

# **Bulgarian Old Calendar Orthodox Church Clerical Court**

To His Reverence hieromonk Cassian, abbot of the  
monastery St. John the Baptist, Jablano

Sofia, 5 November (23 October old style) 2005  
Holy Apostle Jacob, Brother of God

Your Reverence,

Attached we send you the Decision of the Clerical Court of the Bulgarian Old Calendar Orthodox Church on church-penal case No. 2 of 4 November (22 October old style) 2005. We request that you acquaint with its contents the brothers of the monastery.

Secretary of the Clerical Court: *sgd.*  
(Zl. Zlatev)

## **BULGARIAN OLD CALENDAR ORTHODOX CHURCH CLERICAL COURT**

### **DECISION**

#### **ON CHURCH-PENAL CASE No. 2 of 2005**

**THE CLERICAL COURT** of the **BULGARIAN OLD CALENDAR ORTHODOX CHURCH** at its session held on 4 November (22 October, old style) 2005 in the town of Sofia, through its members:

**CHAIRMAN:** His Eminence Photius, Bishop of Triaditsa  
**Members:** their Reverence presbyter Constantine Djenkov and presbyter Nickolay Ivanov

With the secretary Zlati Zlatev, reviewed the church-penal case reported by his Reverence presbyter Constantine Djenkov against hieromonk Cassian (Angelov), abbot of the Jabliano monastery “St. John the Baptist”.

The session was held in connection with a decision of the Church Council of the Bulgarian Old Calendar Orthodox Church (Decision No. 48 of 28 October (15 October, old style) 2005) the case of hieromonk Cassian (Angelov) to be brought to a Clerical Court with the opinion to initiate a church-penal case against the above mentioned cleric. In order to pass a decision the Clerical Court took the following into consideration:

The conclusion of the investigation conducted by the Church Council of the Bulgarian Old Calendar Orthodox Church, in which has been collected, researched, and systematized information received of violations of spiritual and ethical nature in the governance, the life and the activity of the monastery “St. John the Baptist” under the guidance of His Reverence hieromonk Cassian (Angelov) gives sufficient grounds and even imposes the initiation of the proceedings on the present church-penal case.

The investigated data and clarifications form the following groups of violations:

1) The exercise on multiple occasions of physical violence on the part mainly of the abbot hieromonk Cassian. The explanation of hieromonk Cassian that he has inflicted light slaps to some of the brothers, so that those hit, as well as all others should have fear from him, and thus ensure that a strict order is created in the monastery, is unacceptable in the context of all reports of such acts on the part of hieromonk Cassian which have been received. And the attempts of some of the current brothers of the monastery to qualify such actions of the abbot not as physical violence, but as his disciplinary right with a marked beneficial effect on themselves, are an illustration of an unhealthy and extremely dangerous spiritual outlook by creating a cult attitude towards the person of hieromonk Cassian according to the axiom that “all that the spiritual leader does, is always unconditionally right and good” (see for comparison item 3).

Even for a single case of physical violence exercised on the part of a cleric the church canons are unequivocal: In the 27th rule of the Apostles it is said:(We order that a bishop or a priest, or deacon, who beats the sinning faithful... should be disordained from priesthood. Because our Lord has taught us not of that, but on the contrary – having been HIMSELF beaten, did not inflict blows...) And the 9th rule of the Double Council, by repeating the text of the Rule of the Apostles quoted, adds: (To God’s priests it becomes to bring to sense by instruction and conviction; sometimes by church epithymia, but not to strive against the human bodies by whips and lashes...).

2) Disregard for the church-hierarchical power on the part of hieromonk Cassian and disparaging attitude towards it in respect both of the Hierarch of the BOCOC and of the Church Council, as a body supporting the archpriest in governing. Such attitude – both direct, and indirect – towards Photius, Bishop of Triaditsa has been expressed in the letter of hieromonk Cassian to him of 3 March 2005 (new style) as well as in other written evidence. It should be added that during the conversation with the archpriest and the members of the Church Council hieromonk Cassian exhibited inadmissible, even from the perspective of a simple human decorum, disrespect towards them, chiefly through innuendos and hints, from which the bishop and the members of the Council had

themselves to guess the unequivocal meaning invested in them. Word goes of ironising, for marked lack of trust in the capabilities of the Church Council to resolve monastic problems, as well as allegations against the Church Council of injustice, proclaimed through the words of other persons. These summarized acts of hieromonk Cassian are a violation of the 55th Rule of the Apostles: (If someone from the clergy should inflict an insult upon the bishop, shall be expelled and also the related thereto 18th rule of the IV Ecumenical Council and 34th rule of the Trul Council).

3) Violations of church discipline. Inadmissible from the point of view of the church discipline is the journey of hieromonk Cassian without the blessing of his archpriest to Greece during the summer of 2005 for a meeting with the Hierarch of the Synod of Resistance, Metropolitan Cyprian, and attempting to impose on him his view on internal-church problems, which affect him himself. These acts of hieromonk Cassian, reflect his attempt to ensure to himself support or arbitration from the Hierarch of a sister-Church, by which we are connected with exemplary sincere relations, which is a gross violation of church-hierarchical order.

