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Life Of St. Blessed Xenia of Petersburg

Compiled By Archimandrite Nektarios Serfes
Boise, Idaho
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Introduction by Archimandrite Nektarios Serfes

God Bless You!

Humbly I am presenting to you the "*Life of St. Xenia*" (Xenia Grigorievna Petrova) known as the Fool-for- Christ's sake, and a Wonderworker, who is still known among the God loving faithful as St. Blessed Mother Xenia of Petersburg, Russia. The following life of St. Xenia was written for children, and even parents can read this life to their beloved children. It would also be spiritually rewarding to let your teenager read this life.



Icon Of St. Xenia Of Petersburg, Helping To Build A Church

We have other saints named St. Xenia and would like to indicate them to you:

- St. Blessed Xenia of Petersburg, Russia. Commemorated on January 24.
- St. Xenia of Kalamae, the Great Martyr, Wonderworker. Commemorated on May 3.
- St. Xenia the Righteous of Rome. Commemorated on January 24.
- St. Xenia the Martyr. Commemorated on January 18.

Please kindly note that both St. Blessed Mother Xenia of Petersburg, and St. Xenia the Righteous of

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Rome, are both commemorated in the Orthodox Church on January 24th.

What we do know in addition about St. Blessed Mother Xenia of Petersburg, was that she was born around 1730, and reposed in the Lord around the year 1800, and she was about seventy-one. Without a doubt St. Blessed Mother Xenia was given many great spiritual gifts of prayer and prophecy, and often foretold things to come: in 1796 she even foretold the death of Empress Catherine II of Russia. St. Xenia did spend time in a Convent after the repose of her beloved husband named: Andrei. Keep well in mind too that she was homeless, and was often seen kneeling on the ground at the main cemetery in Petersburg in prayer. After the repose of Mother Xenia, her grave sight became indeed a source of many prayers. In addition many men, women, as well as youth were converted to the Russian Orthodox faith by the prayers and intercessions of this holy woman and saint. During the times of communism in Russia no one could have access to the church which was built over the site of her burial, even a large fence was put around the church so the faithful could not have access. The faithful however would bring flowers to the fence, and write notes to the saint and many found answers to their prayers. When the communist told the faithful to stop bringing flowers to the popular grave site church of the ten foot high fence, the faithful then made paper flowers. Those who obtained soil from her grave near the fence and church have observed miracles in abundance. The main church has been restored and the fence is now down, and the church was blessed for all the faithful to now enter and to pray to St. Blessed Mother Xenia of St. Petersburg.

Until this day St. Blessed Mother Xenia is noted for her intercessions in helping those with employment, marriage, the homeless, for fires, for missing children, and for a spouse.

Now I would like to present to you the main hymn sung in the Orthodox Church to St. Blessed Xenia of

Petersburg, which is called in the Greek Orthodox Church as the Dismissal Hymn, and among the Russian Orthodox the Troparion, although both terms can be used. Keep in mind also that the Orthodox Church has a series of eight tones, and each tropar or dismissal which is indicated how to sing this prayer, and if your unable to sing the prayer then it could be humbly read.

Troparion or Dismissal Hymn

Plagal of the Fourth Tone

in Commemoration of St. Blessed Mother Xenia
Petersburg

Commemorated on January 24th

*In thee, O wandering stranger,
Christ the Lord hath given us an
ardent intercessor for our kind. For
having received in thy life
sufferings and grief and served God
and men with love, thou didst
acquire great boldness. Wherefore,
we fervently hasten to thee in
temptations and grief, crying out
from the depths of our hearts: Put
not our hope to shame, O Blessed
Xenia.*

Now I would like to humbly present to you the life of St. Blessed Mother Xenia of Petersburg that you can read to your beloved children, and you can as well as use the above indicated as a background:

Life Of Saint Xenia Of Petersburg

by Nun Nectaria McLees

Saint Xenia was a beautiful young Russian girl from the city of Saint Petersburg, who became a Fool-for-Christ, and this is how it happened.

When she was just old enough, Xenia married a dashing cavalry officer named Andrei, and they were very happy together. Because they were young, they

loved going to balls and dinners, but one night at a party Andrei suddenly fell over dead! This was terrible for Xenia, of course. Andrei had not even had time to go to Confession or receive Holy Communion before he died, and she was dreadfully worried about his soul. After Andrei was buried, Xenia left Saint Petersburg for a long time and some people she even went to a monastery. I don't know about that, but I do know that when she came back she gave away everything she had-her house, her money and her beautiful clothes. Instead of her own things, she wore Andrei's old army jacket and told everyone to call her by his name. She went all over the city doing good for people in his name, so that if his soul which was suffering from his sins that he hadn't repented of, her deeds and prayers would help him. Christians often give money or offer prayers for the souls of people who have died. This is called "almsgiving", but it is not so common to give up your whole life for another person, which is what Xenia did. The interesting thing about doing good deeds and offering prayers for other people is that soon you become very close to God yourself, and that's what happened to Xenia. She was praying so hard for her husband that she became holy!

