

St. Tikhon

PATRIARCH OF MOSCOW • APOSTLE TO AMERICA

Commemoration Dates: April 7th & October 9th

On January 16, 1865, Basil Belavin was born in Toropets, a region in Russia. His father, Ioann, was a parish priest. He had two brothers. As a young boy he showed his love for the church and those around him by helping the peasants with their work.

After he graduated from the Pskov Seminary and the St. Petersburg Academy, he became a teacher. In 1896 he was tonsured a monk and given the name Tikhon.

On October 19, 1897, Tikhon was consecrated as Bishop of the Kholm Diocese and, in September 1898, he became the Bishop of the Aleutian Islands and Alaska. His home was Holy Trinity Orthodox Church in San Francisco, California.

Using dogsleds and kayaks, Bishop Tikhon traveled through the Alaskan wilderness to visit his flock. During his travels, he encouraged both the clergy and the lay people to develop mission parishes. It did not take long for the parishes in the diocese to increase from 15 to 70.

Bishop Tikhon was a gentle man who loved everyone. He believed it was important to help people to adjust to life in America. As a result, he decided to move to New York City to help the immigrants arriving from Europe. With the help of St. Alexander, Bishop Tikhon supervised the construction of St. Nicholas Cathedral in New York City.

In 1905, two years before he left America, he blessed the Monastery of St. Tikhon of Zadonsk in South Canaan, Pennsylvania. In 1907, he moved to Russia and, after ten years, he was elected as the first Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia.

On April 7, 1925, at the age of sixty, Patriarch Tikhon died and was buried in the Cathedral of the Donskoy Monastery. Patriarch Tikhon was canonized a saint by the Council of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church on October 19, 1989 at St. Daniel's Monastery in Moscow, Russia.