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Patriarch Kirill Boldly Enters Russian Social Media

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A screenshot of Patriarch's new VKontakte page

Patriarch Kirill, head of the Russian Orthodox Church, launched an account on the country's most popular social network VKontakte on Sunday in a bid to connect with the more social media savvy among his followers.

He planned for the move to coincide with the Day of Slavic Literature and Culture, which Russia celebrates each year on May 24, the RIA Novosti state news agency reported.

The head of the Russian Orthodox Church's Synodal Information Department, Vladimir Legoyda, said the VKontakte page was launched in a bid to reach out to believers on Russia's most popular social media site.

He compared the initiative to "missionary work," asserting that saints Cyril and Methodius would have approved of the undertaking, RIA Novosti reported.

"The Church must not forget about this [social media savvy] part of its congregation," RIA

Novosti quoted Legoyda as saying Sunday.

The page will be kept by the Church's Synodal Information Department and the most relevant questions and comments will be passed on to the patriarch, according to RIA Novosti. Patriarch Kirill, who already boasts an official Facebook page, had more than 31,000 followers within hours of launching the page, with his flock growing by the minute.

Patriarch Kirill led a liturgy Sunday at the Christ the Savior Cathedral in Moscow, before taking part in celebrations of the Day of Slavic Literature and Culture on Red Square.

"Because Russia is a power that has an impact on the whole world, we can truly influence the world through a synthesis [of morality and education]," RIA Novosti quoted Patriarch Kirill as saying Sunday.

The Day of Slavic Literature and Culture commemorates saints Cyril and Methodius, ninth-century brothers credited with devising the Cyrillic alphabet.

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