



June 7, 2023

SNAP

Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests

PO Box 16376

Chicago IL 60616

Archbishop Alexander Golitzin

519 Brynhaven Dr.

Oregon, OH 43616-2809

SENT BY EMAIL: alexander@bdoca.org

Re: Archpriest Benjamin Henderson

Dear Archbishop Golitzin:

It has come to our attention that a recently deceased Archpriest under your omophorion [apparently continued to bear his title](#), despite being [a registered sex offender](#). We are appalled that Archpriest Benjamin Henderson, a cleric convicted of possessing child pornography, was never defrocked.

We know that [Archpriest Henderson was suspended from ministry on April 16, 2021](#), albeit with no public notification of the reason for that suspension. We also know that he was arrested [earlier for possession of child pornography](#). We applaud you for your swift action in suspending this clergyman when [you were finally made aware of the charges against him](#).

However, you acknowledged in your letter to Archpriest Henderson that “such charges clearly demonstrate conduct contrary to the Sexual Misconduct Policy.” We are then left puzzled as to why the cleric’s subsequent conviction on those charges was not an occasion for additional discipline? Surely you must have been aware of that development? We call on you to explain why a registered sex offender, whose suspension was never lifted as far as we can tell, got to retain the title of “Archpriest.”

Child pornography is **NOT** a victimless crime. The images of those very real boys and girls who appear in the photos and videos are traded and used indefinitely, leading to a lifetime of victimization. Moreover, studies have shown a strong correlation between those downloading child pornography and child sexual abuse. 50 percent of those who consume such material also admit to abusing children.

We cannot help but wonder if Archpriest Henderson will receive all the honors at his funeral as would a man who was not a registered sex offender? We hope not. We believe that honoring perpetrators endangers children because it deters victims, witnesses, and whistle blowers from speaking up and exposing abusers.



We urge you to give a complete and transparent account as to why this travesty occurred, as well as to do outreach to every parish where Archpriest Henderson worked in your Archdiocese, begging anyone who may have experienced abuse by this clergyman to come forward and get help. Finally, we believe that you should also inform any other OCA dioceses, or other Orthodox jurisdictions or religious institutions where Archpriest Henderson previously worked of his conviction, so that they can do the same.

It is never too late to do the right thing, and publicizing this important information about Archpriest Henderson to those who may be suffering alone and in silence from crimes committed by him is surely the proper thing to do. Sunshine is the best disinfectant.

Sincerely,

Shaun Dougherty, President

SNAP Board of Directors

sdougherty@snapnetwork.org

814-341-8386

Michael McDonnell

SNAP Communications Manager

mmcdonnell@snapnetwork.org

267-261-0578

Melanie Sakoda

SNAP Survivor Support Coordinator

925-708-6175

msakoda@snapnetwork.org

Cc: Metropolitan Tikhon Mollard, metropolitan@oca.org

Archpriest Alexander Rentel, chancellor@oca.org

Bernie Wilson, bwilson@oca.org

Bishop Gerasim Eliel, geliel7@yahoo.com

Archpriest Marcus C. Burch, chancellor@dosoca.org