

Religious Pilgrimages on Blimp or Bike Not Real, Orthodox Church Says

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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An Orthodox priest blesses the Soyuz rocket at the Kazakhstan Baikonur Cosmodrome Launch pad in May 2012.

Pilgrimages on blimps, helicopters, bikes and other forms of transport that have become popular in recent years do not qualify as religious processions, a Russian Orthodox Church official told RIA Novosti on Tuesday.

"A religious procession is a divine service whose main content is prayer. Moreover, such processions require certain determination: People commit their physical strength as a sacrifice to God and connect it with prayer," Vsevolod Chaplin, archpriest and spokesman of the Orthodox Church told the state-run news agency.

Religious processions on bikes, boats, airships and other vehicles have become common in Russia during the last decade. The Sakhalin-Siberia 2014 bike procession began Tuesday, and will see participants cycle 781 kilometers over southern Siberia.

In 2010, monks from the Nikolo-Tikhonov monastery suggested attempting to extinguish the massive wildfires then consuming central Russia by sprinkling holy water on them. The Orthodox Church did not support their initiative.

During World War II, the icon of Our Lady of Kazan was flown by plane around Moscow, after which the city was successfully defended against the advancing Nazis.

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