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RELIGIOUS EDUCATION WOULD HELP PREVENT SCHOOL SHOOTINGS—PATRIARCH KIRILL



High quality religious education in schools would help prevent school shootings, believes His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia.

The Patriarch met with teachers of the foundations of religious cultures and secular ethics in Moscow yesterday.

“No matter how much those who are against any mention of religion in school talk about secularism and about how the school shouldn’t touch on questions of faith in God, in the end, we see young people who, calling themselves ‘gods,’ and others ‘ biowaste,’ take up arms and go to kill, not knowing that God isn’t putting yourself above others, not some proud right to judge and sentence people to life or death, but rather love and light,” His Holiness said.

The Patriarch referred to the recent school shootings and bombings in Kerch, Kazan, and Perm, which had a “pseudo-religious” element. Familiarity with true religious values could have prevented such tragedies, the Russian primate told the

teachers.

On May 11 this year, Ilnaz Renatovich Galyaviev killed nine people and injured 23 others at a school in Kazan. On the morning of the shooting he posted a photo of himself in a mask with the word “God” written on it, captioned: “Today I will kill a huge amount of biowaste and shoot myself.”

“If we don’t want someone to write illiterately, we teach him spelling. If we don’t want them to make mathematical mistakes, we teach them mathematics… To protect children from an incorrect or distorted perception of religion, we should give them the chance to learn the religious traditions of our people, which have formed a system of moral values, underlying the generally accepted behavioral norms and laws,” Pat. Kirill exhorted.

He also emphasized that the teachers themselves must be well qualified to teach about religion, and must make every effort to make the lessons engaging.

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