

VENERABLE THEODORA OF ALEXANDRIA

St. Theodora and her husband lived in Alexandria, in love and harmony. A rich man was captivated by the youthful beauty of Theodora and tried to lead her into adultery. She resisted for a long time, until he bribed a woman of loose morals to lead her astray by saying a sin unseen by the sun is unseen by God. Theodora betrayed her husband. Realizing her sin, she was furious with herself and repented. She left home dressed as a man, hoping to purify herself by prayer and labor at a monastery.

Testing the newcomer, the igumen of the monastery would not bless her to enter. She spent the night at the gates and fell at the knees of the igumen in the morning, saying she was Theodore from Alexandria, and she entreated him to let her remain at the monastery for repentance and monastic labors. Even the experienced monks were amazed at Theodora's all-night prayers on bended knee, her humility, endurance, and self-denial. She labored at the monastery for 8 years,

She was sent to Alexandria to buy provisions and stayed over at the Enata monastery. The daughter of that monastery's igumen was staying in the guest house. She was attracted to the comeliness of the young monk and tried to seduce Theodore, not knowing it was a woman. Rebuked, she instead slept with another guest and became pregnant. Meanwhile, Theodora bought food and returned to her monastery.

The father soon realized the shame of his daughter, and she told him Theodora was the father of her child. The igumen reported this to the igumen at Theodora's monastery. Theodora said, "As God is my witness, I did not do this." The igumen, knowing of Theodore's purity and holiness of life, did not believe the accusation. Still, when the baby was born, the Enata monks brought the infant to Theodora's monastery, and this time the igumen believed the lie; Theodora and the baby were thrown out of the monastery in disgrace.

The saint humbly submitted to her banishment for 7 years. Finally, at the request of the monks, the igumen allowed her to return with the child, and Theodora spent 2 years in seclusion, instructing the boy. The igumen received a revelation from God that Theodore was forgiven, and soon all the monks began to witness to the signs worked through the prayers of the saint.

Before her death, St. Theodora shut herself in her cell with the boy and instructed him to love God above all things, to obey the brethren, to be meek and without malice, and to pray. After this, she prayed and peacefully departed this life. The Lord revealed to the igumen her secret, and with tears they fell down before her body, asking forgiveness.

The news reached her husband, and he was tonsured a monastic at that same monastery. The child, raised by the nun, followed in the footsteps of his foster mother and later became igumen of that very place.

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HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH
6822 BROADVIEW ROAD
PARMA, OHIO 44134

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6822 BROADVIEW ROAD, PARMA, OHIO 44134
CHURCH OFFICE PHONE: 216-524-4859
CHURCH WEBSITE: <http://www.holy-trin.org>
Divine Liturgy at 9:00 A.M.
REVEREND CHRISTOPHER MOORE, PASTOR
Phone: 440-447-7704

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BULLETIN 45 - VOLUME LIX

TONE 4

SEPTEMBER 11, 2022

THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Sunday before the Exaltation of the Cross

Afterfeast of the Nativity of the Most Holy Theotokos

Ven. Theodora of Alexandria; Martyrs Demetrius, his wife Euanthia, and their son Demetrian, at Skepsis;

Martyrs Diodorus, Didymus, and Diomedes of Laodicea;

Martyr Ia and 9,000 Martyrs with her, of Persia; St. Euphrosynus the Cook, of Alexandria;

Translation of the Relics of Ven. Sergius and Herman, Wonderworkers of Valaam;

The weeping "KAPLUNOVSKAYA" Kazan' Icon of the Most Holy Theotokos

"You offered your life as a holy gift, O righteous Theodora, for resplendent with the light of repentance, you illumined mankind. Now pray to Christ who has magnified you to grant us His great mercy!"

Troparion, Tone IV

THE UNIVERSAL EXALTATION OF THE PRECIOUS AND LIFE-GIVING CROSS

Wednesday, September 14

"As You were voluntarily raised upon the cross for our sake, grant mercy to those who are called by Your Name, O Christ God: make all Orthodox Christians glad by Your power, granting them victories over their adversaries, by bestowing on them the invincible trophy, Your weapon of Peace."

Kontakion, Tone IV

TODAY'S EPISTLE: GALATIANS 6:11-18
I CORINTHIANS 16:13-24

TODAY'S GOSPEL: JOHN 3:13-17
MATTHEW 21:33-42

HOLY WORSHIP THIS WEEK:

Tuesday, September 13 6:00 p.m. Vigil
Wednesday, September 14 9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy - **The Exaltation of the Cross**
Saturday, September 17 5:00 p.m. Great Vespers

WELCOME VISITORS!

