

17/02/2023

Communiqué on the Petition of Appeal by Clergymen from Lithuania



Some months ago, the Very Reverend Archpriests from Lithuania, Vladimiras Seliavko and Vitalijus Mockus, and the Reverend Presbyters Vitalis Dauparas, Gintaras Sungaila and Georgy Ananiev, who were imposed the penalty of deposition from the priesthood by the Patriarchate of Moscow, addressed His All-Holiness Bartholomew, Archbishop of Constantinople - New Rome and Ecumenical Patriarch by letter to exercise the petition of appeal before Him, as they are entitled.

Our Patriarch, who exclusively bears the responsibility of receiving appeals, in accordance with the Holy and Sacred Canons (namely, Canons 9 and 17 of the Fourth Ecumenical Council) and the sanctified practice of the Church, received these submitted petitions.

Following thorough study of the relevant circumstances, it was ascertained on the one hand that these cases were made final before the ecclesiastical authority that imposed these penalties, and on the other hand that the reasons for which the penalties were imposed do not at all derive from ecclesiastical criteria, but from the

justified opposition of these clergymen to the war in Ukraine. Wherefore, irrevocably adjudicating these petitions of appeal, His All-Holiness recommended to the Holy and Sacred Synod that the imposed deposition from the priesthood be lifted and that they be restored to their former ecclesiastical rank of priesthood, which was unanimously decided.

Moreover, after the above-mentioned restoration, upon their request, the Ecumenical Patriarch received these clergymen under His venerable omophorion, taking into consideration the long-established right of the Ecumenical Throne, as it is also indicatively reported in the interpretation by Theodore Balsamon of Antioch to Canons 17 and 18 of the Council in Trullo and Canon 10 of the Seventh Ecumenical Council (namely: “From this canon, note explicitly that only the Patriarch of Constantinople is allowed to receive foreign clergy, even without a letter of release from their ordaining hierarch”).

At the Ecumenical Patriarchate, on February 17, 2023

From the Chief Secretariat

of the Holy and Sacred Synod

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