



**ORTHODOX OHRID ARCHBISOPRIC
HOLY METROPOLIS OF VELES AND POVARDARJE**

Protocol No. 44 from 08 March 2003

To the Synod of the Macedonian
Orthodox Church which dwells in schism

We have been considering for quite a long time whether to respond to your Decision N.30 from 17 February 2003 and the Decision 246-1 from 7 August 2002, which we received by registered mail the same day we got the Decision N.30 from 2003. Having no eucharistic communion with the schismatics, the Orthodox Christians reduce all other communication with them to a minimum. They communicate with them only when there is hope that the schismatics or heretics will repent, come out from the darkness in which they reside and unite with the one holy, catholic and apostolic Church. To our great distress the entire hope that the Synod of Bishops of the Macedonian Orthodox Church, in its present composition, will throw off the schism as devastating to the salvation and will join the body of the Church, which is the body of Christ, has almost been lost. Still, because of the historic responsibility towards the future generations, because of those who will decide to live in the Church and despise the schism, because of those who will condemn all your undertakings and decisions as anti-church, uncanonical and heretical, because of them we decided to reply and reveal your delusive deed, the malice and envy typical of the schismatics, but above all your wrong choice in life to move towards the grave and decay instead of resurrection and eternal life.

Firstly, we shall review the Decision N.246-1 from 7 August 2002, which we received on 28 February 2003. What is evident from this decision is that it was not reached on 7 August 2002, as is written on it, but it has probably been reached the same day as decision 30 from 17 February 2003. In order not to repeat the number 246 it has been registered under no. 246-1, although it has been reached much later. But this is not so important, you have been teaching heresy and breaking the canons of the Church, so why should we criticise the disorganized administration? There is only one dilemma which is whether the quoted articles from the Constitution of the MOC were also mistaken by the administrative clerk who prepared the decision thus none of them have any connection with the content of the decision, or, were they put in the introduction only to record some numbers?

The problem is much more serious than it might seem. Your inconsistency, unawareness, ignorance can be tolerated to a certain extent. The upbringing in the faith, the spirituality, even the administration is a personal ability and God will measure these at the Last Judgement, but the desire to remain in schism, motivated by petty excuses, and defending the same heretically is something unforgivable in the present or in the time to come. There is no need of extensive investigation to locate the problem in the schismatic perception of some bishops, who end up in heresy by making apologies their own ethnophiletism. We believe that you will hardly find a person naïve enough to believe that the Serbian Orthodox Church wanted to subordinate the Macedonian Orthodox Church. The Church is

disgraced by the few people who sit with you, gentlemen, and care only for their personal interests and have profit from the schismatic state of the Church.

You sit with a murderer in the Synod, you officiate with him, you partake in communion with him, so you have share in the same legacy. Can anyone distinguish you from him? Not to mention some others, again amongst you, for whom we are sure you know well who appointed them and introduced them to the bishop's rank and to whom they serve instead of the Church. By using the excuse that you do not have 12 bishops in the Synod, you failed to put them on trial, but if only there was someone to expose their deeds. On contraire, together with them you disintegrate the Church from the inside with the uncanonical actions and erroneous teachings.

We will give you only some of them. First of all, with the Decision no.161 from 6 July 2002, you dismissed us from, work just as it is done in companies with limited responsibilities, not only contrary to the canons, but also contrary to your rule book, which you call the Constitution. You evicted us from the cathedra of the Veles Metropolis in a barbaric way, with a gun pointed at our mouth by the police, you called us a former metropolitan in that decision and you didn't name the rank we had at that time, and eight months later we receive a decision that we are deprived of our authority and dethroned. The question you will need to answer the future generations, and to history as well, not to us for we have no need of your answer because we consider all of your decisions as worthless, is: How is it possible for an archpriest with a rank of a metropolitan to be, first, evicted out of his cathedra, evicted from his diocese, be proclaimed that he is no longer a member of your Company, be deprived of his title and called 'former', and even later to deprive him of his authority and dethrone him, not considering whether it was eight months after the events or 7 August 2002, as it is stated in the decision, and all of this without a court proceeding against him, without giving him an opportunity to defend himself. Nowadays such a thing is inconceivable even in the most barbaric countries. Even if it was due to ignorance, it is too much, but it is far worse that it was out of malice and petty, covetous passions.