We are very glad you have come to worship the Holy Trinity with us this morning! Please participate in the services at your comfort level. Our greeters will kindly assist you with whatever questions or needs you may have. The communion of Christ's Body and Blood is reserved for practicing Orthodox Christians. All are invited to come forward at the end of the service to receive the blessed bread. Please stay after the Divine Liturgy for coffee hour in the Fellowship Hall so we can get to know you better!

Daily Scripture Readings

Monday, September 12 (Theotokos)	II Corinthians 12:10-19 Philippians 2:5-11	Mark 4:10-23 Luke 10:38-42; 11:27-28
Tuesday, September 13 (Church at Jerusalem)	II Corinthians 12:20-13:2 Hebrews 3:1-4	Mark 4:24-34 Matthew 16:13-18
Wednesday, September 14	I Corinthians 1:18-24	John 19:6-11,13-20,25-28,30-35
Thursday, September 15	II Corinthians 13:3-14 Galatians 1:1-10,20-2:5	Mark 4:35-41 Mark 5:1-20
Friday, September 16	Galatians 2:6-10	Mark 5:22-24,35-6:1
Saturday, September 17	I Corinthians 1:26-29 I Corinthians 4:1-5	John 8:21-30 Matthew 23:1-12

SEPTEMBER:

11, TODAY Food Sale
26, Monday Cooking for St. Herman's House
28, Wednesday Delivering dinner to St. Herman's House

OCTOBER:

9, Sunday Meatloaf Luncheon to benefit St. Herman's House
13, Thursday 6:00 p.m. EOWG 60th Anniversary Banquet

FOOD SALE TODAY:

After the Liturgy today there is a Food Sale in the Fellowship Hall. Please stay and shop for some favorite take-home items!

EXALTATION OF THE CROSS:

This week we celebrate the Exaltation of the Cross, one of the 12 Great Feasts of the Church year. We will offer Vigil at 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, September 13 and Divine Liturgy at 9:00 a.m. on Wednesday, September 14. Blessed feast to all!

CHURCH SCHOOL:

We are preparing our classrooms for the beginning of Church School on October 2. We need hands to clear rooms, clean and generally make the classrooms ready. Paula Svilar has volunteered to take on the blessed task of Church School Coordinator. Questions may be directed to her. Contact Paula at paulasvilar@gmail.com ; or phone 216-372-1862.

Details are available in the Fellowship Hall. We will celebrate Opening Day with an Ice Cream Social! Please register your children by September 18.

MEMORIAL PRAYERS:

There will be a 40th Day Memorial Prayer Service for Mary Ann Moga next Sunday, September 18, following the refreshments, which will be offered by the Moga Family.

FLOWERS:

The flower sign-up sheet will be in the Fellowship Hall. Flowers are \$15, and payment should be made to Mary Ann Schmidt or Nancy Scardon.

ST. HERMAN'S MEATLOAF LUNCHEON:

Our Meatloaf Luncheon and Basket Raffle to benefit St. Herman's House will be on October 9. Tickets are \$15 for ages 12 and older; there is no charge for those ages 11 and younger. Ticket sales will begin on September 18.

The Basket Raffle is a crowd-pleaser and another way to fundraise for our monthly meals served at St. Herman's House. We are seeking completed baskets, bits & pieces of new items that can make up a bundle and/or restaurant and grocery store gift cards to complete baskets. Contact Dianna Kall at 216-741-2888 with questions or donations.

EASTERN ORTHODOX WOMEN'S GUILD:

The EOWG is holding their annual membership drive. Please consider joining. If you have any questions about the organization, see Joanne Stoyka. Joanne also has membership forms.

FR. PRISLOPSKY DINNER LECTURE:

The 12th Annual Fr. Prislopsky Dinner Lecture will be Thursday, Sept. 22, 6:30 p.m., at St. Michael Church. The lecture will cover Anthon Chekhov's short story "The Bishop." Details are posted in the Fellowship Hall.

ST. LUKE ANTIOCHIAN CHURCH:

The parish of St. Luke Antiochian Orthodox Church invites all to their 20th Anniversary celebration on Sunday, Sept. 25, 5:00 p.m. Details are in the Hall.

COFFEE HOUR:

Our refreshments today are hosted by Judy Howe and Pauline Smolarchuk.

