The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russian Priest Suspended After Navalny Memorial Service

April 24, 2024

Priest Dmitry Safronov at the grave of Alexei Navalny. **SOTAvision**

The Russian Orthodox Church has suspended a priest who led a memorial service for the late opposition figure Alexei Navalny last month, according to a ruling on the Moscow diocese website.

Priest Dmitry Safronov performed a memorial service at Navalny's gravesite in Moscow on March 26, 40 days after the Kremlin critic died in an Arctic prison. According to Orthodox tradition, memorial services for the dead are traditionally held on the 40th day after their death.

An order signed by Russian Orthodox Church leader Patriarch Kirill bans Safronov from giving blessings, wearing the frock and carrying the clerical cross for three years starting April 15, 2024.

Patriarch Kirill is a close ally of President Vladimir Putin and has strongly backed Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine.

Safronov was also transferred to another Moscow church and demoted in his duties to be a psalm-reader there.

The Moscow diocese did not provide a reason for suspending Safronov.

In addition to leading Navalny's memorial, Safronov was among the priests who had called on Russian prison authorities to return Navalny's body to his family after his death and had reportedly refused to recite a prayer for Russia's victory in Ukraine.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2024/04/24/russian-priest-suspended-after-navalny-memorial-service-a84940