



Bishop Basil (Osborne) is defrocked and laicised

The Holy Synod of the Patriarchate of Constantinople defrocked Bishop Basil (Osborne) and returned him to lay status due to his wish to marry again, as Archbishop Gabriel of Comana, head of the Archdiocese of Russian parishes under the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Constantinople **wrote in his letter** to the clerics and faithful of the Amphipolis deanery on 20 February 2010.

"Earlier this year [Bishop Basil] asked me to approach His All Holiness Bartholomew I on his behalf and request laicisation as it became clear to him that for his own well being he needs a family home and a chance to marry again. I have to inform you that the Holy Synod took the decision last week to return Bishop Basil to lay status." Archbishop Gabriel's letter reads.

"We have lost a bishop, that is true, but we still have a brother to love and support," Archbishop Gabriel underscored and called the faithful of the Amphipolis deanery not to condemn their former archpastor for his decision, reminding them that "Metropolitan Anthony taught us only to look at the person, not how he behaves."

Bishop Basil (Osborne) was born in 1938, married in 1962, ordained deacon by Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh in 1969, and priest in 1973. He became a widower in 1991, and on 7 March 1993 was consecrated Bishop of Sergievo, a vicar of the Sourozh diocese. On 30 July 2003, short before the demise of Metropolitan Antony, he was appointed administrator of the Sourozh diocese.

In April 2006, he announced his wish to enter the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Constantinople. On 9 May 2006, he was relieved of his duties as administrator of the Sourozh diocese and retired without the right of moving to another jurisdiction. On 8 June 2006, by the decision of the Synod of the Patriarchate of Constantinople he was received in the jurisdiction of this Church without a letter of release and appointed assistant bishop of Archbishop Gabriel of Comana with the title of 'Bishop of Amphipolis.'

In January 2007, representatives of the Patriarchate of Constantinople and the Patriarchate of Moscow discussed the case of Bishop Basil. On 16 May 2007, the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church resolved: "Taking into consideration a wish expressed by His Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople, in order to avoid further temptations among Orthodox believers on the British Isles and for the sake of ecclesiastical peace – to lift an earlier imposed ban from Bishop Basil (Osborne) and to grant him a letter of release for his moving to the Patriarchate of Constantinople."

In autumn 2009, the Synod of the Church of Constantinople granted Bishop Basil's request to retire, and Archbishop Gabriel of Comana notified clergymen and laymen of the Amphipolis Vicariate of this decision on 5 October 2009. Following the retirement of Bishop Basil the parishes of the Vicariate now constitute a deanery.

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