



Orthodox Ohrid Archbishopric
Holy Metropolis of Veles and Povardarje
Bitola

Protocol No.07 from 10 January 2003

To
the Municipal Public Prosecutor of Veles
Mr. Jovan Dimov

Dear Mr. Dimov, Public Prosecutor of Veles,

We are writing this letter as a pastor and prayer of the Holy Metropolis of Veles and Povardarje in order to point out the utterly anti-church proceedings in which you are engaged. You have probably heard these days from the media that our humbleness has not been stripped of rank at the church court and we are still Metropolitan of Veles and Povardarje and we have recently become Exarch of Ohrid. It is exactly from that position that we are addressing you for it is our duty to warn one before judging that person, just as we are taught by the Gospel (Matt. 18:12). No matter to what extent you yourself consider to be a believer and a member of the orthodox church, or if you are not baptised or an atheist, or in the worst case if you are an infidel, you have no right to judge the Church according to the civil laws, let alone according to Church laws.

You have claimed more rights than the Public Prosecutors of the European courts and you have become a “specialist” in prosecuting the Church. Do not think that we make a mistake when we say the Church, even though you have started an accusation against a private subject by prosecuting our humbleness. The Orthodox Church is an episcopal church and it can not exist unless it has an episcopate, that is, a metropolitan as its head. The episcopate is the basic element in the structure of the Church, which is the body of Christ. Christ is its head but the episcopate is the visible icon of that head. He is an “icon of Christ” and he is seated where “God is seated” as St. Ignatius the Godbearer said in the second century AD. The Church has preserved that ecclesiology until now and that is why the canonical law maximally protects the episcopate. That does not mean that he is infallible just like the pope is claimed to be, but it may happen that he is utterly groundlessly accused, and it is not only the episcopate (as a person) who suffers but the entire Church. You have scandalised and humiliated the entire Church in Macedonia, Mr. Dimov, for if such is the episcopate of the Church as you want to present him, then what about the priests, not to mention the people. Even under a condition you proved all your accusations against us you would still be guilty before the history of the Church, not before the episcopate, for today the whole world knows that Metropolitan John is being prosecuted on political basis and not according to the laws and justice. But imagine something else. What if you fail to prove that the Metropolitan is guilty? What are you going to answer then to God, at His Last Judgment, when

the entire Church accuses you of scandalizing it? We will not accuse you then, as it is not proper for us to be a “diavol” or devil, as the people say, for the word diavol in its translation from Greek means slanderer. We pray most sincerely, that God will forgive you for you do not know what you are doing, just as those who crucified Christ on the cross. Yet, it is our episcopal duty to save the entire flock of God even those who neither know where they have come from, nor do they know where they are going after death. Let us leave, if necessary, the ninety-nine sheep and look for the lost one. This is how we’d like to be understood with this letter. Let us teach you of what you should have been taught in your earliest childhood by your grandparents. You should know that when you persecute the Church you persecute Christ, and when you persecute the episcopate, you persecute the Church. That is the utmost reality for anyone who believes in the crucified and resurrected Christ. And if you want to justify yourself with the excuse that you do not believe in God or that such is the nature of your profession, then do know that there is no such omission in the law of God.

What you are doing can not be in any way justified by the logic of the world, let alone by the law of God. Imagine you submitted a law suit against the president of a country, because, for example, he had spent unrestricted funds on a bottle of wine given as a presentation? Wouldn’t it be a greater disgrace for you than for the president? You should be more ashamed because you have dared solve matters in the Church by political methods. And if you declared yourself autonomous and incorruptible, not a subject to any political pressure, this would be ridiculed by most of the people in Macedonia

You better understand that the events concerning our humbleness will leave a deep historical imprint, not only in the history of the Church in Republic of Macedonia but in the whole orthodox ecumene. This letter which has been sent to you is also history, and, unless you repent, you are going to have a negative part in it, even if you put the Metropolitan John in prison. Many bishops before us were unjustly imprisoned. For the Prosecutor Jovan is not a source of justice and truth, and neither are the laws in power in certain countries. They are a reflection of the majority’s will. The only justice and truth is the law of God which does not need devils, that is, slanderers.

The first three centuries AD were a period of persecution and martyrdom for the Church. Do you think that those Christians did something wrong, something against the public laws and that was why they were punished? They sinned because they fasted on Fridays, they sinned because they were not promiscuous like the others, because not only did they not steal but they also did not desire the other’s property, they sinned because they even loved their enemies. These were the sins for which they were imprisoned, tortured with the cruellest means and then killed. There were also public prosecutors then who “performed their duty”. But, their names, if remembered at all, are remembered after evil, cupidity and inhumanity, while “the blood of the martyrs was seed for new Christians” as Tertullian says. Instead of exterminating them, the Christians were multiplying, for those who wanted to eradicate them forgot that God can never be destroyed, and God and the Church are one and the same.

Mr. Dimov, your sin is great. You have acted as if you were a god, certainly a fake one, and you judge which side in the Church is right. As evidence before court you have submitted the Decision of the schismatic synod that discharges our humbleness from the duty of eparchial bishop of the holy Metropolis of Veles and Povardarje. Whether the Court will accept your proof it will remain for us to see, but one thing is certain, you act as no other public prosecutor has acted in any of the neighbouring countries in which there is a schism. The public prosecutor must not take sides in the church problems, at least not officially. There is schism in Greece between the supporters of the Old Calendar and the New Calendar, but the state did not come in to divide their property. There is a schism in Bulgaria and the state does not interfere. There has been a schism in Russia for hundreds of years, but the public prosecutors have never interfered. You are unique. Yet this uniqueness is not to be praised but it is shameful. If you read the Constitution you would have seen that the state is not to interfere with the church affairs and carry out this or that decision of a certain church management. You have used the Decision of the schismatics as the most essential proof in the criminal charge against us, but only you

know according to which law you accept that decision. Even if such a law existed, but even the birds know that there is no such law in Macedonia, you would be still guilty in this world and in the one to come unless you repent, because you inclined to one side in the church disputes in which you act from a position of a prosecutor.

You cannot blame us, Mr. Prosecutor, for believing as we do and for acting in accordance to our beliefs. Nowadays it is not a secret that the Prosecutor is a political instrument of the governing set. But that governing set, of which you are one of the last remnants, failed for good after having robbed, humiliated and underestimated the people while you were sleeping. The only issue left unsolved is the issue of the Church, so, as an obedient party member, you have taken up to solve this unsolved issue for the former government.

We are finishing this letter calling you to repent. Do not let the curse for seven generations fall upon you and your family. Do not let “owls hook” under the eaves of your house, as Grigor Prlichev said, which is what happens to those who persecute bishops and thus they persecute Christ and the Church. That is our prayer as a pastor of the reasoning flock of Veles.

We shall send the same letter to the deputy prosecutor of Veles Ms. Slavica Temelkovska, for she co-participates with you in an act against the Church.

Metropolitan of Veles and Povardarje
and Exarch of Ohrid
+Jovan