



**HOLY METROPOLIS OF VELES AND POVARDARJE
BITOLA**

To
His Excellence
The Prime Minister of the Government of Republic of Macedonia
Mr. Ljubco Georgievski

Your Excellence,

If your brother sins against you, says the Gospel, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. (Matt. 18:15) Even later, if he will not listen, take up to other precautions, tell him to one or two other witnesses, and in the end before the Church and the public.

So, We sent you a letter, Mr. Prime Minister, informing You that the Holy Metropolis of Veles and Povardarje entered liturgical and canonical unity with the orthodox ecumene and We explained the meaning of that. We reminded You that the Macedonian Orthodox Church has decided to enter liturgical and canonical unity with the Serbian Orthodox Church ever since 1992. We told you that the liturgical unity is the aim of every Orthodox Church, for without the liturgical unity the Church is not a Church but a schism. We received no answer to that letter.

We wrote one more letter to you later, in which we asked you to express yourself as to whether Mr. George Naumov's positions are the positions of the government or are they positions of an incorrigible communist and totalitarian, but again You did not deign us with your answer. It might be that We are too small in Your eyes, especially since Your police tried to humiliate us, but the contemporary civilization considers it impolite not to answer a written address to the Prime Minister, even if it is from the minor and sinful like us, yet we still possess a rank: an episcope of the Church of God spread throughout the ecumene. Good manners is something people learn at a young age and, for somebody, it is probably too late to learn good manners at an older age, however administration can be learnt, or, at least should be learnt as an adult as well. After all, every organized state should have agencies that will remind the Prime Minister of his administrative duties. Therefore, if your manners are the reason for not responding, then, Your administration should not have neglected it, on condition this is an administration of an organized state.

You know that we supported you wholeheartedly in your efforts to reform the social system. We had supported you even before you came to power with expectations that You would follow Your words and carry out the long expected changes. You started well and You did what many before You would not dare do. You managed to cope with the military crisis quite well, even though in our opinion, you should have dealt with the terrorists much more decisively. You are blamed for the disintegration of Macedonia, but, we are convinced that if anybody else had been in charge they would not have been able to do anything better. Certain biological processes are irrepressible. They can only be delayed.

Yet, during our last encounter in April this year We were convinced in the numerous rumours about you. You have been overwhelmed with pride by the position you have. You have done many good deeds for the Church, You supported it financially, You passed a law for returning of property, a law for religious education, but all that was shattered when You put yourself in the role of a judge in the Church. Only a man self-confident and self-centred, a man over-conceited and full of pride can place himself above the Church and judge it. Mr Prime Minister, You did this by taking a side in the Church disputes. What is more, you did it, not in a political, polite and civilized manner but in a totalitarian, in a way that even the communists didn't act. We only remind you that in 1989, the bishop Peter had a dispute in which the state interfered, but then, they did not dare react in a barbaric way as you did Mr. Georgievski. There were much greater riots by the priests and the people, but the police did not throw the bishop out in the street. Your police, now in the 21st century, did that. They threw out our humble self, together with our associates, in the street, what is more without an injunction, violating the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia, article 26 para.1 in which the inviolability of one's home is guaranteed as well as article 13 para.3 of the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia in which it is confirmed that the Church is separated from the state.

You present yourself as a Byzantinist which is very good, but that is not the same as the Caesar-papalism. Caesar-papalism was a negative phenomenon in Byzantium and not a rule. At that time, just as now, there would be a similar John fighting against the impermissibly big influence of the ruler in the Church. At that time that John was Chrysostom, or Grammaticus, and now it is John of Veles, but it is for the same faith, the same God, the same truth, both then and now. Indeed, not only because of pride and self-sufficiency of the rulers did the Caesar-papalism appear, but also because of the inferiority of the church dignitaries. It was shown at the assembly during the consecration of the church St. Pantheleimon at Plaoshnik when you spoke like a theologian on behalf of the Church, while the dignitaries, who should have spoken on behalf of the Church, spoke like politicians. "The dignitaries" of the schismatic church are incapable of speaking or of working, most of them have less than an ounce of education, and the one they have is as if they had only attended evening classes. Thus, it comes to no surprise that they are inferior, but knowing you as God-loving and church-loving, it is not good to use their incapability and inferiority so that you can govern the Church as well. God has not granted you such a right. Do not interfere with the Church and church affairs so that God would not take away from you what was once given to you. Whenever a ruler interfered with the Church affairs, at the same time he did great wrong not only to the Church, but also to the state. Firstly, because one can not expect to have a strong state if the Church is weak and only a weak Church can let the authorities interfere with the internal affairs of the Church; Secondly, God's blessing to the state ceases, because the ruler has placed himself above the Church and the Church is God Himself, His body, and no one can be above it. The meaning and the purpose of existence is that the state becomes a Church and not the other way around.

