

Jerusalem, Feb. 26, 95

My dear Mr. Kopan

As I was reading again and again the letter of His Eminence Vassilios, I thought that, if you would agree to that, it would be nice to ask him certain questions to see what his response is going to be. Of course, it may provoke his anger but, I do not know how much you care for a friend like him and, I think that, if you really like to help him understand his mistake of supporting the Patriarch and the harm he did in his own name and self respect and also how much he harmed his chances of becoming a Patriarch him self, you could be firm in your criticism of his behavior in general concerning the fate of the Patriarchate and especially his stand towards my case and my efforts for a reorganization of the Patriarchate.

So, you can ask him, for example, why there is no budget presented every year to the Synod, since he claims that almost everything in the Patriarchate is OK and we would have no problem if we could get enough money to do what we have to do. (Actually we have more than enough to do our job, but we do not have enough to do what is our pleasure, whatever that may be.)

He says in his letter that the Patriarchate is doing " its best to fulfil its mission and guarantee its Orthodox presence in the Holy Places and safeguard its ownership in the Holy Shrines ". Some members of the Patriarchate are openly declaring , and he knows that, that we are going to lose the Holy Places and the Patriarchate in 10- 20 years. Is then this what he means by saying that the Patriarchate is doing its best?

Times indeed are difficult. However, what is the Patriarchate doing in order to face the times? Are we trying to built a strong brotherhood which will be able to face the challenges of the times? Are we trying to built for the future, the means which we will need to overcome the difficulties? or are we behaving in a manner which indicates complete disregard to the signs of the times, and which is completely the opposite of what it should be?

Is it true that the Patriarchate is doing the minimal possible effort in helping the communities, concerning the education both of the Clergy and the laity? (concerning this point , I am sending you an article written in a Greek newspaper and my response to it) .

He tells you not to pay attention to what other people say about the situation here. Is this the way we should go on? without listening to what other people say about our doings? Is this the Christian or the common sensical way of operating as a Patriarchate or even as an organization?

Concerning my actions ask him : Did you tell Bishop Nikiphoros what should he do? How he should act and behave? Or I should put it slightly differently, what did you do to help improve the situation? Because I do not take as an alternative the solution of doing nothing ourselves but leave everything in the hands of the Divine Providence. Then what are we supposed to be doing here? Just eat and sleep and enjoy the ride?

He is suggesting that I show penitence and ask for the Patriarch's forgiveness. But ask forgiveness for what ? for protesting his destruction of the Patriarchate? Shouldn't we all be doing the same thing, that is, protesting and taking action to correct everything that is wrong in the operation of the Patriarchate?

Then he asks you to write to the Patriarch and ask him to have mercy on me. Why can't he, the first Bishop in the Patriarchate, the General Patriarchal Representative, the acting Patriarch when the Patriarch is not present, do that? Why can't he ask the Patriarch, and why he thinks that you have more chances to convince the Patriarch?

. Also ask him, why this matter should be left in the discretion of the Patriarch? Is there not a Synod which should be making the final decision? or is it true, as Bishop Nikiphoros claims that the Patriarch is a dictator and listens to nobody, be it the Synod or anybody else?

And does it not indicate that the problem is only between me and the Patriarch because I openly criticized his policies? And if this is so why then nobody in the Synod objected my punishment but all of them signed without any second thought? The Patriarch claims that it was a decision of the whole Synod. Why doesn't Vassilios ask you to write to the Synod but rather only to the Patriarch? I am sure you do understand why.

Well, these are some thoughts that came to my mind and, of course, you can ask him more things, concerning the situation, in general.

One more thing I would like to ask you. Could I use Vassilios letter to you , if I have to?

With these thoughts and with my best wishes to you I remain,

With much love in Christ

+ Bishop Nikiphoros