ENTHRONEMENT OF BISHOP DANIEL

His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon has set the date for the enthronement of His Grace Bishop Daniel of Bishop of Chicago and the Midwest for Saturday, October 1, 2022, the Feast of the Protection of the Theotokos.

Everyone is invited! All diocesan clergy are encouraged to attend, and parishes are welcome to send at least one lay representative as well. The Enthronement has been scheduled for a Saturday so that priests who are traveling can return to their parishes for Sunday's Divine Liturgy. Given the importance of the Enthronement of a new bishop in the life of our diocese, His Grace has blessed parishes to cancel Vespers / Vigil services on Saturday evening or to provide for a reader service.

INTRODUCING YOUR NEW PRIEST - PART IV

BECOMING ORTHODOX & CONTINUED MISSION

Our journey in missions has been a series of baby steps with the Lord. The Lord would open a door, and we would take one small step of faith at a time, and would find Him leading us to many places. Often times we can get focused on trying to figure out what specific will God has for us. “God, I have these 2 options ahead of me and I know You have the right one You want me to follow. So just show me!” However, when faced with options, as long as they do not put us on a path of sin, I believe that God gives us freedom to choose and follow Him in the choice. I think the Lord often would say to us: “I will bless either option. Remain faithful to Me.”

After Jen’s Peace Corps service in Ukraine, we got married (naturally, we played saxophone duets at our reception!) and then promptly were sent as missionaries by our church to teach English and music at Ukrainian Evangelical Theological Seminary outside of Kyiv. A lovely year seeing Ukrainians filled with passion to follow Christ and proclaim Him to their fellow countrymen.

Even before that year in Ukraine, I began developing an interest in Orthodoxy which just wouldn’t go away! I was drawn to the historic connection to the early church, the beauty of the liturgical services and the way they engaged not just my mind but all my senses, and the monastic tradition and ascetic practices of the church. And after several years since my first curiosities about Orthodoxy, we found ourselves attending then becoming members of St. John the Forerunner Orthodox Church in Indianapolis.

The call to missions certainly was still inside us, and we found ourselves traveling to Albania for 2 weeks with OCMC in 2011, then later that year, with some trepidation, applying to become full-time missionaries. Our dear Andrew was born in 2013; and when he was just 10 months old, we whisked him away to Mongolia where we began serving alongside Holy Trinity Orthodox Church in Ulaan Baatar, the only Orthodox parish in the whole country. During our short stay in Mongolia, we began having weekly meetings at our apartment with Mongolian Orthodox faithful for prayer, meals, and fun. We loved opening up our house and spending time with the Mongolians.

After almost a year in Mongolia, the Lord quickly opened a door for us to study at St. Vladimir’s Seminary, where Gideon, our second son, was born. We came with the expectation to be further trained and equipped as missionaries and the hope of being deployed back to Mongolia. We left full of blessings: a group of close friends with whom we had spent 3 years of life in a tight-knit Orthodox community, receiving pastoral and theological education and ordination to the priesthood, and a growing sense that God was leading us now not to Mongolia but to South Korea!

The Orthodox Church in South Korea has a great need for more native leaders and to raise up men to become ordained. This need was a big reason we arrived at St. Dionysios Orthodox Church, in Ulsan City where the Korean priest had passed away and no Koreans were in a position to be ordained and take his place. Korea turned out to be our family’s longest missionary endeavor, serving in the country and our parish for over 3 years. And we thank God that our little John was born in the middle of that time. COVID-19 hit hard a year after our arrival and brought huge restrictions to our ability to meet people, build relationships, and develop parish ministry. It was a saddening and frustrating season; but God is faithful. And He gives us strength to endure trials and makes us stronger through those trials. We thank God for the relationships we did build with our Korean brothers and sisters, and we thank God that we could be present for the local parish through the most challenging years of the pandemic.

Do you ever find yourself wondering why God allows certain challenges in your life? Do you ever wonder why He seems to put one path before us then promptly changes it to another? Our experiences in missions in different ways over the past 15+ years have at times led us to ask these and other questions about meaning. However, God uses these trials, these unexpected turns, for us to say “yes” to Him and to learn how to follow Him. He also works through us in other people’s lives when we seek to be faithful amid the changes of life and unfamiliar surroundings. It’s often not till later or perhaps even after our death that we find out how God used the “momentary affliction” to bring about “an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison” (II Cor. 4:17). We never know what kind of doors the Lord might be opening up for us to choose to follow Him in. And with small steps of faith, He will guide us to an eternal home with Him.

Fr. Christopher Moore