



Dear Members of Parliament!

Dear members of the Estonian Council of Churches!

We address you at a crucial moment for our Convent. The Pühtitsa Monastery has become a hostage in the clash of political forces, which ultimately threatens its very existence. However, as you may well know, the monastery and its nuns have always remained outside of politics. Our aspirations are directed toward Heaven – in other words, toward the life of the age to come. This is the foundation of our existence. However, the circumstances have now unfolded in such a way that it is simply impossible for us to remain silent. With great confusion and sorrow, we perceive attempts to make us, the nuns of the Pühtitsa Monastery, responsible for what is happening on the political stage.

From the Statement issued by Parliament in April of this year, it follows that a direct connection with the Russian Orthodox Church will be regarded as a threat to Estonia's security. For the Pühtitsa Monastery, this sounds like a verdict. According to the logic of this Statement, the Convent and its residents, whose average age is 60, are being hence transformed into a sort of subversive, terrorist organization. Surely, you would agree that this sounds absurd.

The catalyst for this situation were the well-known words of Patriarch Kirill. We would like to emphasize that we do not share the position expressed in those words, and our prayer has always been – and will continue to be – a prayer not for military victories, but for the gift of peace.

The Convent is 133 years old. Throughout this time, prayers for the well-being of Estonia, for the peace and prosperity in the Estonian land, and for the welfare of the Estonian people have been always offered within its walls. We would like you to know this and to always remember it.

We address you as politicians of the 21st century, bearing the bitter experience of the past century, marked by wars, state violence, and horrific acts of genocide. Therefore, it is our belief that in all your decisions, you would first remember the human being – the simple human being.

Every policy, in one way or another, affects the individual—especially a policy in such a sensitive area as the relationship between Church and State. We believe that parliamentarians—people who stand as guardians of the Law—should not demand that we violate the Law of the Church.

In this context, allow us to recall the words of Jaan Lattik, Estonia's Minister of Foreign Affairs (1928-1931) and Minister of Education (1925-1927), a writer and theologian, who spoke out against state interference in the matters of faith.

Esteemed members of Parliament and the Council of Churches of Estonia! Hear our voice! **For more than half a year now, the idea of a threat to the Estonian Republic emanating from the Convent has been propagated within Estonian**

society. We are being forced to violate the Church's Statute. In essence, we are being pushed out of the legal framework and reduced to outcasts, second-class citizens with whom one can act without regard for the demands of law and morality. What is happening now can be compared to the violence exerted by someone, undeniably stronger, against an indisputably weaker one?

Is it permissible in a democratic state to show such blatant disregard for the legitimate rights of a religious organization? Are you indifferent to what the international community will say about this? Does this flagrant injustice, of which you are becoming participants, whether willingly or unwillingly, not trouble your conscience?

We address you in the hope that common sense and love for Estonia will lead you to see the true state of affairs. Leave us out of politics! We wish to be only with Christ!

We sincerely ask you to preserve the Status Quo of the Pühtitsa Convent.



**Abbess of the Pühtitsa Dormition Stavropigic Convent
mother superior Filareta (Kalacheva) with her sisters**