

**The Holy Empress Theodora** was the wife of the Byzantine emperor Theophilus the Iconoclast (829-842), but she did not share in the heresy of her husband and secretly venerated the holy icons. After the death of her husband, Saint Theodora governed the realm because her son Michael was a minor. She convened a Council, at which the Iconoclasts were anathematized, and the veneration of icons was reinstated. Saint Theodora established the annual celebration of this event, the **Triumph of Orthodoxy**, on the first Sunday of the Great Fast. Saint Theodora did much for Holy Church and fostered a firm devotion to Orthodoxy in her son Michael. When Michael came of age, she was retired from governing and spent eight years in the monastery of Saint Euphrosynē, where she devoted herself to ascetic struggles, and reading books that nourished her soul. A copy of the Gospels, copied in her own hand, is known to exist. She died peacefully around the year 867. In 1460, her relics were given by the Turks to the people of Kerkyra (Corfu).

**Fr. Paul Lazor wrote that** “the Christian faith is celebrated in the liturgy of the Church. True celebration is always a living participation. It is not a mere attendance at services. It is communion in the power of the event being celebrated. It is God’s free gift of joy given to spiritual men as a reward for their self-denial. It is the fulfillment of spiritual and physical effort and preparation. The resurrection of Christ, being the center of the Christian faith, is the basis of the Church’s liturgical life and the true model for all celebration.” *This is the chosen and holy day, first of sabbaths, queen and lady; the feast of feasts, holy day of holy days. On this day we bless Christ forevermore.* —Paschal Hymn

**Please register to attend** the workshop  
*Death and Dying: Being Prepared* on Saturday, March 2.  
You can register using this QR Code.



# ST. SERAPHIM CATHEDRAL

## PROTECTION OF THE HOLY VIRGIN ORTHODOX CHURCH



**February 11, 2024**

**Empress Theodora, Restorer of the Holy Icons**



- TROPARION OF THE RESURRECTION, Tone Three:  
Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad; for the Lord has shown strength with His arm; He has trampled down death by death; He has become the first-born of the dead. He has delivered us from the depths of hell, and has granted the world great mercy.
- TROPARION OF ST. THEODORA, Tone Five, Model Melody:  
As a right worthy name sake of gifts bestowed by God, and a divinely wrought image of holy wisdom and faith, thou didst make the Church to shine with godly piety; for thou didst demonstrate to all that the Saints in every age have shown honor to the icons, O Theodora, thou righteous and fair adornment of the Orthodox.
- KONTAKION OF THE RESURRECTION, Tone Three:  
On this day Thou didst rise from the tomb, O Merciful One, leading us from the gates of death. On this day Adam exults as Eve rejoices; with the Prophets and Patriarchs they unceasingly praise the divine majesty of Thy power.

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## ACTIVITIES & EVENTS THIS WEEK

- Saturday, February 10: 11:30 AM, Sisterhood Meeting  
5 PM, Vespers and Confessions
- Sunday, Feb. 11: 10 AM, Divine Liturgy  
Noon, Agape Meal  
12:30 PM, Spiritual Lesson in the Protection Church
- Wednesday, Feb. 14: 5:30 PM, Akathist to Matushka Olga  
6 PM, Vespers
- Thursday, Feb. 15: 9 AM, Divine Liturgy (Protection Church)  
6 PM, St. Seraphim Men's Fellowship Dinner (byob), Parish Hall  
7 PM, Bible Study with Fr. James
- Friday, Feb. 16: 11:30 AM–1 PM, Confessions

**Congratulations** to our newly elected Parish Council Members: Timothy Danford (who begins a second two-year term), Miranda Limonczenko, Daniel DeCarlo, James Greene, Andrew Mikrikov, Kristina Daya. The *Oath of Office* will take place on Sunday, February 18 at the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy. *The next Parish Council Meeting is on Wed., Feb. 21 at 6:30 PM.*

**House blessings continue.** If you would like your home blessed, please contact me. I will be blessing houses up until the beginning of Great Lent. Call the parish office or send me an email. —*Fr. Lawrence*

**The Saint Seraphim** Men's Fellowship will gather for dinner in the Parish Hall this coming Thursday at 6 PM. Bring your own beverage. Please let Daniel DeCarlo, at (716) 861-4046, know that you plan to attend.

**Catechism begins** on Saturday, February 24 at 3:30 PM in the Parish Hall. This second semester we will study the Sacraments of the Church.

**Your annual** offering receipts are in the Narthex, in a box, alphabetically sorted.

**Prayer is not merely** the recitation of words. Prayer may begin by reading or saying the words of prayers. But a mere reading or saying of words, without feeling or attention, is not prayer. It is not even poor prayer. It is not prayer at all. Prayer is learned only by praying...But a good way to begin to

pray is to use the prayers of the prayer book. This is so because, since “we do not know how to pray,” the Holy Spirit reveals in the prayers of [the Son and] the saints the proper form and content of prayer. In the prayers of the books—especially the **Lord's Prayer**—we not only pray truly by putting ourselves into the words of the prayers, but we also learn for what we must pray. The catechism classifies prayer in three types: **asking** [for ourselves in *petition* and for others in *intercession*], **thanking**, and **praising**. A fourth category can [also] be added: the prayer of **questioning** or complaining to God. To learn to come to God in every situation, and with each of the four categories operating all the time, is a very important achievement: the achievement of a prayerful life. —*Fr. Thomas Hopko*

**When does Great Lent begin?** Each week, beginning with this Sunday, we hear Gospel selections that are prepare us for Great Lent. This Sunday we read the Gospel about the Canaanite Woman who begs that her daughter may be healed. The following weeks:

- Feb. 18—Zacchaeus Sunday
- Feb. 25— Tax Collector and the Pharisee (and we begin to sing hymns from the *Lenten Triodion*)
- March 3—Prodigal Son (for the next three weeks we sing Psalm 136, *By the Waters of Babylon*)
- March 10—Meatfare/Last Judgment Sunday
- March 18—Cheesefare/Forgiveness Sunday with the Vespers of Forgiveness at 1 PM, during which we enter into Great Lent.



### SAVE THE DATE! Teen Event

- \* **Who:** .....St. Seraphim teens who are current 8th–12th graders
- \* **What:** .....Northern CA Bay Area OCA teen gathering
- \* **Where:** .....San Francisco, Holy Trinity Cathedral
- \* **When:** .....Sunday, February 25, 2024 at 2 PM. Carpools will depart St. Seraphim around 12:45)
- \* **Why:** .....Fun and fellowship with fellow teen parishioners—activity to be determined soon. Please contact Vicky Basch with any questions and to let us know if your teen plans to attend. Parents of teens are also welcomed to attend (it's a nice fellowship time for parents too). Vicky: 707-291-2369