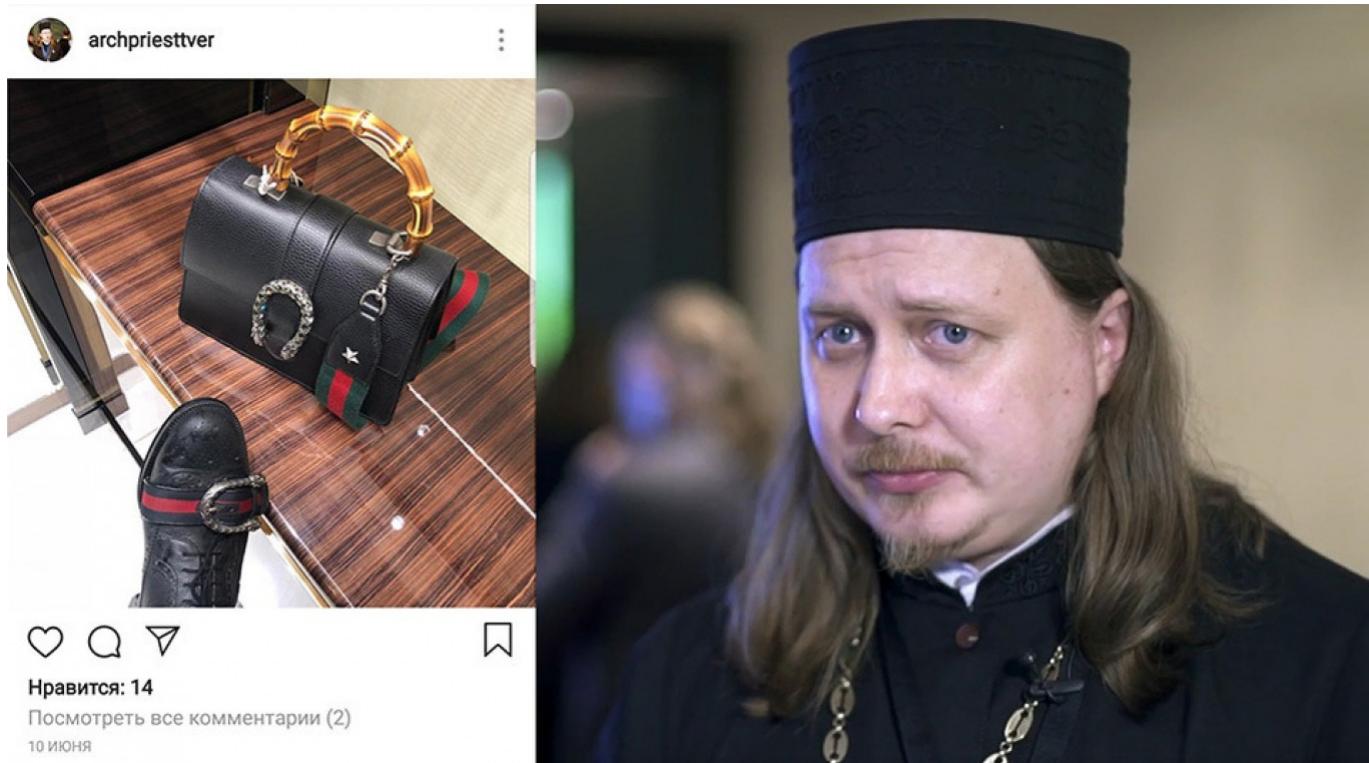


Russian Priest Apologizes for Gucci Photos, Says He Was Fighting for Freedom

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Vyacheslav Baskakov / Youtube

A Russian Orthodox priest who was condemned by the church this week for professing his love of luxury clothing brands on Instagram has issued an apology, explaining his past social media activity as a “fight for freedom.”

A church spokesman said Sunday that Vyacheslav Baskakov, the priest in the Tver region who featured in a series of photographs with Gucci and Louis Vuitton accessories, would be investigated by a church disciplinary committee that would attempt to “return him to his senses.” The Instagram account that published the pictures has since been deleted.

Related article: [Russian Priest Investigated After Flaunting 'Gucci' Lifestyle on Instagram](#)

“I am very ashamed and I bear full responsibility for this,” Baskakov wrote in a letter [carried](#) by the Ahila Christian news outlet.

“I will pay penance and close Instagram, since I do not know how to behave modestly and adequately,” Baskakov wrote.

The priest explained that he had posted the controversial photographs due to a social media habit of “posting everything that was pleasant and not sinful.”

“I tried to be an open person. I was warned [against it], but I fought for this freedom,” he added.

In the letter, Baskakov admitted that he was the owner of the Instagram account that had published the photographs, but said that some of the featured accessories, including the Gucci slippers, did not belong to him.

“The majority of the pictures were taken inside shops...No priest can afford such things. And what for?” he wrote.

The priest, who says he suffers from neuralgia and is currently in the hospital, wrote that a doctor had once told him that a “change of scenery,” including wearing different clothes, could help offset his symptoms.

“So that’s what it came to, changing what I could — [my] shoes and scarf,” he said.

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