



# ST. NICHOLAS NEWS

## February 2025

### St. Nicholas Orthodox Church

102 Ross Avenue  
San Anselmo, CA  
94960

(415) 454-0982

[www.stnicholasmarin.org](http://www.stnicholasmarin.org)

*Orthodox Church in America  
Diocese of the West*

Fr. Stephan Meholick,  
Pastor

Protodeacon George Golitzin

---

### IMPORTANT DATES

---

~February~

#### 1 - Festal Vigil

& Blessing of Candles

#### 2 - Meeting of the Lord

*Annual Parish Meeting*

#### 14 - St. Valentine's Day Dance

*(w/board games for non-dancers)*

~March~

#### 2 - Forgiveness Sunday

*Bliny Luncheon*

**Forgiveness  
Vespers 6pm**

#### 3 -7- PURE WEEK

*All-parish week of retreat,  
prayer, fasting & worship*

---

### FEBRUARY - A TIME FOR TRANSITION

At the beginning of this month, we celebrate the Great Feast of the Meeting of the Lord, which itself brings to a conclusion a long, bright, deep winter festal period stretching from before Christmas to the leave-taking of the Meeting (Feb.9). Things shift through the middle of the month as we prepare for Great Lent, which begins on Monday, March 3. Each of these weeks offer profound reflections on important spiritual themes as well as changes in diet in anticipation of Lenten fasting.

Fasting is, together with good works and prayer, a key discipline of Orthodox Christianity. It is a common and popular idea that, on a practical level, Lent is all about making some sacrifices and giving things up. It is about abstaining from this or that food, giving up select treats and comforts, cutting back on entertainment, avoiding social events and so on.

But while this is actually what happens in some measure for those who try to observe the Fast, the hymns and prayers and readings for each day of the Fast emphasize that our Lenten discipline and effort is a path to, and anticipation of, our return to Paradise. The Sunday before we enter Lent sets before us the sad, tragic reality of our Fall from Paradise and calls us to take up those things which are signs and anticipations of Paradise restored.

In this respect, to give up animal products is not meant to be so much a sacrifice on our part as an anticipation of Paradise. Paradise is the Kingdom of God, God's good creation restored and renewed. In Paradise we don't slaughter and butcher. The vegan diet recommended to us by the Church for this Lenten season is something positive, an opportunity to participate in the reversal of one of the consequences of the Fall.

It is certainly true that our ethnic and cultural commitments can be bound up with eating animal products, especially on festal occasions. Nonetheless I think it a wonderful thing that our Orthodox theological vision invites us to stretch our imagination, to try on something different, to enrich our experience, by adopting a vegan or vegetarian diet for a liturgical season. Such a diet is meant to be a foretaste (pardon the pun) of the Kingdom, of Paradise. Our thinking about abstaining from animal products should not be 'oh my gosh, I have to give something up!' but 'thank goodness I have this window of opportunity to do this thing'.

- Adapted from an article by Fr. Andrew Morbey