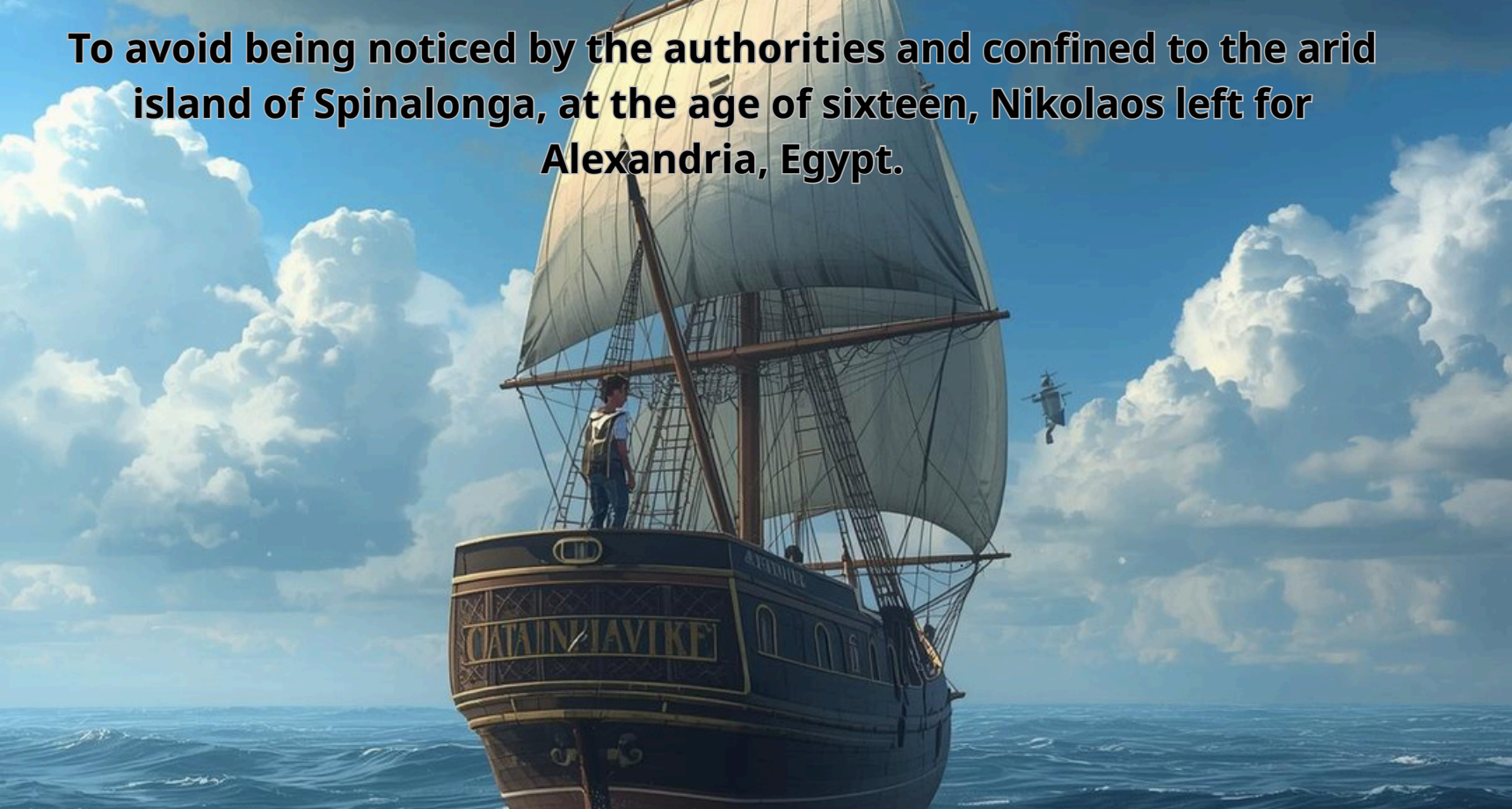
**Is it scary? Today, NO! We have strong medicine.
Is it easy to catch? No!**



Leprosy germ

We also call it Hansen's Disease, named after the brave Dr. Gerhard Hansen, who found the germ!

To avoid being noticed by the authorities and confined to the arid island of Spinalonga, at the age of sixteen, Nikolaos left for Alexandria, Egypt.



