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Head of Russian Orthodox Church Proposes Exorcism As Cure for Mental Illness

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Head of the Russian Orthodox Church Patriarch Kirill **Russian Government**

Patriarch Kirill, the head of the Russian Orthodox Church, has defended exorcism as a helpful practice for healing people who suffer from various mental health problems.

Driving out demons might help in cases where professional psychological counselors fail, the state news agency RIA Novosti cited him as saying on Monday.

Trained psychiatrists often come up against cases of mental illness which are impossible to explain from a scientific point of view, Kirill said during his visit to a convent in Veliki Novgorod.

The Patriarch slammed skeptics who call the Church's tradition of driving out demons as "unscientific," stressing that "demonic power is real and anyone can fall victim unless protected by the Church."

“Everyone who has ever attended an exorcism has witnessed how priests often defeat those terrible forces of evil,” Kirill said.

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