

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Maryknoll Priest Faces Removal from the Priesthood; Receives Second Canonical Warning for His Support of Women's Equality in the Catholic Church

Under pressure from the Vatican, the Maryknoll Catholic religious order has [issued a second canonical warning](#) to Fr. Roy Bourgeois stating he will be dismissed from the order and his priesthood if he does not recant his support for women priests.

Fr. Roy [responded to this latest threat](#): "As people of faith we believe in the primacy of conscience. Our conscience gives us a sense of right and wrong and urges us to do what is right, what is just. What you are asking me to do in your letter is not possible without betraying my conscience. In essence, you are telling me to lie. This I cannot do, therefore I will not recant. I firmly believe that the exclusion of women from the priesthood is a grave injustice against women, against our Church, and against our God."

"The culture of bullying within the Catholic Church cannot be tolerated any longer," said, Erin Hanna, Executive Director of the Women's Ordination Conference. "It is contrary to the gospel itself to bully and dismiss faithful priests who dare to break the silence in support of women's rightful role in the Church."

"Jesus himself welcomed women as well as men into ministerial leadership," said Jim FitzGerald, Call To Action's Executive Director. "It is a shame that our church does not do likewise."

"The Vatican does not excommunicate the pedophile-priests who have raped and sodomized Catholic youth, or punish the bishops who covered up these crimes. Yet, now in this outrageous action they stand ready to defrock Fr. Roy, priest of the people and prophet for justice who has served God for over 40 years as a well-known peace and justice activist and Nobel Peace Prize nominee" said Bridget Mary Meehan, from the Association of Roman Catholic Women Priests. Suzanne Thiel of Roman Catholic Womenpriests-USA affirmed: "Regardless of personal consequences, Fr. Roy refuses to be cowed by men who support an unjust law that knowingly discriminates against half the Body of Christ. He sees the face of Jesus in his sisters."

An online [petition](#), sponsored by the Association of Roman Catholic Womenpriests, Call To Action USA, and Roman Catholic Womenpriests-USA, Women's Ordination Conference, and co-sponsored by 15 church-justice organizations, has garnered over 8,000 signatures of Catholics across the globe and continues to build momentum.

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The Association of Roman Catholic Women Priests are ordained women who live and minister in the United States and South America. The Association prepares and ordains

qualified women to serve the people of God as priests and uses equal rites to promote equal rights to achieve justice for women in the church. For more information, visit www.associationofromancatholicwomenpriests.org Contact: Bridget Mary Meehan, 703.505.0004

Call To Action (CTA) educates, inspires and activates Catholics to act for justice and build inclusive communities through a lens of anti-racism and anti-oppression principles. An independent national organization of 25,000 people and 53 local chapters, CTA believes that the Spirit of God is at work in the whole church, not just in its appointed leaders. For more information, visit www.cta-usa.org Contact: Nicole Sotelo, Director of Communications, 773.404.0004 x285

Roman Catholic Womenpriests USA's mission is to spiritually prepare, ordain, and support women and men from all states of life, who are theologically qualified, who are committed to an inclusive model of Church, and who are called by the Holy Spirit and their communities to minister. For more information, visit www.romancatholicwomenpriests.org. Contact: Suzanne Thiel, 503.784.3330

Women's Ordination Conference, founded in 1975, is the oldest and largest national organization that works to ordain women as priests, deacons and bishops into an inclusive and accountable Roman Catholic church. WOC represents the 63 percent of U.S. Catholics that support women's ordination. WOC also promotes perspectives on ordination that call for more accountability and less separation between the clergy and laity. For more information, visit www.womensordination.org. Contact: Erin Saiz Hanna, Executive Director 202.675.1006 (office), 401.588.0457 (cell)