



Българска Патриаршия

Bulgarian Eastern Orthodox Diocese  
of The USA, Canada and Australia

550-A West 50th Street • New York, NY 10019 • USA • 1.212.246.4608

Most Rev. Metropolitan Joseph

April 07, 2009

PERSONAL & CONFIDENTIAL

Mrs. X [REDACTED]

Dear Mrs. X [REDACTED],

Glory to Jesus Christ!

As You know, You wrote to me on February 24, 2009 with allegations of misconduct against The Very Reverend Simeon Gitlis of St. Isaac of Syria Skete, which You allege occurred at different times while You were a resident there from approximately May 1995 through February 1999.

I previously wrote to You on March 05, 2009 advising You that Your allegations would be investigated by the Diocesan authorities.

This letter reports on the results of that investigation.

It is our Diocesan policy, upon receipt of a written complaint, to suspend any clergy against whom allegations are made. Please, be advised that Your complaint was received on February 25, 2009 and that on February 26, 2009, The Very Reverend Simeon Gitlis was suspended in accordance with that policy. Since then, he has not served as a priest nor otherwise been permitted to engage in other priestly duties including pastoral care.

On March 28, 2009, the Spiritual Court of the Diocese considered Your complaint and made inquiries about it. Please, be advised that The Very Reverend Simeon Gitlis has been deposed from the sacred functions of the Holy Priesthood and we have removed him as Abbod of St. Isaac of Syria Skete and returned him to the status of simple monk. We have advised the Holy Synod of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church of this action and have notified the other canonical Orthodox Churches in the United States.

Your February 24, 2009 letter inquires potential civil or monetary recoveries and the welfare of Monk A [REDACTED] and Nun E [REDACTED]. The property of St. Isaac of Syria Skete

Mrs. X [REDACTED]

April 07, 2009

Page 2

does not belong to the Bulgarian Eastern Orthodox Diocese of the USA, Canada and Australia, but rather is independently owned by a nonprofit corporation. This Diocese has neither representation nor control of that corporation. Regarding Monk [REDACTED] and Nun E [REDACTED] we have expressed our pastoral care to them and will continue to consult with them about where to live their monastic lives. Your allegation from the perspective of this Diocese have thus been addressed and resolved according to canonical norms.

I also want to advise You that we received on March 23, 2009 letter from Mrs. Melanie Jula Sakoda of [www.pokrov.org](http://www.pokrov.org). Although we have extended to Mrs. Sakoda the courtesy of acknowledging receipt of her letter, we have directed this response to You alone.

Mrs. Sakoda asked whether this Diocese referred Your allegations to law enforcement. Inasmuch as the alleged matters did not happen while The Very Reverend Simeon Gitlis was affiliated with the Bulgarian Eastern Orthodox Diocese of the USA, Canada and Australia, truly, we are not a party with first-hand knowledge or even a relationship with any parties involved during the period of Your allegations.

Lacking that capacity, this Diocese can make no factual statements to law enforcement and, accordingly, we are ill-placed to make a referral.

Please, be assured of my earnest and prayerful hope for Your welfare, the welfare of Your husband J [REDACTED] and family, and the spiritual health of all involved.

Have a Blessed and Joyous Pascha!

With love in the Risen Lord,



( + Metropolitan JOSEPH )