An especially worrying testimony to the spiritual atmosphere in the monastery is the letter of the monastery brothers of 12 March 2005 (new style), designated for distribution among the flock of the Bulgarian Old Style Orthodox Church. Despite the fact that the contents of this letter was known to hieromonk Cassian, he did nothing to stop its dissemination, by which he became its indirect co-author. In the letter there are strong praises for himself, with a clear implication that he is called righteous, against whom we must beware not to revolt. Strongly worrying are the data received about oddities in the behaviour of hieromonk Cassian and especially about his desire to impose his power, by attempting to break the will of novices and monks by inspiring fear and by applying thought-of psychological methods. In the cases described by various persons can be recognized the typical traits of a cult personality, which irrespective of its ability for clear understanding and assessment of his own motivation and acts, inflict grievous harm to the personalities and the spiritual life of his followers. Hieromonk Cassian himself, during his meeting with bishop Photius and the members of the Church Council relayed cases, which even if completely true, service the undisguised conceit of the teller, coupled with the exclusion of the possibility for his own mistakes and own guilt. Part of the deeds and acts are a violation of the 39th rule of the Apostles "Presbyters and deacons must do nothing without the will of their bishop...". Also of the 8th rule of the IV Ecumenical Council: "Clerics, [who serve] in monasteries ... shall be under the power of the bishops of the cities... Those who dare violate this provision in any way, and those who do not obey their bishop, if they are clerics, shall be punished according to the rules, if they are monks or laymen, shall be expelled from church communion".

4) The conversion of the economic activity to a significant extent into a priority of the monastery life, as well as the involvement into inappropriate from a spiritual and ethical standpoint property disputes. Many and varied are the specific data on the priority of the cares and efforts in the material field in the life of the monastery. Together with the cases of property disputes and irregularities, some of which are related to the appropriation of others' property, this priority introduces a dangerous imbalance in the monastery life between the spiritual and economic labour to the benefit of the latter. For spiritual occupations almost no time is left. This is a violation of the 4th rule of the IV Ecumenical Council, that monks in each town and country be in obedience to the bishop, remain in silence and exhibit diligence only in fasting and prayer.

#### **ON THE BASIS OF THE ABOVE AND AFTER TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THAT:**

1) Hieromonk Cassian and the brothers of the monastery exhibited the typical for a cult

personality and its followers complete conviction in their irrefutable righteousness and in the unconditional truthfulness of the data, opinions and assessments, which imposes a heavy blow upon the hope that they will exercise self-criticism and deliver penance.

2) Hieromonk Cassian and part of the monastery brothers unyieldingly attach to the understandings of important spiritual issues formed by them, which understandings in the view of the Clerical Court from an orthodox point of view are incorrect and harmful.

3) The lack of even the smallest response on the part of hieromonk Cassian and the brothers of the monastery towards the effort of the Church Council to preserve them from the extremely dangerous replacement of spiritual values with their misleading imitations, which displacement has been established in the life of the monastery.

4) The risk of the above mentioned **replacement** of spiritual values, conditioned in this case by a variety of factors and not least by the two way connection between the cult personality and its followers, imposing a grievous spiritual harm on the flock of the Bulgarian Old Style Orthodox Church.

5) The unwillingness of hieromonk Cassian to re-think in penance the highly disturbing and completely unacceptable position, maintained by him before the governing archpriest and the members of the Church Council, for which repentious re-thinking he was called upon by His Eminence Photius Bishop of Triaditsa in a letter of 25 September (12 September new style) 2005.

6) In spite of the deep compassion to the persons themselves it is inadmissible to make compromises in respect of issues, which affect and damage the depth of unity of our Church, the church-hierarchical order and the healthy orthodox church consciousness and the founding principles of a proper spiritual life

**THE CLERICAL COURT OF THE BULGARIAN OLD STYLE ORTHODOX CHURCH  
RESOLVED:**

**1) Hieromonk Cassian (Angelov), effective as of 6 November (24 October old style) 2005 shall not be considered a cleric of the Bulgarian Old Style Orthodox Church.**

**2) By calling upon the brothers of the monastery «St. John the Baptist» to exercise the highest spiritual and ethical responsibility, gives to them to make their choice on whether to remain under the guidance of hieromonk Cassian or to join in the execution of the Bulgarian Old Calendar Orthodox Church.**

This decision deprives hieromonk Cassian (Angelov) of the right to mention the name of the Hierarchy of the Bulgarian Old Calendar Orthodox Church, His Eminence Photius, Bishop of Triaditsa.

Within the shortest period of time the decision must be relayed to hieromonk Cassian (Angelov) with an invitation to acquaint with it the brotherhood at the monastery, as well as in a suitable short and clear form about it to be informed the clergy, the monks and the flock of all parishes and monasteries of the Bulgarian Old Calendar Orthodox Church.

CHAIRMAN: (sgd.) Photius, Bishop of Triaditsa

MEMBERS:

1). Priest (sgd.) Constantine Djenkov

2). (sgd.) Priest Nickolay Ivanov

True,

Secretary of the Clerical Court:

(Zl. Zlatev)