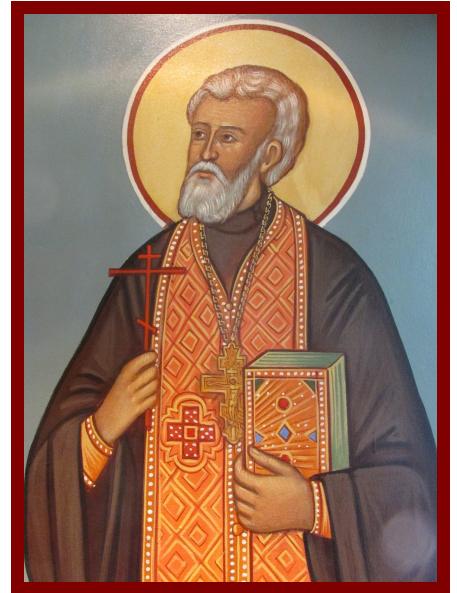


## **HIEROMARTYR ALEXANDER HOTOVITSKY**

(1872-1937)

*Feast Day: December 4<sup>th</sup>*

The future saint and martyr for his Faith was born in 1872 in the city of Kremenetz in the Volhynia area of western Ukraine, the son of a priest, who was the Dean of the Volhynia Seminary. After graduating from seminary, he continued his studies at the St. Petersburg Academy, from which he graduated in 1895. He was then sent as a missionary to America and assigned as Reader at the St. Nicholas Church in New York City. Soon he married and was ordained to the priesthood in 1896 by Bishop Nicholas, and was assigned as the pastor of St. Nicholas Church/Cathedral, where he served for eighteen years. Father Alexander worked in close collaboration with Bishop Tikhon when he was Bishop of North America from 1898 until 1907. The future Patriarch, Tikhon, admired his young priest's sincere piety, pastoral love and deep theological erudition.



*St. Alexander Hotovitsky, east wall of vestry,  
St. Innocent Orthodox Church, Redford, MI*

St. Alexander's labors for Orthodoxy in America are multi-faceted. He labored hard, with much success, to bring back to their Orthodox heritage many of the Uniates who had been immigrating to America from Galicia and Carpatho-Rus'. He established many new parishes—in Yonkers, Passaic and Philadelphia—and throughout North America. He was the editor of the influential educational periodical, the *American Orthodox Messenger*, published in English and Russian. He was actively involved with the running of the Mutual Aid Society, which provided vital help to Orthodox immigrants.



*St. Nicholas Russian Cathedral, NYC; built in 1903*

Fr. Alexander is especially remembered for being responsible for the construction of the architectural marvel, St. Nicholas Cathedral in NYC, (which celebrated its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary in the Fall of 2003). In 1903 Bishop Tikhon transferred the center of the Russian Orthodox Diocese of America from San Francisco to New York, making St. Nicholas the Diocesan Cathedral. At the tenth anniversary of Fr. Alexander's ordination, Archbishop Tikhon expressed his praise for the future saint's character and priestly devotion to the service of Christ's Holy Church. Finally, in 1914, the New-Martyr Alexander was transferred, concluding his 18½ years of sacrificial and dedicated pastoral service to Orthodoxy in America. In his farewell address, he expressed feelings of profound love and gratitude towards his spiritual mother, the American Orthodox Church, as an ever-grateful son.

After three years serving at the Cathedral in Helsinki, Finland, as the assistant to Archbishop Sergius, (the future Patriarch), the Passion-bearer Alexander was transferred to Christ the Savior Cathedral in Moscow. Once again he was to collaborate with Saint Tikhon, the Metropolitan of Moscow, who became Patriarch of All Russia a few months later at the Church Council of 1917-18, which was in session during the Communist Revolution. Both saints believed that the fate of Russia was at stake and the Church should struggle to save the nation from the Communists. Christ the Savior Cathedral became the center of anti-Communist resistance, and Fr. Alexander helped to establish a Cathedral Brotherhood which led the Church's resistance. He drafted a document that appealed to the faithful not to surrender their churches and their holy things to the godless, but to rise up and protect their holy things. In 1920 and 1921 Fr. Alexander was briefly arrested—for having a church school. In 1922 Patriarch Tikhon forbade his clergy to cooperate with the now wide-scale confiscation by the State of the Church's sacred vessels, for which he was arrested. The persecution of the Church and its clergy radically intensified. The Hieromartyr Alexander supported his Patriarch unwaveringly, and drafted a resolution protesting the confiscation of the Church's holy things. He was arrested again, for "criminal counter-revolutionary activity." Following a high-profile court case, he was sentenced to ten years. Patriarch Tikhon was released from prison, and issued some statements regarding loyalty to the government, after which Fr. Alexander and many other imprisoned church leaders were released. But a year later, in September 1924, the Passion-bearer was arrested again and sent into exile in the far north for three years, which greatly weakened his failing health. During this time St. Tikhon died as a martyr-confessor. After Fr. Alexander was released, he became a close assistant to the new Patriarch, Sergius, with whom he had served in Finland. One of the parishioners at the church where he served during his final years commented that she saw the same light shining in Father Alexander's eyes as she saw in the holy Patriarch Tikhon's eyes, and that it was testimony of his sanctity. In the fall of 1937 the New Martyr Alexander was arrested once more, never to be heard from again. Hieromartyr Alexander is venerated as a Passion-bearer, whose life as a confessor ended with sufferings and martyrdom for Christ.

