

Clergyman Crashes Sports Car With Maltese Diplomatic Plates

By [The Moscow Times](#)

August 14, 2012

The  Moscow Times

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A Moscow clergyman driving a sports car with red diplomatic number plates smashed into two other cars, causing thousands of dollars of damage and injuries to other motorists.

Eyewitnesses wrote to Gazeta.ru, saying Alexei Podobedov, a senior priest at Moscow's Church of the Holy Prophet Ilya, was responsible for the crash and intoxicated at the time.

The priest's lawyer insisted that his client wasn't drunk, had a history of illness and had borrowed the car owned by the Maltese Embassy strictly for work purposes.

The crash occurred July 31 at 11:30 p.m. on Zatsesky Val, a section of the Garden Ring near

metro Paveletskaya, when a blue BMW Z4 driven by Podobedov collided first with a Volkswagen Touareg and then with a Toyota Corolla driving in the opposite direction, Gazeta.ru reported Monday.

It was not immediately clear why it took two weeks for the incident to come to light.

In a video of the aftermath of the crash posted on YouTube, ambulances and traffic police are seen alongside the smashed-up BMW. The news portal said all those involved in the accident were injured, without elaborating further.

Late Monday, church spokesman Vsevolod Chaplin called on traffic police to investigate the crash in a radio interview. Chaplin said the church would give its own assessment of the incident.

Podobedov, whose preaches under the name Timofei, made headlines in April when he baptized the surrogate daughter of Russian pop star Filipp Kirkorov.

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