



Metropolitan Vladimir of Kishinev and All Moldova's open letter on situation around Pochaev Monastery

The Ukrainian Ministry of Justice commission, in response to a complaint from the Ministry of Culture, has recently cancelled the state registration of the right to use the Pochaev Laura of the Dormition's Cathedral of the Dormition, Cathedral of the Trinity, monastic cells, belfry, Archbishop's House and Holy Gates. Metropolitan Vladimir of Kishinev and All Moldova has appealed to Ukrainian President Petr Poroshenko with an open letter expressing concern over the situation and called upon the Ukrainian leadership to fulfil their constitutional function as guarantor of the preservation of freedom and religious peace in the country.

'The Pochaev Laura of the Dormition, which the faithful of the Republic of Moldova love so much to visit, is above all a true stronghold of our faith for the whole Orthodox world. It has been safeguarded for many years with special devotion in spite of all the hardships and misfortunes', the letter reads. As Metropolitan Vladimir underscores, in the years of trials and in the period of reviving religious life, it is the Pochaev Laura that 'has become a real school of spiritual and moral education in which the Orthodox conscience of our faithful has been formed'.

'In the Republic of Moldova, with our blessing, an annual tradition has taken root to hold a foot procession with the cross to the Pochaev Laura. A great many Moldovan pilgrims take part in it to take upon themselves this blessed feat in order to solicit the intercession of the Mother of God, Ss Job and Amphilochius and all the ascetics and spiritual fathers who tirelessly serve on Pochaev Mount'.

The open letter states that the Synod of the Orthodox Church of Moldova, the clergy and all the pious Moldavian people express support for all the clergy and Ukrainian people who obey the only canonical Ukrainian Orthodox Church, which preserves and hands down the inviolable Truth to future generations.

'With special anxiety we follow the deep crisis into which the Ukrainian Orthodox Church has been driven. Its aim is to sow religious enmity among the Ukrainian population'.

'In the context of the above, we call upon the Ukrainian leaders to fulfil their constitutional role as guarantors of the preservation of freedom and religious peace in the country, and we, on our part, will enhance our prayers to All-Merciful God that He may grant us peace and the unity of faith, according to the call of St. Paul: *to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace* (Eph. 4:3)'.

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