



**St. Nicholas  
Orthodox Church**

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Diocese of the West

Orthodox Church  
in America

Fr. Stephan Meholick, Pastor

Protodeacon George Golitzin



**IMPORTANT  
DATES**

October 1

**Protection of the  
Mother of God (Pokrov)**

in Santa Rosa

October 18

**Square Dance**

October 28

**Candle Making**

November 16

**Parish Tree Planting Day**

Dec. 5 - 6

**St. Nicholas Day**

Our Patronal Feast

*With a visit from "St. Nicholas"*

**Please mark  
your calendars now.**

# ST. NICHOLAS NEWS

## October 2024

### **I Believe in One , Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church....**

What comes to mind when you see the word Church with a capital "C"? Most of us probably think of a number of entities such as St. Nicholas community, the Diocese of the West, the OCA, global Orthodoxy, Christianity in a more general sense, or perhaps a even a particular foreign ethnicity like Romanian or Greek. In spite of all these possibilities, we usually most directly encounter the Church in the context of "parish."

So what do we really mean when we say the Church is "Catholic?" One of the definitions of catholicity implies the capability of embracing everyone. To paraphrase Fr. Alexander Schmemmann: *Parishes, however, are conditioned by their environment, and therefore are naturally limited in their catholicity. Parishes can be classified as predominately ethnic, convert, "middle-class," missionary, urban, suburban, or rural and although ideally none of these qualifications ought to simply determine its life, none of them can be ignored. Therefore, it is from the diocese that a parish receives its catholicity, i.e. the constant challenge to transcend itself as a self-centered and self-sufficient community, to identify itself not only with its own people and their "religious needs," but with the Church and her eternal needs. The parish can achieve this only together with other similar communities which all together transcend their natural limitations.*

Why am I mentioning all this now? The Diocese will be having its annual assembly in Portland this month and it reminds me of the importance of having a bigger picture of the Church. One of the ways that helps me transcend an exclusively parochial mindset is the internet. Take a look at [dowoca.org](http://dowoca.org) and browse through the reports for this year's assembly. It'll give you an interesting perspective on the goals, successes, and struggles of our sister parishes. The reports always remind me that we are not alone in our challenges or the ways in which we can meet them. The central administration's website, [OCA.org](http://OCA.org), is always a good resource for news, meditations, lives of saints, official documents, music, educational material, Q & A, and last but certainly not least, a convenient way to follow the daily lectionary of the Holy Scriptures. Over the years I've made it a habit to not look at anything else on the computer before reading the Epistle and Gospel of the day.

Finally, it's important for everyone to personally visit our local parishes, to become acquainted with as many of our brothers and sisters as possible. Perhaps, a good start is to attend services on their altar feasts, and to personally invite them to ours for St. Nicholas Day on December 5-6.

- Fr. Stephan