Forgive our impertinence, but the term impertinence (drskost - in Macedonian) comes from the Church Slavonic - derznovenie, which means freedom. We hope that our freedom is in God and His love and that is why we are not afraid to declare it. For, what is the meaning of keeping silent about the truth? It is not as if there is something more important and more precious than the truth. That is why we are ready to suffer for the truth as we have already proven. We are prepared to bear even greater suffering than the one you prepared for us, Mr. Prime Minister, as You deprived us of a roof above our head and by using guns you evicted us from our home, just as once the bandits went after Christ, you denied us the basic human right to confess the faith, with a gun pointed at our head, for if your police did this, it is the same as if you had done it yourself. But it is more blissful to suffer for God and be humiliated and maltreated than to be rich and inhuman. Happiness is to meet God in the silence of the confidence which he rests on us as His sons and brothers. It is not happiness to become rich dishonestly, for fortune can only make you proud, and pride is the mother of all sins.

I am not a prophet, nor am I a prophet's son; however, I know what history has shown many times: A state can never have a blessing when its ruler pretends to be a god. The Pharaohs pretended to be gods and Egypt decayed; the Roman Caesars pretended to be gods and Rome fell, the Turkish sultans did the same and the Ottoman Empire collapsed as well. Macedonia cannot have prosperity if its rulers want to be greater than God. And we shall repeat that you, by taking a side and by supporting one church side with the police, have put yourself in the role of a judge, which belongs to God only. The truth is not always in the majority. And your sin is the greater because, knowing which side the truth is on, you chose the lie for your companion just to please the majority. But that is exactly what will overthrow you. Fake politics is the one built upon the majority, but not upon the truth at the same time. An ideal case is to be both with the majority and with the truth. But if a choice should be made, then it is far better to be with the truth than with the majority. Hasn't the apostle Paul taught us that: if God is with us who can be against us? And precisely that has been confirmed today. The infidels, atheists, communists, and even the Prime Minister rose against us, but as long as God is with us not even a single hair will lack from our head. Not that we weren't maltreated, humiliated and insulted, but when God is with you, even when you suffer, the suffering is easy. We thank Him for deigning us with the possibility to suffer for the faith, but We remind you Mr. Prime Minister, that you have become a tool in the devil's hands so that he can realize his goal, to strike against God and the truth. Thus, among other things you have become a fighter-against-God, a fighter with best intentions for the Church. But isn't the path to Hell also paved with best intentions? And this will cost you. Now You have the authority to behead us, just as Herod beheaded St. John when he told him the truth in his eyes. By fighting against God, you close the door for the future, for eternity, and not only for yourself, but being on a responsible position you close the door to the future for the major part of our people. By not reading or not wanting to read how the Patriarch Paul addressed the Macedonian people, by not listening, or again, not wanting to listen what the Patriarch Alexy announced for the Macedonian press, by not seeing or not wanting to see what the Patriarch of Antioch wrote, and generally how the whole orthodox Church reacted, You direct the entire future of our people to Nowhere land.

Is it not disgraceful that we and our companions are kept for half an hour on exiting or entering the country's borders as if that maltreatment would change our mind and would bring us back to the schismatics? If you think more carefully, the schism is to your own detriment because the state that has a schismatic Church, hasn't got the blessing of God. The schism is a sick state of the human souls. If the majority in one state are schismatics it means that the schizophrenia has grown into an epidemic. First you ought to be divided within in order to find it normal to be in a schism with the entire orthodox ecumene.

They can call us traitors, but we have not betrayed a single inch of Macedonia, Mr. Prime Minister. On the contrary, We were the first, as Metropolitan of Veles and Povardarje, to stand in defence of the fatherland, even before the Synod came out with an official position. You well know that we visited the army and the police on the battle fields many times, encouraging the people to endure the difficulties, for we thought that was our share of patriotism to show. As a matter of fact, the people who actually betrayed Macedonia are those who started calling the real patriots traitors. But that has also happened in the history.

They can call us financial embezzler, but the Living God is our witness that we have never used a single denar for ourselves. After all, what is the meaning of the term "ourselves" when We have no family, no inheritance and all we have will remain for the Church, and those who robbed the state now make a reassessment of the financial work of the bishop John. This is a parody that can only happen in Macedonia, for in our country, whenever the state finds it suitable the Church is not separated from the state, so the state can interfere in everything, although, according to the Constitution the Church and the State are separated. But let this miracle be. We would only remind you of St. Athanasius the Great, a pillar of the orthodoxy, for since they couldn't accuse him of heresy, he was accused of financial

scandals, that he allegedly encouraged people not to pay taxes to the emperor, that he was selling certain “linen albs” from which he profited, and as a result, he was evicted from the his cathedra. God brought him back again, for a light is not to be covered but it is to be put on the table so that everybody can see it. Two years later he was persecuted again. Thus, five times persecuted and five times back, he finally passed away in his cathedra in Alexandria. Such is the destiny of great men Mr. Prime Minister. They are our consolation and our strength in the martyrdom in which You pushed us.

It might seem belated, but after the mess with which you left us Mr. Prime Minister, it is now that we found, first a place, and then time to write these lines. Until recently, We had nowhere to lean our head. We hope that you, despite all your duties, will find some time to answer this letter. Unless you answer us it will remain that you answer before the future which creates its own history. Be wise and do it in the present, for if you do it before the history, We doubt that not even St. Pantheleimon, or the Life-giving Source, not Veljusa, or Vodocha, and ten times as many, will be enough to do that.

With due respect,

+John Metropolitan of Veles and Povardarje