

“Protodeacon Was Awarded a Salary:” One Year in the Life of Metropolitan Platon

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Below is a translation of handwritten notes made in his 1775 church calendar by Metropolitan Platon (Levshin) of Moscow. The notes were obtained and published by “*Russkiy Arkhiv*” (*Russian Archive*) in its annual collection in 1877.ⁱ The publishers of the *Russian Archive* only added two footnotes to the text, which are also reproduced in this translation. The endnote commentaries included here are those of the translator.

One of the most distinguished Russian Church figures of the 18th century, Archbishop Platon (June 29 1737 – November 11 1812), was transferred from Tver to Moscow at the directive of Empress Catherine II in 1775, the year he made these notes. After 12 years in Moscow, he was elevated to the rank of Metropolitan. Initially, Metropolitan Platon was favoured by Catherine II, mainly for his 1765 discourse on Orthodox theology written for the royal family, and his respect for the Enlightenment. Platon was also popular among the people, who called him “the second Chrysostom,” and “apostle of Moscow.”ⁱⁱ Eventually,

divergence of opinions developed between the Metropolitan and Catherine II, and her successor Pavel I, and Platon was marginalized; however, he did manage to play a very important role in the life of the church, and left a lasting legacy.ⁱⁱⁱ

Metropolitan Platon is credited with a number of positive moves in the Russian Church, which had to endure strict state supervision and policies. His activities in the second half of the 18th century are associated with a spiritual re-awakening of the Russian Church, restoration and renewal of seminaries, defence of monasticism from negative influences of Protestantism, and the elevation of the status of the 'white' (married) clergy in Russian society.^{iv} The beginning of the Russian practice of awarding married clergy with the miter, the tradition which in all other Orthodox churches belongs to bishops and archimandrites, is also associated with Metropolitan Platon's discussions with Catherine II.^v

Metropolitan Platon tried hard to find a common language and unity with the 'Old Believers,' a large group of Russian dissenters who continued to practice old rituals of the church, and refused to accept the 1666-1667 reforms of Patriarch Nikon. Under Platon's guidance, in 1800, the Synod of the Russian Church issued a declaration of *edinoverie* or 'common faith,' which allowed the Old Believers to re-join the canonical church, and keep most of their old rituals.^{vi} The Russian translation of *Philocalia* of Nicodemus was first published in 1793 in St Petersburg^{vii} with the blessing of Metropolitan Platon.

A contemporary of St Tikhon of Zadonsk (1724-1783), St Seraphim of Sarov (1759-1833), and St Paisi Velichkovsky^{viii} (1722-1794),^{ix} Metropolitan Platon is remembered by the Russian Church with great respect and reverence (see Appendix).

Metropolitan Platon's Notes on Slipsheets of the Church Calendar^x from 1775¹

On the 21st (of January) the Empress^{xi} willed to be in Tver, where I received a directive to become [Archbishop] of Moscow.

On the 22nd, Her Majesty was in Tver.

On the 27th, I arrived in Moscow, and was proclaimed [Archbishop] of Moscow.²

From the September tithe^{xii} I received 78 rubles and 63 kopeks. I kept 60 rubles, [and] distributed the rest.

February the 2nd. I visited my cathedral sobor in Chudov for the first time.

From the January tithe^{xiii} I received 70 rubles.

From the May tithe I received 695 rubles, from which [I distributed] 50 rubles to the brethren, and [I spent] 45 rubles on the almshouse.

Blessings of God poured unto me this year.

1. Consecrated as Moscow hierarch.
2. [I was] allowed to keep the Lavra^{xiv} [under my supervision].
3. [I was] awarded a *panagia* in Tver.
4. [I was] awarded 5,000 rubles.
5. [I was] awarded a velvet mantle.^{xv}
6. [I was] awarded a *panagia* by the Empress.
7. [I was] awarded a diamond watch by the Empress.
8. [I was] awarded 1,000 rubles in Lavra by the Empress.
9. Her Majesty granted [to me] two pieces of brocade.^{xvi}

¹ This calendar belongs to A. I. Sobolev, and it was available through the Russian Archive [note in *Russkiy Arkhiv*, 1877].

