



## *St. Xenia of Petersburg*

January 24

Xenia Grigorievna Petrova was the wife of an army officer. She became a widow at the age of twenty-six when her husband suddenly died at a social event. She grieved for the loss, especially because he died without Confession or Holy Communion.

Once her earthly happiness ended, she did not look for it again. From that time forward, Xenia lost interest in the things of this world, and followed the difficult path of foolishness for the sake of Christ.

She began to wear her husband's clothing, and insisted that she be addressed as "Andrew Feodorovich." She told people that it was she, and not her husband, who had died. She abandoned her former way of life and experienced a spiritual rebirth. When she gave away her house and possessions to the poor, her relatives complained to the authorities. After speaking to Xenia, the officials were convinced that she was in her right mind and was entitled to dispose of her property as she saw fit. Soon she had nothing left, so she wandered through the poor sections of the city. She refused all assistance from her relatives, and was happy to be free of worldly attachments.

When she did accept money from people, it was only small amounts, which she used to help the poor. She spent her nights praying without sleep in a field outside the city. Prayer strengthened her, and in her heart's conversation with the Lord, she found the support she needed on her difficult path.

Soon her great virtue and spiritual gifts began to be noticed. She prophesied future events affecting the citizens of Petersburg. She became known as someone pleasing to God, and everyone loved her. They said, "Xenia does not belong to this world, she belongs to God." People regarded her visits to their homes as a great blessing. St. Xenia loved children, and mothers rejoiced when she would stand and pray over a baby's crib or kiss a child. They believed that her kiss would bring that child good fortune.

St. Xenia lived about forty-five years after the death of her husband, and departed to the Lord at the age of seventy-one. The exact date and circumstances of her death are not known. People flocked to her grave to pray for her soul, and to ask her to intercede with God for them. So many visitors took earth from her grave that it had to be replaced every year. Later, a chapel was built over her grave. Those who turn to St. Xenia in prayer receive healing from illness, and deliverance from their afflictions.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [www.antiochian.org](http://www.antiochian.org)