



РУССКАЯ ИСТИННО-ПРАВОСЛАВНАЯ ЦЕРКОВЬ АРХИЕРЕЙСКИЙ СИНОД

Украина, 67668, Одесская обл., Беляевский р-н, п. Великий Дальник, ул. Калинина, 77,
Синодальное подворье Архиерейского Синода Русской Истинно-Православной Церкви
тел: +7-495-374-9701, e-mail: mail@ripс-synod.ru

+TRANSLATED FROM THE RUSSIAN ORIGINAL+

January 21 / February 3, 2018
St. Maximus the Confessor

To: Bishop Stefan (Sabelnik)

UKAZ

For the last two years the Synod of Bishops of the RTOC has been obliged to constantly review your anti-canonical actions, among which was the reception of Omsk schismatics under your omophorion. No matter how much you deny this fact, it is one of the serious crimes of the Church. Although before this event, you said in your Declaration of 11/24 November 2015. the following (we quote):

“In this Declaration, I have avoided in every possible manner to inflict offence to anyone. It’s quite possible that some may wish not to remain under my omophorion. Let that person act according to the Church Canons: to request a “Letter of Release” (15th Rule of the Holy Apostles and 17th Rule of the Sixth Ecumenical Council).

I would have nothing against granting the wish of such a person. Likewise: if a person wishes to come under my omophorion, I hope that the Bishop of RTOC will also grant the wish of that person – but naturally, it is the Bishop’s decision.”

Consider your words! With this statement, you are calling for a schism!

Earlier, for perpetrating a schism with the bishops of the RTOC, the Synod of Bishops of the RTOC decided to retire you without the right to serve. (*see Decree of October 20 / November 2, 2016, on the official Synodal website “Church Life”*) However, instead of repenting, you have now exacerbated your condition by another uncanonical act – you participated in the performance of a hierarchical consecration with a group of bishops, who split from the synod of Met. Agafangel (Pashkovsky).

Ignoring the suspension from serving imposed upon you until your repentance, you continue to perform services and publish your heretical beliefs on your website. In particular, your heresy was pronounced during your public sermon for the Sunday of the Triumph of Orthodoxy, 2017. Given the aforementioned, according to the 15th canon of the 1st & 2nd Council, it is now possible for clergymen and faithful to separate from you, as from a bishop who publicly, from the cathedra, preaches heresy. (*see: Determination of the 2nd Holy Sobor, RTOC, 2017, on the official Synodal website “Church Life”*).

You are charged with the violation of many ecclesiastical norms regarding the relationship between the bishops and the flock, the breach of the Oath of Bishops, where you swore an oath to the Russian bishops who ordained you:

“...Herewith I promise also to do nothing through constraint, whether coerced by powerful persons, or by a multitude of the people, even though they should command me, under pain of death, to do something contrary to divine and holy laws: nor to celebrate the Divine Liturgy in another diocese than my own, nor

to exercise any other priestly function without the permission of the Bishop of that diocese; and that I will not ordain either a Priest, or a Deacon, or any other ecclesiastic in another's diocese, nor receive such into my diocese without letters of dismissal from their own Bishops."

After your episcopal consecration, having become a member of the Synod of RTOC, you perpetrated a schism with the Synod, and by this action, you imputed as nothing your promises to do everything possible to restore the Higher Church Authority of the Local Russian Church, along with the simultaneous restoration of the canonical Church Authority of the ROCOR. Thus, you have committed a Church crime as defined by the 14th canon of the 1st & 2nd Council:

"If any Bishop, on the allegation that charges of crime lie against his own Metropolitan, shall secede or apostatize from him before a conciliar or synodal verdict has been issued against him, and shall abstain from communion with him, and fail to mention his name, in accordance with the consuetude, in the course of the divine mystagogy (i.e., liturgical celebration of the Eucharist mystery), the holy Council has decreed that he shall be deposed from office, if merely by seceding from his own Metropolitan he shall create a schism. For everyone ought to know his own bounds, and neither ought a presbyter treat his own bishop scornfully or contemptuously, nor ought a bishop to treat his own Metropolitan so."

By the power that is given to us by God - "to bind and to loose," and for all of the above canonical crimes committed by you – Stefan (Sabelnik), the former bishop of Trenton and North America, we, the Bishops of the Russian True Orthodox Church, taking into account our responsibility for your unlawful actions as those who gave you apostolic succession at your consecration, find ourselves obliged to stop the spread of your schismatic activities. Because of this, we have determined to depose you, Stefan (Sabelnik), of your episcopal rank. From now on you shall be considered to be a monk.

+ **Archbishop Tikhon**,
of Omsk and Siberia
President of the Synod of Bishops
Russian True Orthodox Church

+ **Archbishop Benjamin**,
of Chernomorsk and Kuban,
Vice-President of the Synod of Bishops
Russian True Orthodox Church

+ **Bishop Germogen**
of Gomel and Briansk

+ **Bishop Savvati**
of Vinitsa and Hmel'nitsa

Protopresbyter Victor Melehov
Secretary of the Synod of Bishops