There, he became acquainted with the then-flourishing Greek community and the Hierarchs of the Patriarchal Throne, quickly becoming well-loved by everyone.



**After a few
years,
when the signs
of the disease
became very
visible, he had
to leave there as
well.**



A Bishop, to whom Nikolaos had entrusted his problem, sent him to Elder Anthimos, founder of the Monastery of Panagia Voitheia in Chios and chaplain of the local leper colony.

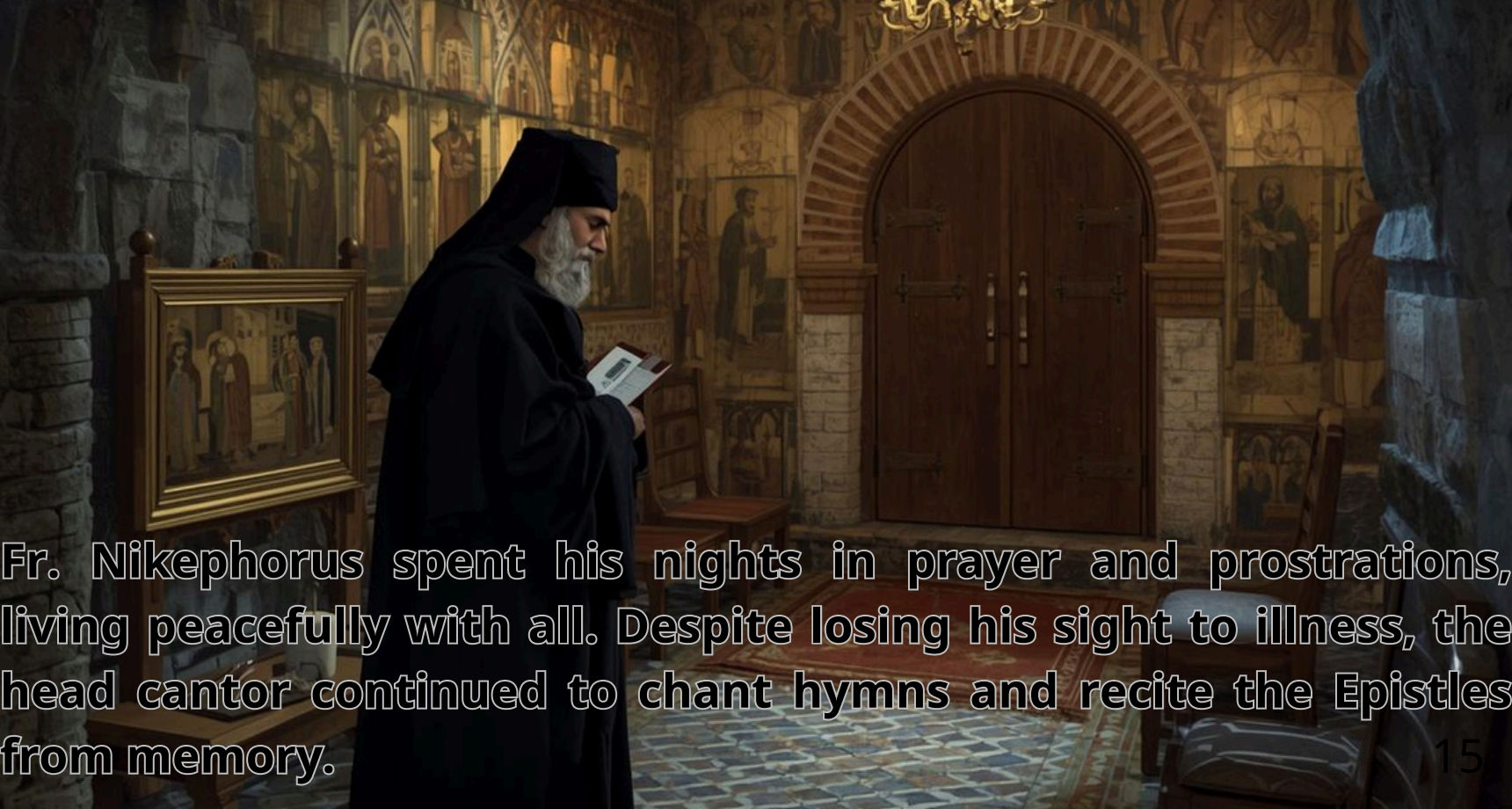




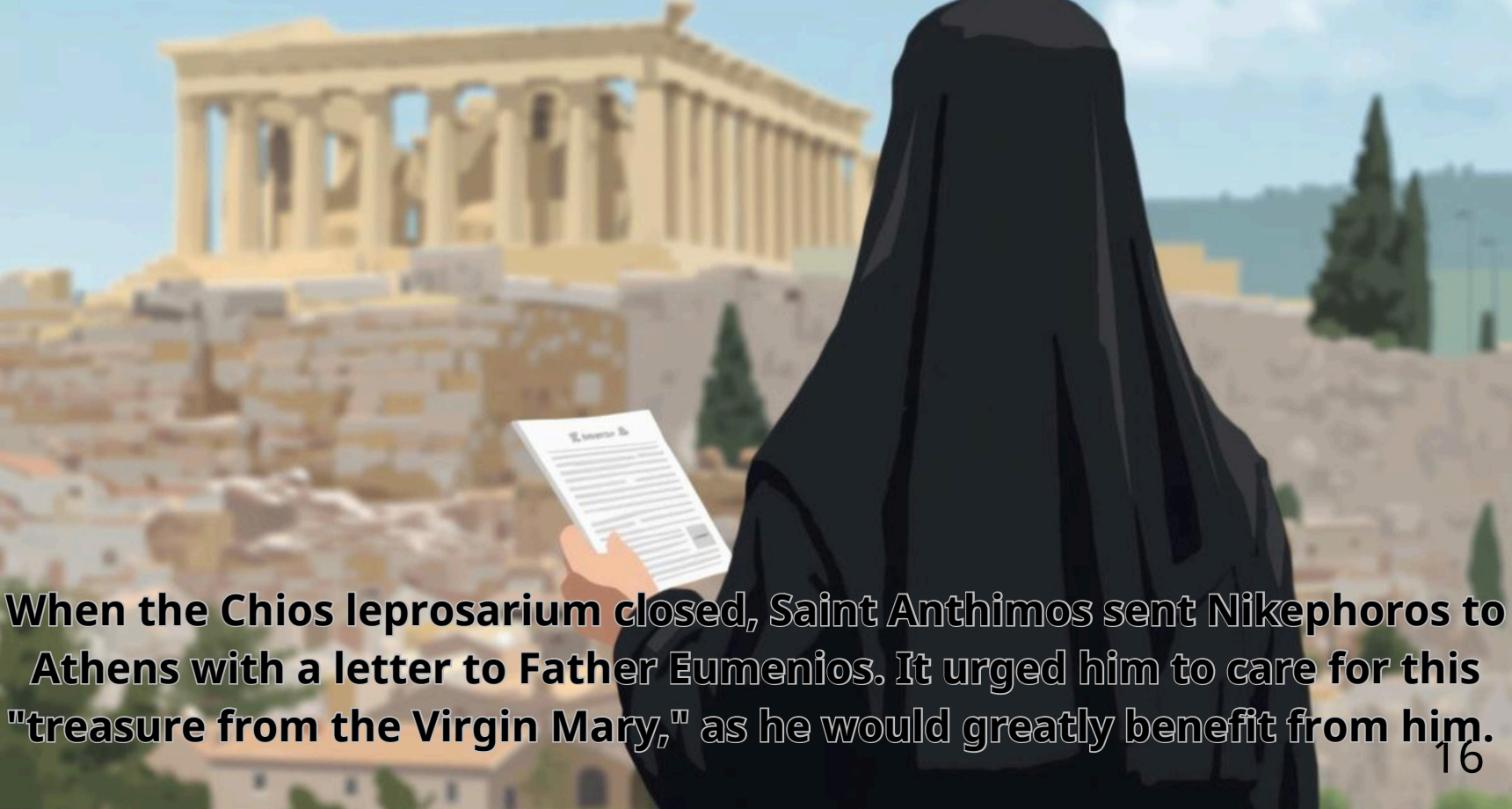
Nikolaos decided to become a monk and took a new name: Nikephoros, which means '*The one who brings victory*'. He spent his days praying and helping other sick people feel brave.



