



HOLY SYNOD OF BISHOPS
OF THE SERBIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

No. 1859/1
22 June 2002
Belgrade

To
His High Reverence
the Metropolitan of Veles and Povardarje, kyr John
Metropolis of Veles, Macedonia

Subject: reply to Your letter no.106 from 21 June 2001, with which you reacted to Our address to their High Reverences the hierarchs, the clergy, the monastics and believers of the Holy Orthodox Church in Your country (Synno. 1859 from 20 June 2002) appealing to the pastoral and Christian conscience of each bishop, cleric, monk, nun and believer before the urgent need to finally overcome the tragic schism which since 1967 has divided, pained and spiritually separated us.

Your High Reverence,
respected and dear brother in Christ the Saviour and coofficator of Our humbleness,
kyr John

With joy and brotherly love and above all with gratitude to God, the Eternal Archierarch of the holy Church and the Episcopo of our souls, the Source and Giver – with the Father and the Spirit – of being, wellbeing and eternal welfare, we inform your High Reverence that we received your letter No. 106 from June 21 this year, which is your reply to our address to their Reverences the bishops, the clergy, monastics and the Christ-loving people of our Holy Orthodox Church in the Republic of Macedonia (Synno.. 1859 from June 20, 2002) in which we appealed to the pastoral and Christian conscience of each brother bishop, cleric, monk, nun and believer in all the eparchies on the territory of Macedonia and we called all together and each one individually to make an effort for overcoming the tragic schism, which has been dividing us since 1967, and for healing the spiritual sore which has been aching and afflicting both you and us, and with us the whole orthodox world.

You have, dear Highly Reverend Bishop, responded most sincerely, responsibly and bravely as it is appropriate for any orthodox archpastor, who, as the Good Pastor, Christ our Lord, “gives his own life for his sheep”, for the spiritual flock entrusted to him. You have rejected the state of schism as unsound and, above all unredeemable, and you have accepted the proposed liturgical and canonical unity with the Serbian Orthodox Church and with the entire orthodox ecumene, which is in liturgical and canonical unity with it, and you have decided to cease any officiation with the Metropolitan of Kumanovo and Polog, Cyril, whose personality represents a great stumbling block on the road to establishing canonical unity and order in the Church.

What we find particularly rejoicing in Your letter is Your, inspired with the sincere, apostolic Tradition of the holy fathers, profession of faith in God's Church, the one and only, not supplementary, organizational or merely functional, but in its being and nature Church of God as the only Source and Way of our eternal unity with the Triune God of ours in the Kingdom of His glory. May God give that your spiritual and theological profession of the truth of the Church inspires and spurs the other brothers bishops who have not replied to our address yet!

With brotherly love in God we inform You that we accept You in the holy communion of the Church, in full liturgical and canonical communion, together with all the reverend clergy, most virtuous monastics and the respectable people of the entrusted to You holy Metropolis of Veles and Povardarje. It is also our pleasant duty to inform You that we will officially without any delay, inform the Holiest Orthodox Patriarchs and other Primates of the local sister Churches of this gift from God to His Church.

Since the day we received your letter we have been mentioning you at the Divine Liturgy, as well as in our cell prayer, as a brother and co-officiator in Christ our Lord. "All these are the work of one and the same Spirit ... For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one Body... and we were all given the one Spirit to drink." (1 Cor. 12, 11-13).

Your High Reverence's brother in Christ

Archbishop of Pec,
Metropolitan of Belgrade and Karlovci
and Patriarch of Serbia
+PAUL
president of the Holy Synod of Bishops