



HOLY ASSEMBLY OF BISHOPS
OF THE SERBIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

SB no.46/rec.28

13 May 2003

Belgrade

To His High Reverence
the Archbishop of Ohrid and Metropolitan of Skopje
kyr Stephen
Skopje

Subject: a message from the Holy Assembly of Bishops of the Serbian Orthodox Church to the Holy Synod of the Macedonian Orthodox Church

Your High Reverence,

Christ has risen! – On the first day of this year's regular session, on May 13 of the current year, the Holy Assembly of Bishops of the Serbian Orthodox Church examined in detail the issue of the schism which divides us, and particularly it analysed the most recent situation which occurred after the completion of the work of our two negotiating commissions and your attitude towards the text of the agreement reached between the commissions, after the entrance of His Eminence, the Metropolitan of Veles and the Povardarje, kyr John, into eucharistic communion and canonical unity with the Serbian Orthodox Church, and thus with the holy ecumenical Orthodoxy, – after the actions undertaken by the Holy Synod of the Macedonian Orthodox Church against him and after the latest discussions between the Holy Synod of Bishops of the Serbian Orthodox Church and the delegation of the Holy Synod of the Macedonian Orthodox Church on 30 April 2003 at the Patriarchate in Belgrade. Bearing in mind the complexity of the situation, and its respective decision from the last year's extraordinary session, the copy of which we are enclosing in this brotherly letter, and guided exclusively by the concern for the unity of the Church, its graceful mission and salvation of all baptized souls, the Holy Assembly makes a brotherly appeal to you and expects you to, with full conscience of your pastoral and historic responsibility, in the course of the following five days do the following:

1. to officially, at the joy of heaven and earth, accept the widest church autonomy, formulated in the text of the agreement in Nis, which our holy Church gives to you with brotherly love and consent from all the local sister Churches, and
2. To annul all uncanonical measures which have been undertaken against his Eminence, Metropolitan of Veles and Povardarje kyr John, and to allow his immediate return to the

episcopal cathedra and administration of the eparchy from which he was uncanonically and brutally evicted.

In case you proceed with your present practice of enduring in the unacceptable state of your almost forty-year-old church isolation and postponement of the only possible and blessed solution in terms of normalization of your canonical status, then, with great regret, the Holy Assembly of Bishops will be forced to undertake further canonical measures and to make appropriate decisions.

We would ask Your Eminence and the other Most Reverend brothers not to deem this message as a threat but solely and exclusively as a service to our mutual welfare.

Our Most Reverend representatives, the Bishop of Backa, kyr Irineos and the Bishop of Branicevo, kyr Ignatius, will orally explain in detail the positions of the Holy Assembly of Bishops.

With brotherly love we appeal to you brothers, in the name of Christ's love and only in that name: **Let us stand well, let us stand with fear!**

Your Eminence's brother in Christ,

President of the
Holy Assembly of Bishops
Archbishop of Pec
Metropolitan of Belgrade and Karlovci
and Patriarch of Serbia
+Paul