

Customs Officer Disrupts Palm Sunday Service by Stripping

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A child carrying the necessities at Palm Sunday church services: pussy willows and a lighted candle. Because palms are rare, most worshipers substitute pussy willows to mark Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem. One service was interrupted Sunday by a man who removed his clothes. **Vladimir Filonov**

Palm Sunday services were interrupted at a majestic Moscow cathedral when a customs officer stripped down to his underwear and tried to enter the pulpit, Interfax reported.

The officer, who holds the rank of lieutenant, was detained by police at the Epiphany Cathedral, a golden-domed edifice near the Baumanskaya metro station where Patriarch Alexey II was buried in 2008.

"The priests told the police that a man had walked into the cathedral with signs of mental illness, mumbled something, and tried to undress," an unidentified law enforcement official told Interfax.

Police took the man to the local precinct, where they identified him as Alexander Darakov, 29, and determined that he was sober, news site Argumenty.ru reported.

Police then summoned a psychiatrist to examine him. It was not clear what charges, if any, he might face.

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