

Man Sentenced to Jail in Greece for Mocking Monk

A man who created a Facebook page poking fun at a revered Greek Orthodox monk has been sentenced to 10 months in prison in Greece after being found guilty of blasphemy.

Thousands of Greeks took to social networking sites to protest against the arrest in 2012 of Filippos Loizos, 28, who used a play on words to portray Father Paisios as a traditional pasta-based dish.

"He was merely satirizing in a country that gave birth to satire," his lawyer Yorgos Kleftodimos said on Friday. "Never and by no means did he insult the Orthodox Church."

Father Paisios, who was revered for his spiritual teachings and said by some believers to have powers of prophecy, died in 1994.

Loizos has appealed against the ruling and will not be jailed before his case is heard by a higher court, Kleftodimos said.

The charges against him, of insulting religion and malicious blasphemy, were filed after Christos Pappas, a lawmaker from the far-right Golden Dawn party, brought the issue before parliament.

While blasphemy charges are not commonly filed in Greece, a similar case in 2012 was brought against the team behind an American play that depicted Jesus Christ and his apostles as gay, drawing criticism from rights' groups and politicians who said the country's blasphemy laws were outdated.

The production of *Corpus Christi* was canceled after weeks of protests outside the theater by priests and far-right groups, including Golden Dawn lawmakers.

Pappas is detained pending trial on charges of belonging to a criminal group, as part of a government crackdown on Golden Dawn.

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