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Russian Orthodox Bishop Warns Faithful Not to Vote for 'Dark' Putin

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Bishop Yevtikhy Kurochkin / Vkontakte

A Russian Orthodox clergyman has spoken for the first time against voting for Vladimir Putin's re-election this spring over recent comments the president made which he described as "blasphemous."

Putin raised controversy in the Orthodox Christian community last week by comparing the Bolshevik revolutionary Vladimir Lenin's tomb to "holy relics" in a documentary about the Valaam Monastery.

Related article: Putin Compares Communism to Christianity

Bishop Eutyches Kurochkin of the Epiphany Cathedral in Ishim said Putin's comparison of communism to Christianity was "utterly blasphemous."

“Shall I go against Christ and vote for darkness, or advise others to do so?! No, no, no!” Rev. Eutyches wrote on his Vkontakte last week.

By contrast, Patriarch Kirill, the head of the Russian Orthodox church and Putin’s ally since his return to the presidency in 2012, has called on believers to vote in the coming elections scheduled for March 18.

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