

CULTURE CLASH

The Commission

HOME	HISTORICAL BACKGROUND	RELEVANT DOCUMENTS	MEDIA COVERAGE	COMMENTS ON THE CURRENT SITUATION
ГЛАВНАЯ	ИСТОРИЯ ВОПРОСА	ДОКУМЕНТЫ	СМИ	КОММЕНТАРИИ

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05/06

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What validity does letter have
When Basil has already acted?

30 May 2006

Your Holiness,

We feel we have no recourse but to write to you directly, and to put **our side** concerning the Commission which you have ordered for investigation into events in the Diocese of Sourozh.

Firstly we would like to make it clear that we cannot recognise this Commission in the capacity which it claims.

Secondly, **even if it were legitimate, its findings can have no real validity.**

We consider that the Commission cannot be legitimate because:

- 1 The canonical norm of our diocesan life and its governance has been deeply distorted through its relationship with the Department of External Church Relations of Moscow Patriarchate over the past few years (see canons of the following Ecumenical Councils: Constantinople, canon 2 and 11 Nicaea, canon 2 and others). It is not the intention of this letter to elucidate on the canonical side of the matter. We note, however, that the Commission appealed to the canons more than once without citing them. To state it simply, and with reference to the above canonical irregularity, the Sourozh Diocese could be said to have been abandoned since the death of Metropolitan Anthony through inability to appoint a successor. Metropolitan Anthony requested that Bishop Basil take charge of the Diocese as he was well placed to understand its needs having lived and worked in it for more than 30 years himself. The Moscow Patriarchate did not object to his administration of the Diocese. The failure to confirm his appointment as Bishop of the Diocese has led to the distortion in ecclesial terms of the local church and rendered the running of its affairs impossible. In this light Bishop Basil's approach to the Ecumenical Patriarchate was not simply an option, but his duty and obligation as bearer of the Episcopal office and obedience. It was his duty to ensure that the diocese under his oversight is to be governed according to the canons of the Church.