

## TO THE HOLY SYNOD OF THE SERBIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

THE SERBIAN PATRIARCHATE, BELGRADE

February 20, 2020

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*Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves,  
and blown here and there by every wind of teaching  
and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming.  
Instead, speaking the truth in love,  
we will grow to become in every respect  
the mature body of him who is the Head, that is, Christ.  
Ephesians 4:14-15*

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Your Holiness,  
Your Eminence,  
Your Graces:

As faithful children, communicants, and benefactors of our Holy Serbian Orthodox Church, we write to express our steadfast support for our bishops in America: Their Graces Bishop Longin, Bishop Maxim, and Bishop Irinej. Recent slanderous articles and petitions to you by a vocal and unchurched minority oblige us before the public and before the Holy Synod to raise our voices openly in support of our archpastors—and to *speak the truth in love*.

We humbly submit to you that the Church of Saint Sava in America is among the most dynamic parts of our church anywhere in the world. This is evidenced by our faithful's regular attendance of divine services, participation in the divine mysteries, and generous stewardship to support the ministries of our dioceses and parishes; by the many active programs for youth and adult education at all levels of church organization; by the frequent and impressive publishing of religious literature; by continuous humanitarian and charitable activities and active hospital ministries; and by defending our brothers and sisters in our ancestral homeland, by educating our nation's government about their oppression. All of these efforts have been inspired and fostered by our bishops who deserve to be commended for their work and their leadership. Indeed, our bishops are honored and respected for their ministries even more widely in the Pan-Orthodox community which is the reality in our country.

Petitions and letters sent to the Holy Synod based on outright lies, half-truths, rumors, or presenting facts out-of-context cannot be the basis for any action which would bring any good to our Church and her faithful children here. Anyone who claims to the Holy Synod that Bishop Longin, Bishop Maxim, or Bishop Irinej seek to separate our dioceses from the Serbian Orthodox Church is either unknowing and ill-informed, or lying with malicious intent. Indeed, it appears that this disinformation is being generated and disseminated by a small group of detractors—while the vast majority of our parishes and faithful in America remain peacefully supportive of our bishops. We

urge you not to heed the ill-informed calls to action of these few detractors at the risk of disturbing the peace and harmony of the much larger majority.

We trust and hope, dear Synodal fathers, that you will have the ability and wisdom to discern the true, ulterior motives of the few who create and raise public controversies in the life of the church in America for their own personal reasons. “By their fruit you will recognize them” (Matthew 7:16). And we hope that you will give due consideration to our joint letter as well, given our years of filial devotion and service to Christ’s Church and Svetosavlje in America and throughout the world.

Yours faithfully,

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