



Holy Synod of Bishops  
of the Serbian Orthodox Church  
Synno. 1596  
May 13, 2003  
Belgrade

**TO THE HOLY SYNOD OF BISHOPS  
OF THE MACEDONIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH  
Skopje**

Your Eminence,

We have received the decision of Your Holy Synod of Bishops no. 188, from 11 June 2003, as well as Your letter Synno.226 from 23 June 2003, addressed to Us as a response to the decisions of the Holy Assembly of Bishops of the Serbian Orthodox Church related to the Macedonian Orthodox Church, which was held from 13<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> May 2003.

The Decision of Your Synod, with which “the decisions, resolutions and positions of the Holy Assembly of Bishops of the Serbian Orthodox Church’ held from May 13<sup>th</sup> to May 24<sup>th</sup> 2003, are rejected and declared invalid” has been based on the grounds of accusations against the Serbian Orthodox Church, that the it is “a servant to the politics, that it has put itself in the service of the heresy of ethnophiletism and national-chauvinism, and that it has forgotten all that is Godly, Christian, evangelic, ecclesiastical, canonical, God-loving and brother-loving”. You also accuse our local Church of “denying the name, the people, the Church, the hierarchy, the culture, the state and all Macedonian”, and you claim that all of these are the reasons for the rejection of the brotherly summon to join the canonical and liturgical unity with the Patriarchate of Pec – the Serbian Orthodox Church, and through it with the entire Orthodox Fullness of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church of Christ.

In the meantime, we have been informed that on the same date, 23 June 2003, you have sent an act to the so-called Montenegrin Orthodox Church. Here you say that you will send your representatives to the “Celebrations of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul” which are organized by this tribal-party, unrecognized, sect of Cetinje.

Your Eminence, we know that all that we do, write and say, we do it, write it and say it before the face of the Living God. In the light of this truth, which is the only thing that liberates, for all the listed and other evils charged against the Church that has given the Macedonian Orthodox Church the apostolic succession and the widest possible autonomy (1958); which has, for more than forty years, been patiently carrying the cross

of Your constant grumbling because of its efforts to preserve the canonical order; which, especially during the last fifteen years, has persisted in the brotherly dialogue for the surpassing of the existing schism; which has, finally, with the *Nis Agreement* from the year 2002, signed by your representatives, God-lovingly and brother-lovingly given “the widest church independence, that is, the widest church autonomy” to the Ohrid Archbishopric, that is, to the Macedonian Orthodox Church, “leaving the issue of the final resolution, in accordance with the canonical catholic order of the Orthodox Church, to the future, all-orthodox concord of the fullness of the Church in the Holy Ghost”, - and after all this, to hold such accusations against our local Church, besides causing deep sorrow and worry in our hearts, it also causes bewilderment and concern for the unecclesiastical and secular-ideological spirit from which stem these unjust, false accusations. All of these accusations are, in fact, based on the denial of the autocephaly to the Macedonian Orthodox Church, an issue, that has its resolution put in the *Nis Agreement*, and which, by its nature, belongs exclusively to the pan-orthodox agreement of the fullness of the Church, and, for the reason of the terminological limitations (with a given explanation of the reasons for the impossibility of usage of the term Macedonian Orthodox Church in the communications with the other local Churches). To reject, based on these formal and jurisdictional reasons, the liturgical communion with the Mother Church and through it with all the local canonical Churches in the world, and to accept inclusion into the quasi-church organizations, such as the so-called Montenegrin Orthodox Church, and other similar schismatic organizations, and with this to irreversibly separate from the orthodox Fullness and definitely renounce oneself the possibility of any communion and communication with the fullness of the Orthodox Church, equals a church-canonical insanity and ecclesiological suicide. This act of Yours, may God forbid it happens, will only be a confirmation of the opinions of all those who claimed, and still claim, that Your hierarchy is spiritually and ecclesiastically immature and that it has been and continues to be a tool in the hands of the secular authorities that, while working on the fulfilment of their ideological-political goals, manipulate the Church, and with this with its mission and its order.

With the writing of this letter, once more we give you a brotherly hand and we call you, in the name of Christ, to a dialogue and unity in the Holy Ghost, far away from the spirit of the fallen world, praying to the Giver of reason and wisdom to save You and the honourable Macedonian people from the spiritual ruin and separation from Christ’s Church, the only real and unalterable “pillar and stronghold of the truth”.

Your Eminence’s Brother in Christ,

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

To His Eminence

the Archbishop of Ohrid and Metropolitan of Skopje  
Kyr Stephen  
Skopje