## **HIEROMARTYR JOHN KOCHUROV**

(1871-1917)

*Feast Day: October 31<sup>st</sup>*

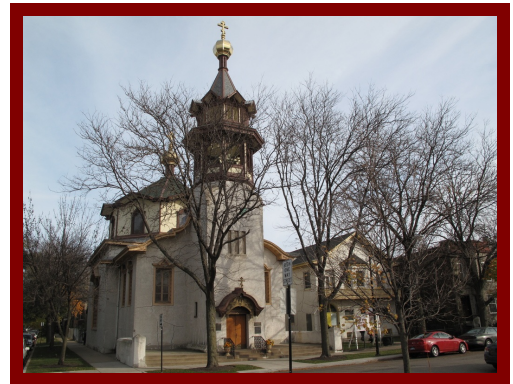


*St. John Kochurov, vestry wall,  
St. Innocent Church, Redford, MI*

The hieromartyr (priest-martyr), St. John Kochurov, is one of the eleven saints who were born in other countries and came to America as missionaries, whom we venerate as American saints. St. John paid the ultimate price for his dedication to the service of God and His Holy Church: he was the first priest to be martyred by the Communists in the Russian Revolution in 1917.

The future saint was born in 1871, the son of a priest, in a village in the Ryazan region of Russia, southeast of Moscow. Completing his studies at the Ryazan Seminary, the studious young John went to the St. Petersburg Theological Academy. After graduating in 1895, he married, and was ordained priest by Bishop Nicholas of the Aleutian Islands and Alaska, the head of the Russian Orthodox Church's mission in North America, who was looking for missionary priests for America. Father John was eager to serve as a missionary in the United States, and so he was sent to America after his ordination, where he served under Saint Tikhon, when he became bishop of North America in 1898.

Father John was assigned as priest of the Holy Trinity parish in Chicago. In 1899 he commissioned the famous American architect, Louis Sullivan, to design a new church, which was consecrated by Bishop Tikhon in 1903. Today, the beautiful historic landmark, the Holy Trinity Cathedral, is the seat of the bishop of the Midwest Diocese of the OCA.



*Holy Trinity OCA Cathedral, Chicago, 1903*

Father John also was instrumental in forming a number of parishes: in the Chicago area; in Burbank, Joliet, Madison and Streator, Illinois; in Buffalo, NY; and in Hartshorne, Oklahoma. Also, he studied the Carpatho-Rusyn language of the many Slavic Uniate immigrants, so he could do missionary work among them, as they were returning to Orthodoxy, thanks to the work of St. Alexis Toth of Wilkes-Barre. A popular teacher and preacher, Father John's great labors on behalf of Orthodoxy in America also included: translating Orthodox literature into English; serving as Dean of the mid-west parishes; working actively in the Orthodox Brotherhood and Mutual Aid Society, which were so vital to the survival of Orthodox immigrants at the beginning of the twentieth century; and helping to organize the first Church Council in North America, convened by Archbishop Tikhon in 1907.



In 1907 Fr. John was transferred to Russia, first to Estonia, and then in 1916, to Tsarskoye Selo (the Tsar's primary residence), near St. Petersburg. In 1917, the Communist Revolution broke out. In October the Communists attacked Tsarskoye Selo. The people flocked to the churches to pray. Fr. John held a prayer service and then led a cross-procession through the streets to pray for peace and an end to the violence and lawlessness. Some accounts say that he was killed then by the Communist mob, and other accounts say that the next day he was arrested and executed. Saint John lived for Christ, and died for Christ, putting Christ above all else, thus providing an example of faith for us to follow.

