

- 1 The Commission has been appointed with complete disregard to the Statutes of the Sourozh Diocese by which we have lived for more than 30 years under Metropolitan Anthony. The Patriarchate never made any objection to our churchmanship during the decades of our late Metropolitan's leadership of the Sourozh Diocese.

The findings of the Commission could not be valid because:

- 2 The Commission cannot be objective or be seen to be objective since most of its Members are under the very same body which has already ruled a judgment against Bishop Basil. For any desired objectivity, an investigative commission would need to be composed of appropriate independent members as is the law in this country.\*
- At the Diocesan Conference in Oxford on 26-29 May the Commission invited us, (implored us even), to speak to them. However dialogue with the Commission must surely require a two-way process – that of question and answer. It was this which presented a major problem. Commission was unable to answer any of the questions asked: instead, stock replies were given which made little or no reference to the questions asked.

- The Commission transgressed the usual procedures in this country by, for example, recording interviews with priests without their consent; there was no real understanding of the role of Chairman among the members of the Commission. The role of the Chair is not to speak himself but to field questions and summarise points made in order to maintain the structure of the discussion. Through lack of appointment of a Chairman the presiding Archbishop allowed little time for questions or discussion. This was a sharp and painful departure from the norm and the tradition of our conferences which has been built up over the past 30 years.

- In the same vein, a group of Russians spent the most part of an evening talking with Fr. Mikhail Dudko. Similarly, questions were constantly deflected, leaving a sense of enormous frustration at not being 'heard'. By the end of 3 days it had become quite clear that it was hopeless to attempt to pose questions to the Commission.

We would like to ask your Holiness to be mindful of some 60 years of faithful support given the country of Russia and the Moscow Patriarchate from afar by the trans-national Diocese of Sourozh and request that Your Holiness find time to take a personal interest in a right and just resolution of the current crisis.

Asking Your Holiness' blessing and prayers,  
With deepest respect,  
Some members of the Diocesan Assembly and a group of lay people of the Diocese,  
97 signatures available on request