Close to Father Anthimos, who was later canonized as a Saint,
Father Nikephoros reached great heights of virtue.

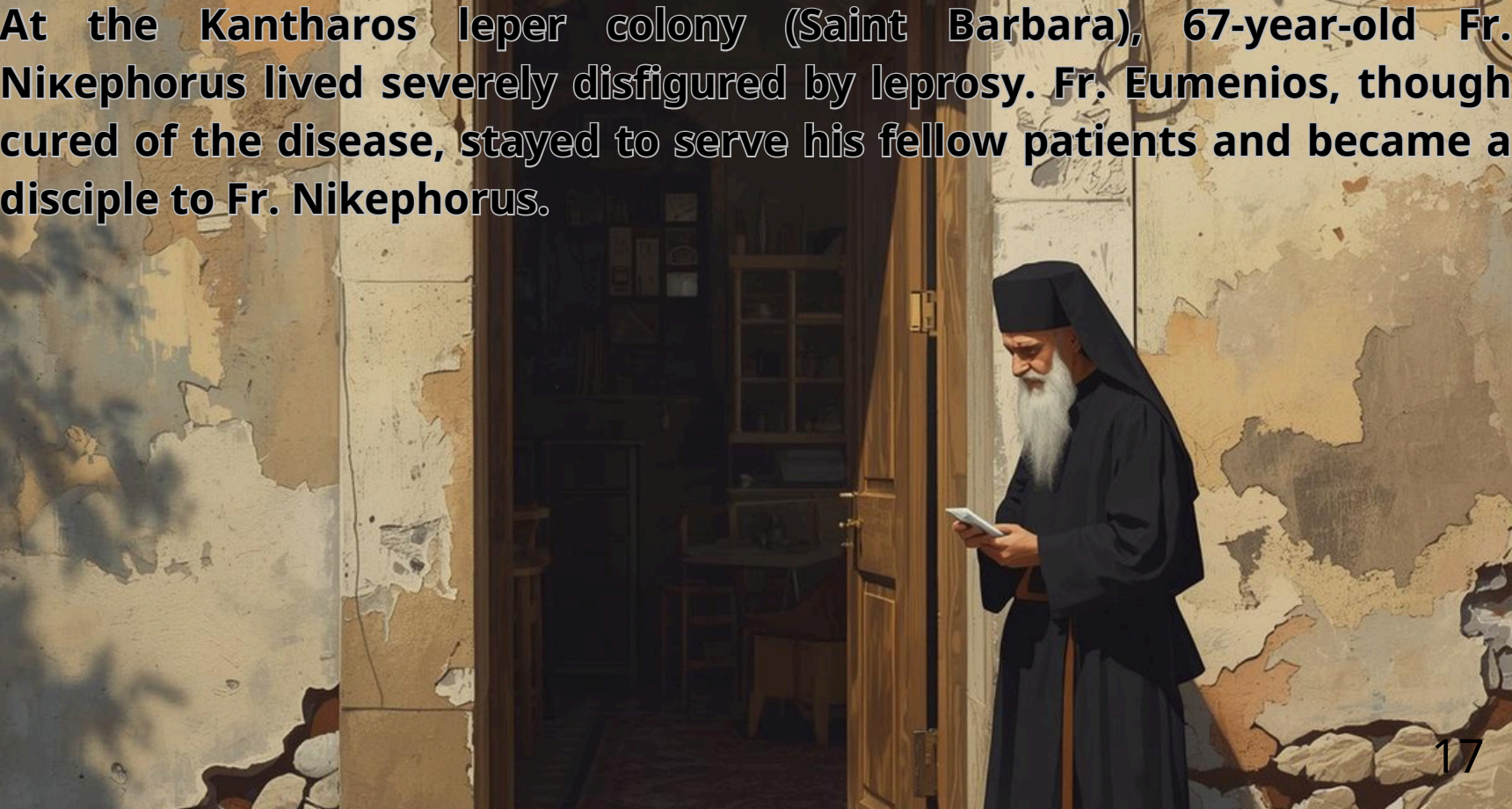


Fr. Nikephorus spent his nights in prayer and prostrations, living peacefully with all. Despite losing his sight to illness, the head cantor continued to chant hymns and recite the Epistles from memory.