Yet, something is correct in the abovementioned decision. We are called **an apostate**, and it is true, for our **apostasy** was from your schismatic organization, and later, in the Decision no.30 from 17 February 2003, you redefined it into **estranged**. It seems that you were right about that, too. We are exceedingly pleased to be **estranged** from all schismatic bishops, from murderers and adversaries of the Church and we consider this a virtue, and not a sin, as you want to present it to the public.

It is clear to us why you want to manipulate the people into thinking that we have no right to perform any religious service or church rite, nor to organize any sort of church or monastic life in the, degradingly adding "into the Macedonian Orthodox Church", so that the people wouldn't understand that you refer to your schismatic gathering places. Just as the malicious person does the greatest malice to himself, so do you, thinking that if you prohibited our humbleness to officiate in the places you usurped from the Orthodox Church you would make it difficult to us to find a place for officiation, and in fact you prohibit yourselves the entrance into the one and only Church of God. For thirty-five years you have been lying to the Macedonian people that the Church in Macedonia is autocephalous, so why not continue the lie that our humbleness has no right to officiate? We would not officiate with you even if we were threatened with a gun, as we were when we were evicted from our cathedra, and before all because you are schismatics and heretics, and not because you forbid us to enter the temples you have usurped, whose founders were Greeks, Serbs and Bulgarians. You will have to explain to the history and to the future: What sort of title is deprived of authority and dethroned former metropolitan John? In what ecclesiology, what canonical or church law and, finally, in what Constitution have you found it?

The only thing we are sorry about is that some, who still sit with you, once had a better reputation among the faithful, and now they lost it. They should probe their reputation and see how it stands now. But not to probe the public opinion of the population of Macedonia, nor of the journalists, since they are not the criterion for the Church, but do it with those who regularly go to Church, who

take communion with the body and blood of Christ as they are the true Church and the true criterion. There is a saying with the people, 'birds of a feather flock together', and the apostle says, "Shall I then take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute?" (1 Cor. 6:15), of course, trying to convey that who you have relationship and communion with, not only physically, but much more spiritually, is who you become one with.

The essential fruit of the schism is your noncommunication. You dislike one another and you are not on speaking terms with each other. The schism breaks up the nature of communion until it is destroyed. Blessed is the one who will oppose ethnophiletism and the communion with people who have canonical obstacles to have any clerical rank, who will say **no** to the heretical apology that the MOC has been creating for decades in order to defend the schism. Lastly, we are sorry for some monks and nuns who still cannot perceive your covetous positions. But God will probably enlighten them soon.

Finally, we would like to remind you of something you should know, since you have been officially informed. Our humbleness, Metropolitan of Veles and Povardarje and Exarch of Ohrid, as of 24 September 2002, is a member of the Assembly of the SOC. This is not only because you reached a decision to expel me from your band (we aren't using this word in a vulgar manner, for a band is not only a criminal group, but in Greek a band is a group of musicians), but also because we are now a member of another Synod, and you should stop reaching decisions about our humbleness for they have no validity in the Orthodox Church, and what is more, they reveal bad things about you that others were unaware of. After everything unecclesiastical, uncanonical, unconstitutional, and even heretical that you have done, no one would be surprised if you continued with even greater offences. You announce two things. First, to have court proceedings against us at the civil court, after the failure of the Public Prosecutor of Veles, Mr. Jovan Dimov, to provide evidence in the political process against us, and second to have a council of the fiends and try us according to political criteria without consulting the church canons. Take at least once the Code of church canons, if you even know that such a book exists, and see what it says about those who solve the church problems through civil courts.

Lent is a period when Christians should think over their lives, where they have reached to and towards what they should strive. We pray that God enlightens you in the forthcoming holy forty-day Lent so that you will come out of heresy of ethnophiletism and approach the body of the Church of God. Any other path you take will lead to nowhere. Even if you build thousands of temples, even if you fill hundred monasteries, if you remain in schism and heresy, you will not have an answer at God's Judgement. St. Cyprian of Cartage says that the schism can not be washed even with the blood of martyrdom. And another thing, the time of the Assembly in May is approaching.

+John
Metropolitan of Veles and Povardarje
and exarch of Ohrid

P.S. No more objections will be sent to you from people whose baptism performed in your "schismatic organization" is not recognized in the Orthodox ecumene and therefore they ask of us to confirm their baptism. You have received enough material to be assured that there are many of these cases.

- Since your abovementioned decisions have been sent to the Republic Commission for Relations with Religious Communities, besides the copy we send to the Synod of the SOC, a copy will also be sent to the indicated commission.