² That is, [he was proclaimed] Archbishop. Platon was elevated to the rank of Metropolitan after 12 years [note in *Russkiy Arkhiv*, 1877].

10. [I was] granted silverware worth 5,000 rubles.
11. [I was] appointed vice-regent^{xvii} in Chudov.
12. [I was] given subdeacons.
13. [My] protodeacon was awarded a salary.
14. Salaries of the [church] servers were increased.
15. The Pererva Seminary was founded.^{xviii}
16. [I was] awarded the funds for two seminaries, [those of] Kaluga and Sav.^{xix}
17. Three monasteries were transferred to the [Moscow] Eparchy.
18. [The office of] Archimandrite of Zlatoustovskaya was renewed.
19. On behalf of Count Potemkin in the Chudov monastery [the following] was done: 1) an expensive hat, 2) another hat, 3) four *panagias*, 4) two crosses, 5) four *sakkos*, 6) an omophorion, 7) a blessing cross.
20. The academy was transferred to the administration.^{xx}
21. The salaries for the parishes [located] on common land^{xxi} were transferred under my supervision.

What am I, Lord, that you remember me?^{xxii}

Notes

ⁱ *Russkiy Arkhiv* (god piatnadsatsiy), izdavaemiy Petrom Bartenevim, Moskva: Tipografiya Lebedeva, na Donskoi ulitse, dom Zorkinoy, 1877.

ⁱⁱ “Platon (Levshin), Mitropolit (1737-1812),” *pravaya.ru* <<http://www.pravaya.ru/ludi/450/1648>>

ⁱⁱⁱ “Arkhieriy: Platon (Levshin),” *Russkoe Pravoslavie*, <http://ortho-rus.ru/cgi-bin/ps_file.cgi?2_3413>

^{iv} Dimitry Pospelovsky, *The Orthodox Church in the History of Russia*, Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1998, pp. 128-129.

^v *Ibid.*, p. 129.

^{vi} *Ibid.*, pp. 125-126.

^{vii} John Meyendorff, *The Orthodox Church*, New York: Pantheon Books, 1968, p. 115.

^{viii} His first name is also spelled as “Paisy” or “Paisius;” and “Velichkovski” is another version of his last name.

^{ix} Nicholas Zernov, *The Russians and Their Church*, New York: Macmillan Company, 1945, pp. 134-136.

^x In Russian, *mesiatseslov* or *menologion* in Greek.

^{xi} Empress Catherine II of Russia (1762-1796), aka Catherine the Great. Metropolitan Platon is referring to her as “*Gosudariniya*.”

^{xii} Archbishop Platon notes receiving “one third for September” – most likely a reference to the practice of giving the ruling bishop one third of monthly church collections.

^{xiii} Archbishop Platon literally mentions “January’s one third from the mug” – “*ianvorskaya tret’ iz kruzhki*” – a reference to collection practices in Russian parishes.

^{xiv} The Holy Trinity-Sergiev Monastery (“Troitse-Sergiev Lavra”), which Archimandrite Platon headed from 1766.

^{xv} “*Mantiya barkhatnaya*.”

^{xvi} “*Parcha*.”

^{xvii} In Russian, “*namestnik*,” an administrative position in the Russian Empire. In 1776, the year following Archbishop Platon’s transfer to Moscow, Catherine II officially divided the Russian Empire into “*namestnichestvo*,” administrative-territorial entities often coinciding with the provinces (“*guberniya*”). Most likely, Archbishop’s appointment to this position was temporary, and it was occasioned by the presence of a large monastery in Chudov. “*Namestnichestvo*” was abolished by Paul I in 1796.

^{xviii} This was the first in a series of seminaries founded or renewed by Metropolitan Platon. “*mitr. Moskovskiy Platon (Levshin)*,” *Svet Xristov prosveshchaet vsax – Stranitsa Sviato-Filaretovskogo instituta*, <http://www.sfi.ru/rubrs.asp?rubr_id=851&art_id=6751> The Pererva Seminary is still in existence: <<http://www.ppds.ru/>>

^{xix} It is not clear to which seminary Metropolitan Platon is referring to.