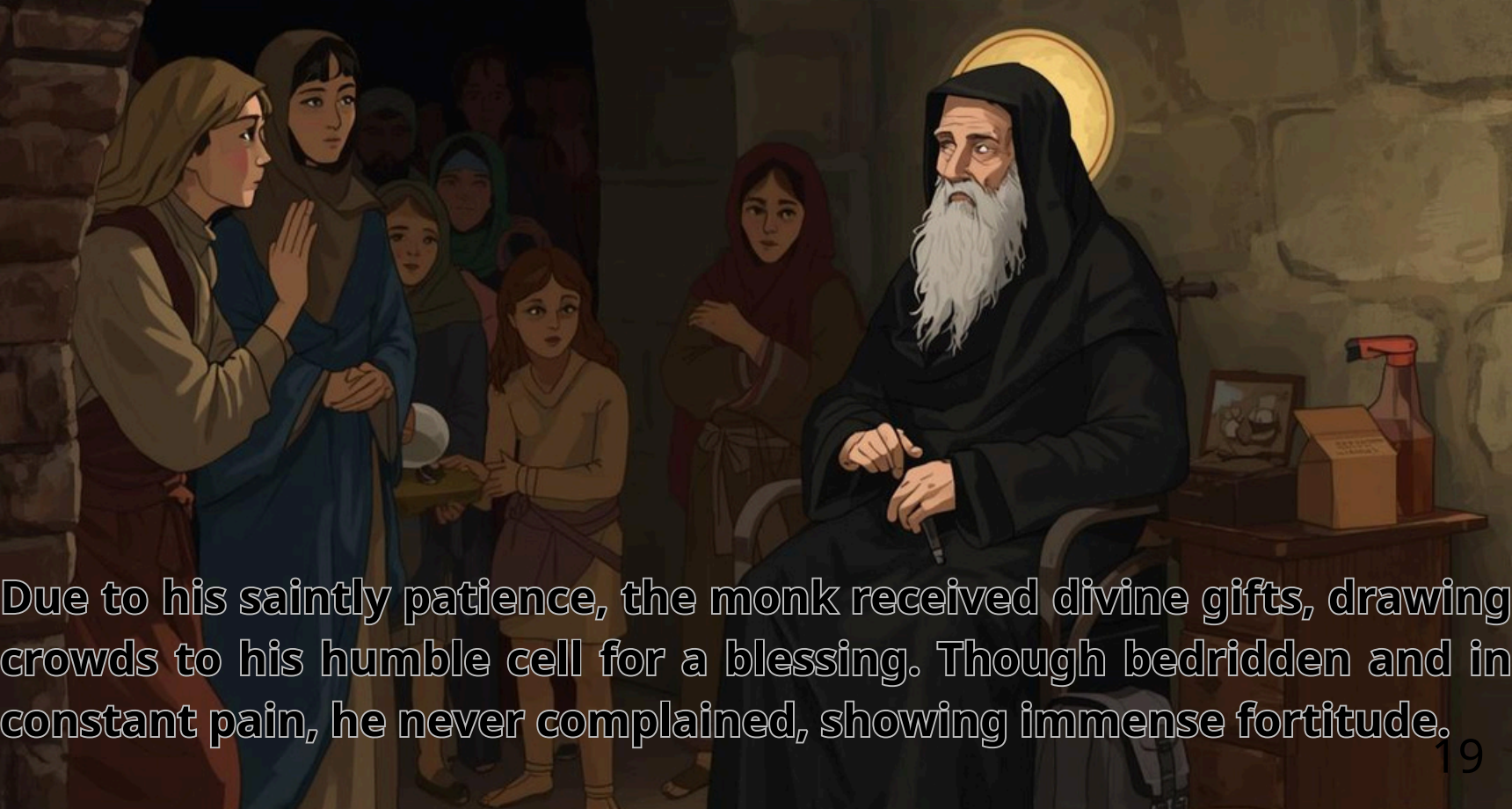
When the Chios leprosarium closed, Saint Anthimos sent Nikephoros to Athens with a letter to Father Eumenios. It urged him to care for this "treasure from the Virgin Mary," as he would greatly benefit from him.

At the Kantharos leper colony (Saint Barbara), 67-year-old Fr. Nikephorus lived severely disfigured by leprosy. Fr. Eumenios, though cured of the disease, stayed to serve his fellow patients and became a disciple to Fr. Nikephorus.

