



Sisters of Pühtitsa Convent send open letter to Estonian Parliament concerning proposed amendments to Law on Churches and Congregations



DECR Communication Service, 11/02/2025

*The Pühtitsa Convent's website published an **open letter** by Abbess Filareta (Kalacheva) and sisters of the abode to the Parliament of the Republic of Estonia concerning the amendments to the Law on Churches and Congregations aimed at forcing the convent to change its jurisdiction or face liquidation. The text of the letter is given below.*

Dear ministers, dear chairman of Parliament, dear members of Parliament!

We address you after reviewing the proposed amendments to the Law on Churches and Congregations of the Republic of Estonia.

We understand the purpose of the bill i.e. to compel the Estonian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate (EOCMP) to change its jurisdiction and come under the auspices of Constantinople.

Despite our repeated explanations that the monastery cannot unilaterally initiate or renounce its jurisdiction, our concerns have gone unheard. The legal aspect of the document is managed by the lawyers. We are plain-hearted monastics who have never been dissembled in our dealings with those in power. Now, we say the same to you and to society – both before God and before people we are sincere in what we stand for.

In the 1990s, the Convent renounced all its property entirely, uncompromisingly, and without any claims, returning it to the state for the sake of maintaining its spiritual connection with the Mother Church. We have consistently honoured the terms of the agreement reached at that time.

Undoubtedly, you fully understand the implications of adopting these amendments. By doing so, you are effectively placing the monastery outside the law, presenting us with only two options: either change jurisdiction or face coercive dissolution. You are well aware that your actions are leading essentially to the closure of the monastery. Do you wish to go down in Estonia's history as parliamentarians who forced the closure of a world-renowned Orthodox Convent in Estonia that has existed for over a century? It is baffling that the government would place the responsibility for this situation on the monastic community, holding us accountable for decisions made by politicians. We have withdrawn from worldly life; we are far removed from political concerns, leading our lives outside of politics, serving God through prayer and labour. Yet, we are being dragged into political disputes and accused of refusing to engage in dialogue.

We would like to remind you of the story of the long-suffering Job from the Old Testament. Job lived righteously before God and was loved by Him. Yet the adversary of humanity, envious of Job, claimed that he was righteous only because God blessed him with abundance. If stripped of everything, Job would curse God. In response, God allowed the devil to do as he wished with Job, with one condition, that he would not touch Job's soul, for the soul belongs to God alone. We urge you to reflect on this...

The authors of the bill are pressuring us to commit a canonical offense, justifying it with claims that they are acting in the monastery's best interest. To this, we respond with the words of the ancient sage Socrates: "Plato is dear to me, but dearer still is the TRUTH."

To all the falsehoods leveled against our sacred and beloved monastery, we, its humble residents, reply with one phrase: **Let GOD be your JUDGE!**

Sincerely,
Abbess Filareta with her sisters