Many people thought that she was a little crazy, especially when she gave all her money away. (Editors notes: Xenia relatives event took her to court, but the judge found of her of good sound mind as she continued to help the poor). But in the Orthodox Church we have a name for holy people that other people might think are crazy. We call them "Fools-for-Christ." They often aren't crazy, but just pretend to be so that they can hide their spiritual gifts. The Lord had given Xenia many spiritual gifts and she began to do odd things like walking barefoot in the snow and wearing unusual clothes so that people wouldn't think she was special. She sometimes knew what was going to happen before it happened, or if people had a problem and didn't know what God wanted them to do, she could tell them. Often just by looking at people, she knew if they were telling the truth or not.

Sometimes, when Christians do good things, they do them secretly so that only God sees. This is because the Lord said, "Let not your left hand know what your right hand is doing," and, "Do your good works in secret so that your father who sees you in secret can reward you openly." This is what this picture of Saint Xenia is about. Many years ago, when the people of Saint Petersburg were building a church in the Smolensk Cemetery, Saint Xenia used to go directly at night and carry the heavy bricks that were needed for the next day's building to the top of the church. When the workmen came every morning, they found the hardest part of their work already finished, and they often wondered who was doing such a kind thing. Finally, two of the workmen decided to spend the night in the cemetery. They waited and waited, and when it was dark, Saint Xenia appeared. All night long they watched her climb up and down, up and down the walls of the half-finished church with her bricks.

The church that Saint Xenia helped to build is still in the Smolensk Cemetery, and there is a tiny chapel nearby where she is buried. Pilgrims from all over Russia still come there to pray and to help. During the terribly difficult years in Russia, when the churches were closed because the Communists didn't want people to worship God, pilgrims came secretly to Saint Xenia's. The door to the chapel was locked, and because they couldn't get in, they wrote their prayers to her on little scraps of paper and slipped them into the cracks in the walls. The Communist didn't like this one bit, but they soon found out that it was impossible to stop Christians from loving the Saints, or to stop the Saints from helping them!

God has healed many people of illnesses and passions through Saint Xenia's prayers. She also helps find homes and jobs. St. Xenia didn't have a home herself, and she knows how hard it is for people who need one. In the church service for her feast we call her a "homeless wanderer," because she gave up her earthly home for heaven.

Source: *A Child's Paradise Of Saints*, by Nun Nectaria

McLees, Christ the Saviour Brotherhood, Indianapolis, Indiana, 2000, pp.59-61.

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Blessed Xenia by Kathleen Patitsas

Introduction by Archimandrite Nektarios Serfes:
The following "*Blessed Xenia*" Orthodox ballad is from a cassette called "Out Of The Land Of Russia", and is being presented, and sung by Katina Patitsas, which can be obtained on from: Katina Productions, Box 427 Huntington, PA. 16652. For more information about this cassette and others access too: <http://www.katinamusic.com> The following is being presented with permission from Katina Patitsas.

O Xenia, O Xenia
Blessed fool for Christ's sake,
Wandering streets of Petersburg.
"Call me Andrew, that's my name."

A young widow was her lot,
Grieving for her husband's soul.
Without repentance came his death;
"I shall wear my husband's clothes."

O Xenia, O Xenia,
Selling all possessions,
So began her wandering.

Free was she from earthly things.

Gone was she from Petersburg
Seeking to prepare herself.
The holy elders taught her well
For the labor that she undertook.

O Xenia, O Xenia,
Foolishness for Christ's sake;
A homeless life of wandering,
Hunger, cold and nakedness.

Foolishness, what foolishness
Did the Blessed one embrace.
Before her was the image of Christ:
Indeed, a stranger to this world.

O Xenia, O Xenia,
Christian virtue filled her soul.
Soon the gift of prophecy
Did this Blessed one receive.

"Make pancakes! Make pancakes!
All of Russia soon will make."
The Empress died the very next day;
Pancakes served in her memory.

O Xenia, O Xenia,
Thou didst know the love of Christ.
Teach us in thy wisdom
Blessed fool for Christ's sake,
Blessed fool for Christ's sake.

Holy St. Blessed Mother Xenia,
Pray To God For Us!

Glory Be To God For All Things!