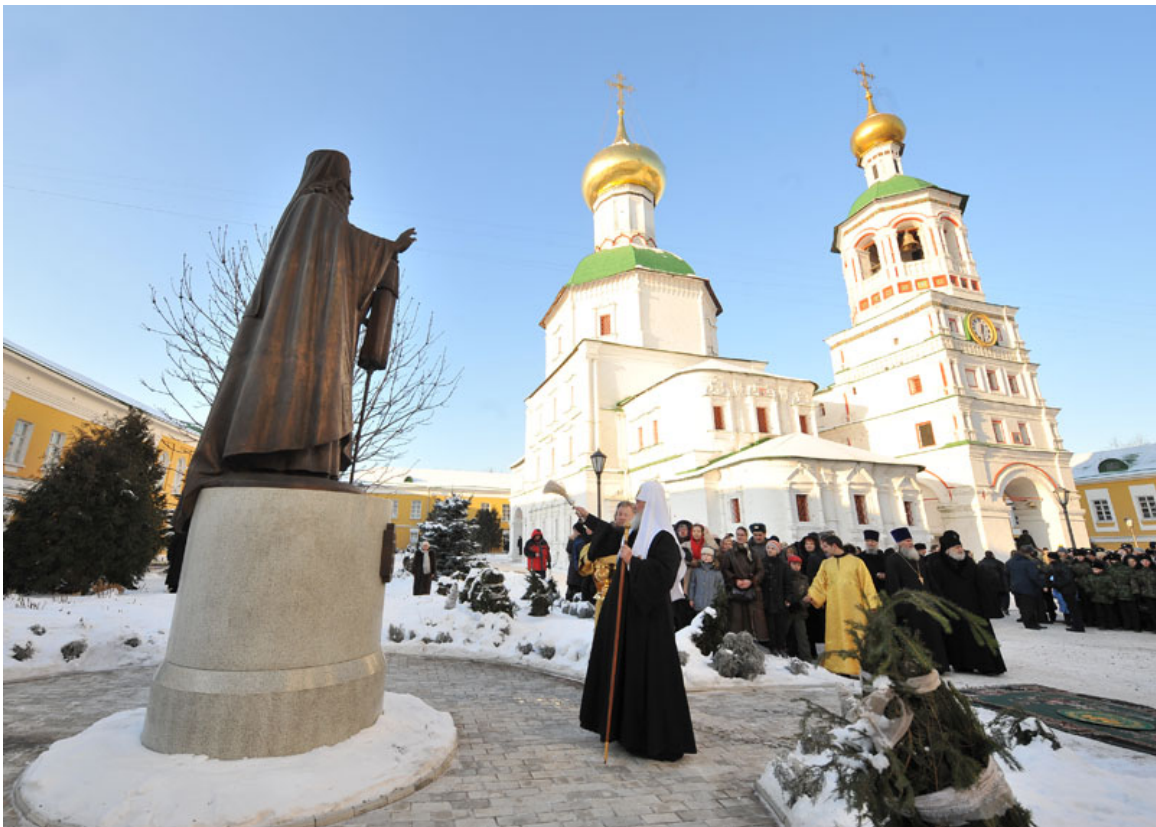
^{xx} Most likely, the Moscow Theological Academy, which had been previously neglected. Under Metropolitan Platon, the Academy was renewed and strengthened, and its influence increased. “*mitr. Moskovskiy Platon (Levshin)*.”

^{xxi} Archbishop Platon is referring to the salaries for the “*ruznykh tserkvei*.”

^{xxii} “*Chto esm’ az’, Gospodī, yako pommishi mene?*”

Appendix

"The visit of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill to the Nikolo-Perervinskiy Monastery. Blessing of the statue of Metropolitan Platon (Levshin)." December 19 2009. The Russian Orthodox Church
<<http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/967210.html>>



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