



## His Holiness Patriarch Kirill meets with H.E. Margus Laidre, Estonia's Ambassador to Russia



On 5 March 2019, at the Patriarchal and Synodal residence in St. Daniel's Monastery in Moscow, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia met with H.E. Mr. Margus Laidre, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Estonia to the Russian Federation.

They were joined in the meeting by Archimandrite Philaret (Bulekov), vice-chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations, and Ms. Piret Reintamm Benno, Minister-Counsellor of the Estonian Embassy.

Greeting the high guest, the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church thanked him for taking part in the celebrations that marked the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his Patriarchal ministry.

"When speaking about Estonia, I recall my childhood. My parents would often spend summer in Estonia, either in Kuremäe or in Pärnu," His Holiness said, "For the first time I visited the Pühtitsa Convent with

my mother in 1955. Back then Estonia was quite different, everything was different. The convent was in a difficult situation. Right in front of the entrance to the abode there was a hospital; its head physician was a radical atheist who set himself the task of closing the convent. I remember that once, when I came there for Easter season, I was very upset, because he had hanged huge loudspeakers, directing them towards the convent, and would turn on march music, making it difficult for people to pray. That was how we lived.”

Patriarch Kirill added that his later visits to the convent left very warm and good impressions. These were home lands for Patriarch Alexy II of blessed memory. “We came there together, therefore, it is an important part of my biography,” His Holiness concluded.

In response H.E. Margus Laidre said, in particular, “I have not been to Moscow for 12 years. I am very surprised in a good way, but not so much at the city, as at the churches. My spouse and I had a tradition: every Sunday we went to some small church. We were very impressed by the beauty of the Russian people, by their spirituality. These traditions did not die away.”

*DECR Communication Service*

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