



St. Theodora of Vastas

September 11th

St Theodora lived during the tenth century on the Peloponnesus in Greece, near the border between the regions of Messenia and Arcadia in a town called Vasta. When the area was raided by bandits, Theodora was determined to help defend her village, but as a woman it was unthinkable to do so. Not to be deterred, Theodora secretly disguised herself as a male soldier in order to join the defense. Unfortunately, Theodora did not survive, and as she lay dying she uttered the following words:

"Let my body become a church, my hair a forest of trees, and my blood a spring to water them."

The villagers, moved by her bravery and her untimely demise, built a church at the site of her grave. A local river re-routed to pass directly under the church. Eventually, trees sprouted from the roof of the church, the roots of which are not visible under the roof and neither inside or outside the church. Her story is often mistakenly combined with that of St Theodora of Alexandria, who cut her hair, dressed in men's clothing and entered the Monastery of Octodecatos, under the male name of Theodore. A promiscuous young woman slandered her, saying that Theodore had made her pregnant.