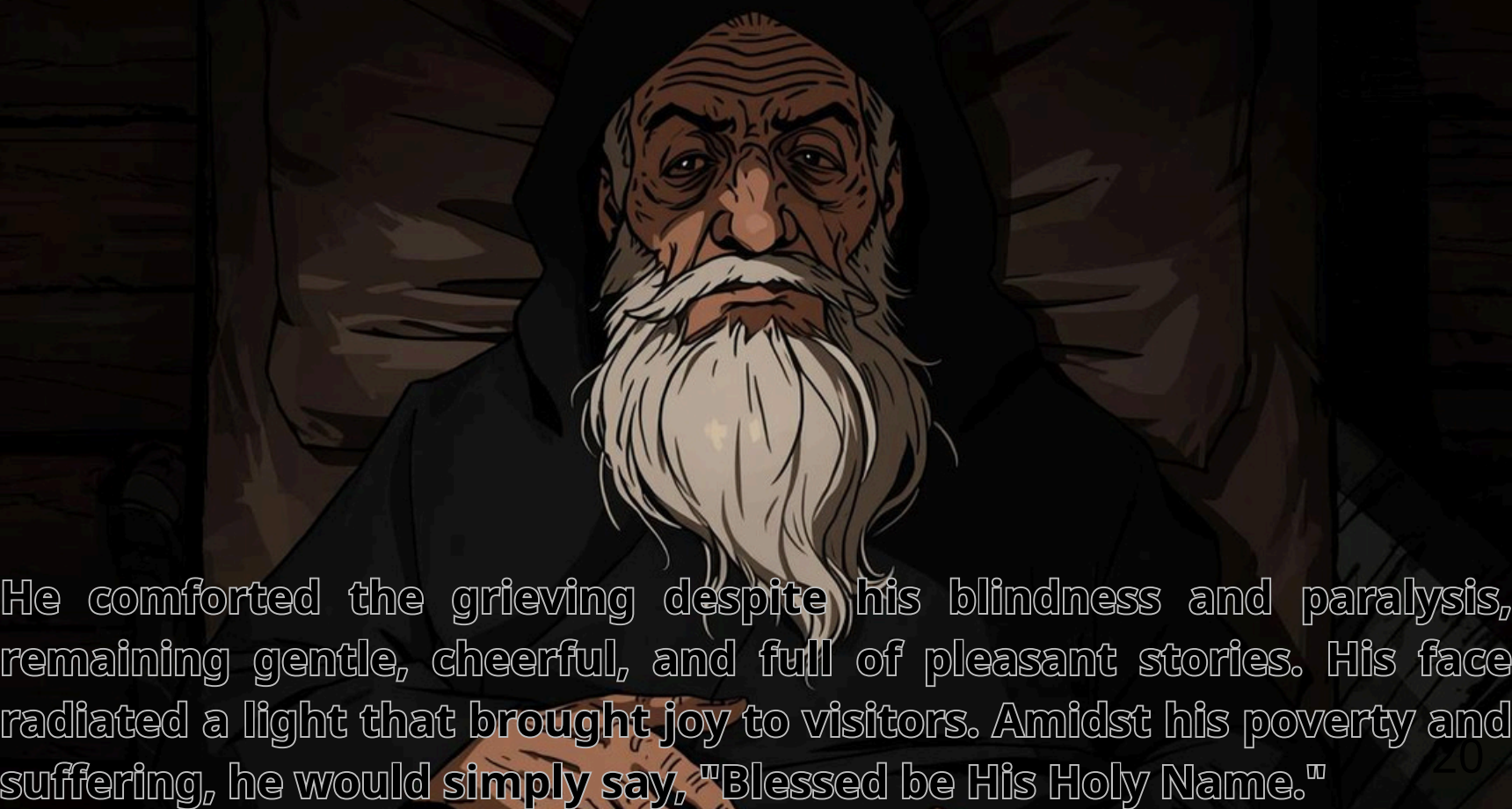




One night, Father Eumenios went to check on him. He saw something amazing! Saint Nikephorus was floating in the air while he was praying. His face was shining like the sun! This miracle showed that even if our body is weak, our soul can fly high.

