

2002

Open Letter from Fr. John Jillions to Bishop Basil Regarding the Sourozh Diocese

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Dear Bishop Basil,

A few days ago I received my copy of Sourozh (No. 90, November 2002). I find it deeply disturbing that a journal sponsored by the Diocese should continue to stir up a campaign of Hilarion-bashing under the guise of reporting 'European Reactions to Events in the Diocese of Sourozh'.

High-minded debate about ecclesiology, canonical order and the special character of the Sourozh diocese cannot cover up an ugly run-of-the-mill injustice that we as a diocese still have not acknowledged: how a new assistant bishop was publicly accused, humiliated, effectively put on trial and dismissed by the diocesan leadership. Whatever his perceived flaws, the fact remains that Bishop Hilarion was not given the due process that should be accorded to anyone in the Church, let alone a bishop. His trial by public propaganda was worthy of Soviet justice, not a diocese claiming to be heir of the 1917-18 Council. Indeed, if today any priest or bishop in Russia had been treated this way there would have been a huge public outcry from Orthodox in the West.

The events of last summer are being turned into a matter of diocesan pride, when instead they should be mourned, especially when so many people in the diocese are still grieving the anti-Christian manner in which Bishop Hilarion was treated.

Yours in Christ,

Fr John