The glorification of Blessed Xenia, an ascetic who lived in St. Petersburg in the eighteenth century, was held in New York City on 23 and 24 September 1978 (10 and 11 September on the Julian calendar). Her struggle for many years as a fool for Christ, and her help to many in their needs and sorrows, earned her a deep respect among the residents of St. Petersburg during her lifetime, and her veneration grew after her death. For two hundred years, the veneration of Blessed Xenia continued in Russia, and after the revolution of 1917 this veneration was carried throughout the Russian diaspora. Abundant material on her life and miracles has been collected and published.2 Approached by the faithful who believed in the holiness of Blessed Xenia, the Synod of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad considered her proposed glorification. They resolved that the solemnity of Glorification should be held in September, 1978, in the Synodal Cathedral of Our Lady of the Sign, in the city of New York.

The Glorification of Blessed Xenia raised these questions: whom does the Orthodox Church number among the saints; what is the process preceding the glorification of a saint; and how is a saint glorified? The Roman Catholic Church uses the term “beatification” for permitting the veneration of a saint, and “canonization” for the solemn proclamation by the pope, decreeing the fullness of public honors to the saint. The Orthodox Church uses the term “glorification,” in Slavic and Russian proslavlenie, which means “making the..."
glory of God known.” The expression “prichtenie k liku sviatykh”—“to number among the choir of the saints”—is also used.

The Christian Church numbers among the saints: 1) the Old Testament patriarchs, prophets and martyrs, St. John the Forerunner and the New Testament apostles and disciples. They are saints glorified by God and their memory is celebrated by the Church in its liturgical calendar; 2) the martyrs of the early Christian Church and all the martyrs for Christ who have died in persecutions throughout the centuries; and 3) the hierarchs, the Christian dwellers of the desert, the ascetics and monastics, and men and women in all walks of life, who lived a life of holiness. As the martyrs (in Greek martyros—witness) have witnessed for their faith in Christ by their suffering and death, there was no need for a special act of the Church in establishing their veneration. Their memory was kept by the Christian communities, who celebrated the days of their martyrdom or the translation of the martyrs’ relics to the place of their repose.

St. Ignatius the Theophorus, Bishop of Antioch, who died in 107, wrote of his coming martyrdom in his moving epistle to the Romans:

This favor only I beg of you: suffer me to be a libation poured out to God, while there is still an altar ready for me. Then you may form a loving choir around it and sing hymns of praise in Jesus Christ to the Father, for permitting Syria’s bishop, summoned from the realms of the morning, to have reached the land of the setting sun. How good it is to be sinking down below the world’s horizon toward God, to rise again later into the dawn of His presence.3

In the account of the martyrdom of St. Ignatius, the believers in Rome took his remains from the Roman arena and placed them with honor in a place out of the city on 20 December 107, and “glorified the holy man and noted the day of his martyrdom, to have communion with the ascetic and courageous martyr of Christ.”4

A friend of Ignatius, Bishop Polycarp of Smyrna, was martyred in 155 at the age of eighty-six. A letter, describing his last days, was soon written from the church at Smyrna to the one in Philomelium, with the thought that it could be sent to other Christian communities. This letter, which is now ac-

4. Zhitiia sviatykh na russkom izyke, for the month of December, ed. Bishop Par-fenii of Mozhaisk (Moscow: Sinodal’naia tip., 1903), pp. 548-61. This twelve-volume edition of the Lives of the Saints was compiled by a group of thirty scholars, with Bishop Parfenii as editor and V. V. Kliuchevskii as advisor. It was reprinted by Archimandrite Panteleimon in 1968-69 at HTM.