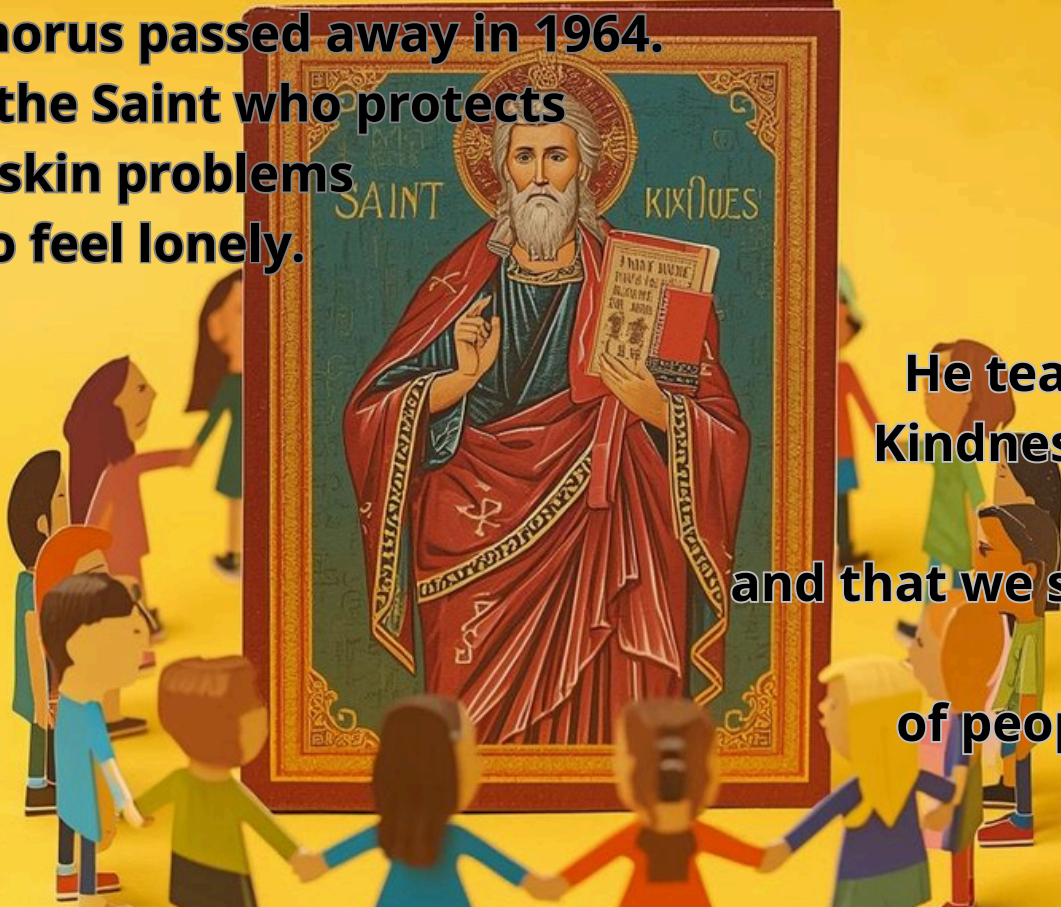


Due to his saintly patience, the monk received divine gifts, drawing crowds to his humble cell for a blessing. Though bedridden and in constant pain, he never complained, showing immense fortitude.



He comforted the grieving despite his blindness and paralysis, remaining gentle, cheerful, and full of pleasant stories. His face radiated a light that brought joy to visitors. Amidst his poverty and suffering, he would simply say, "Blessed be His Holy Name."

**Saint Nikephorus passed away in 1964.
Today, he is the Saint who protects
people with skin problems
or those who feel lonely.**



**He teaches us that
Kindness is the best
medicine
and that we should never
be afraid
of people who look
different.**



Today, because of science, Hansen's disease is 100% curable. Doctors have special pills (MDT) that make the germs go away. People who were once sick can now go to school and play just like you! Saint Nikephorus and doctors worked together to bring hope.

Through the eyes of children, we see the world differently. With an open mind and a heart wide open, the students of the 4th Grade of the Primary School of Palaiochora embraced the story of St. Nikephorus the Leper. Their persistence in fulfilling this project reminds us that when we seek to understand, we find light in the darkest of places.

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