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Russian Priest Tells Men Not to Shave to 'Protect From Homosexuality'

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Donat Sorokin / TASS

A religious leader for Russia's Old Believers has called on Russian men to stop shaving to "protect themselves from homosexuality."

Metropolitan Kornily, Primate of the Russian Orthodox Old Believer Church (RPSC), said that men with beards were less likely "corrupted" by same-sex relationships.

"God set down certain rules. The Lord created everyone with a beard. No man can resist his creator," Kornily told Russia's National News Service. "It's made a monstrous thing to see men's clothing and hairstyles changing."

Metropolitan Kornily also lamented that the beard's special status had "completely disappeared from the Catholic West."

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Russia's Old Believers split from the Russian Orthodox Church in 1666 after protesting against reforms made by Patriarch Nikon of Moscow.

Old Believer communities are found throughout the world, with many fleeing Stalinist repression during the Soviet era.

Russian President Vladimir Putin was the first head of state to visit an Old Believer church in 350 years when he visited the RSPC Rogozhsky spiritual center in Moscow in May 2017.

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