



ORTHODOX OHRID ARCHBISHOPRIC
HOLY METROPOLIS OF VELES AND POVARDARJE

Protocol no.72 from 29 May 2003

To
The President of the Managing Board of MRTV, Mr. Darko Markovic
The General Manager of MRTV, Mrs. Gordana Stosic
The observers of the media in the Republic of Macedonia

Dearly respected,

It is disgraceful, impolite and even offensive that instead of being a public service for all the citizens, MRTV has become a public executioner for the politically inappropriate, among which our humbleness has been ordered to take a place. Not only by your unilateral, biased and malicious informing about the Church events but above all things, by the methods of political discreditation, which were invented since the period of totalitarianism.

It might be hardly any wonder that there is no democracy in the state of Macedonia, or in the media in this state, but it is deplorable and tragic that twelve years have passed since the fall of communism and we haven't even slightly changed our totalitarian upbringing. One's name and dignity are judged and dishonoured, without an even opportunity for defence, and not to mention an opportunity to appeal.

Someone might say it is our pain. But this pain is thoroughly engaged by the machinery of MRTV. This is why we react. Our reason is not to remind of the slow advance of the promises that MRTV would become an oasis of democracy, but to point out that the totalitarian conscience of the teams of MRTV has not changed at all.

This is our story, and we shall leave it to your conscience to judge whether the above-given conclusions are correct or false. After a number of attempts of our humbleness, as well as of the many groups, associations and individuals in the Republic of Macedonia to be given a little room on the programme of MRTV to explain the situation in the Church, for the first time, 11 months after the acceptance of the Metropolis of Veles in liturgical and canonical unity with the Orthodox ecumene and after we were brutally thrown out in the street by the police of the Republic of Macedonia, we were offered the chance to participate in a live show on MTV. On the 27 May this year the editor Branko Radovanovic phoned asking us to participate in a show he prepares called Golo Oko. Since none of the bishops in Macedonia accepted to come out at a duel with us, he was suggested to invite the former secretary of the Metropolis of Veles, the proto-priest Stojko Ristevski, whom we had suspended from that duty after our coming at that cathedra. We immediately asked the editor if he personally

considered that our not being of the same rank with the proto-presbyter Stojko puts us in an equal position? We believe that his answer was honest as he agreed with the same, but since none of the members of the Synod would accept the invitation, the only option left was to accept the mentioned proto-presbyter as our opponent in the show. We asked for some time to think over it and a few hours later, led by the thought that we had undergone an embargo for 11 months, having no chance to explain our acts and views on MTV concerning the unity of the Church, we phoned the editor to inform him that we would accept participation in his show, even under such humiliating circumstances. We instantly noticed that he was not glad to hear that and he tried to persuade us to give up, as there would be some embarrassing questions about the clarification of the financial abuse. We were persistent saying that constructive and provoking questions were exactly what we wanted as that was the way by which the truth would be revealed. Thus, we agreed to be in MRTV at 7.45 p.m. on May 28.

The following morning, on May 28, very early, Mr. Branko Radovanovik phoned us, asking us to accept his apology, as he could not have us as a guest in his show, with the excuse that the Ohrid Archbishopric was not registered in the state. He could have just said that such was the order of the totalitarian centre and we would have understood, and be assured we would not have written this letter. I come from a classically anticommunist family in which my nearest relatives were tried and convicted for acts against Tito, so we would have understood the fear of a man who belongs to an older generation. But, wishing to hide behind a glass seems immature and childish. The Ohrid Archbishopric has not been established yet, so how can it be registered. First of all, two newly elected bishops should be ordained so that a Holy Synod would be established. Furthermore, the Metropolitan John is a physical person before the laws of the secular state Macedonia, and whether he will be treated as someone's representative or not, depends on one's personal belief. When we asked whether the programme would still go despite the fact that with our absence there would be no chance for people to hear the other side, he responded that even in that case the show would go on. We felt as if he wanted to add that the programme would be even better without us participating in it.

The show was less than unattractive. Not only because of its one-sidedness and emphasised partiality, but because in an hour, which is the length of the show, they managed to accuse, to condemn our humbleness, even to put us to the guillotine calling the people to lynch us. We assume with certainty that the questions that were answered were composed by the proto-presbyter Stojko himself before the show. There was not even one of the provocative questions that were portended to us. Part of the questions were formulated by the editor in such a manner that the proto-presbyter Stojko was just supposed to say: Amen, so it is.

Nevertheless, you should make a survey to find out how many believed in that. Yet, for the time being, some totalitarianistically centred brain thinks that the goal has been accomplished.

+John
Metropolitan of Veles and Povardarje
and Exarch of Ohrid