



A Celebration of a Greekalicious book

Greek-Australian Maria Benardis, founder of Greekalicious cooking school, welcomes Sydney to her table, to celebrate the release of her first cookbook "My Greek Family Table". The epic dinner is themed around the stunning hard cover book – a feast for the senses - hitting the stands across the country this month. Written with passion and beautifully photographed, My Greek Family Table is a personal invitation to experience all the depth and flavour of Greek food. In these 100 recipes, passed between the generations, you will find time-honoured classics such as moussaka and souvlakia, as well as modern adaptations of traditional dishes – spicy ouzo keftedes and filo pizza with lamb. Alongside are the intimate tales of family life: an aunt learning to make Greek Easter bread in war-ravaged Kalamata; a generation of relatives arriving to make a new home in Australia, their suitcases bulging with their beloved ingredients; the author as a child keeping a secret vegie garden on the island of Psara. Like the book, the dinner features Benardis's favourite recipes, passed between the generations; and is a rare invitation to enjoy Greek food the way Greek families have always done. With depth, flavour and the tradition of krasma - offering food with love!

Greek Church acts on crucifix ban

The Greek Orthodox Church is urging Christians across Europe to unite in an appeal against a ban on crucifixes in classrooms in Italy.

The European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg ruled last week that the presence of crucifixes violated a child's right to freedom of religion.

Greece's Orthodox Church fears the Italian case will set a precedent.

It has called an emergency Holy Synod meeting for next week to devise an action plan.

Although the Greek Orthodox Church has been at odds with Roman Catholicism for 1,000 years, the judicial threat to Christian symbols has acted as a unifying force.

The European Court of Human Rights found that the compulsory display of crucifixes violated par-



ents' rights to educate their children as they saw fit and restricted the right of children to believe or not to believe.

'Worthy symbols'

The head of the Greek Church, Archbishop Ieronymos, shares Catholic complaints that the court is ignoring the role of Christianity in forming Europe's identity.

It is not only minorities that have rights but

majorities as well, said the archbishop.

One of his subordinates, Bishop Nicholas from central Greece, lamented that at this rate youngsters will not have any worthy symbols at all to inspire and protect them.

Football and pop idols are very poor substitutes, he said.

The Greek Church has ostensibly intervened in this case in response to an appeal by a Greek mother

whose son is studying in Italy.

But without doubt it is concerned that its omnipotence in Greece is under threat.

A human rights group called Helsinki Monitor is seeking to use the Italian case as a precedent.

It has demanded that Greek courts remove icons of Jesus Christ from above the judge's bench and that the gospel no longer be used for swearing oaths in the witness box.

Helsinki Monitor is urging trade unions to challenge the presence of religious symbols in Greek schools.

The socialist government here is also considering imposing new taxes on the Church's vast fortune, but at the same time is urging it to do more to help immigrants and poor Greeks.

Greek priest back to work after violent attack

A Greek Orthodox priest was back performing his duties at the St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Cathedral less than two days after enduring a violent attack.

Marine reservist Jasen Bruce is out on bond facing charges that he attacked Father Alexios Marakis. Lance Corporal Jasen Bruce allegedly accused the priest of being a terrorist and a sexual deviant.

ABC Action News has learned this is not the first time Bruce has said he was a victim. According to police, in 2007 Bruce plead no contest to battery charges against a tow truck driver.

That driver told police he "feared for his safety" after Bruce tried to assault him for towing his vehicle. Initially, Bruce claimed he was attacked by the driver.

Tampa Police say Alexios Marakis, a 29-year-old priest visiting from Crete, Greece, was taken to Tampa General Hospital after the alleged attack by Bruce. Marakis is being hosted by Father Michael Eaccarino at the Greek Orthodox Cathedral in Tarpon Springs.

Eaccarino said he rushed to the emergency room Monday to tend to Father Marakis, who was badly hurt. "He needed three stitches above his eye. Then he needed more on the back of his head. He had several bumps. His left arm was completely raw and so was his leg.

You see when he was trying to run, he was tripping on these robes that we wear," Eaccarino said.

According to police, Marakis had performed a blessing on another Greek priest and was in his car when he accidentally exited I-275 and wound up lost in downtown Tampa.

He followed a line of cars and entered the secured parking garage at the Seaport Channelside Apartments. Marakis, who can barely speak English, asked Bruce for help.

That's when police say Bruce took out a tire iron and hit Marakis over the head and chased him for three blocks. During the chase, Bruce called 911 and claimed that he was pursuing a Taliban terrorist.

Bruce has retained the services of prominent attorney Jeff Brown. At a news conference, Brown said he and his client will fight the charges. Bruce also claimed Marakis made sexual advances towards him.

"We want to know how this man dressed in a robe and sandals got in a secured parking garage, approached the Lance Corporal, and then reached for his genitals. We believe the surveillance tape will clear the Lance Corporal of the allegations against him," Brown said.

Police say surveillance video of the scene will be released after an investigation. But, they say it depicts a slight man (Marakis), being chased



by a 6'3" man (Bruce).

Eaccarino said Father Marakis does not want to press charges because of his religious beliefs. But, he is adamant that Bruce's allegations are false.

Father Marakis has been in the monastery for 11 years. He has been a priest for 9.

Father Eaccarino says he can understand the fear, "This man truly may have been frightened. Because of the way we dress, people judge us. It may not be right, but it happens."

Bruce has a criminal history. He was charged with battery in 2007. In that case, he was charged with aggravated assault with a deadly weapon.

Detectives are working to determine if this latest incident meets the criteria for a hate crime.