

The Boston Globe, Sunday, March 2, 2014

## An Open Letter to Catholics

**Four months before Pope Francis became pope,** I, after serving as a Catholic priest for 40 years, was expelled from the priesthood because of my public support for the ordination of women.

I am among the many in the Catholic Church who have been inspired by Pope Francis' humility, love, and compassion.

Our beloved pope has said, "I see the Church as a field hospital after a battle. The Church must heal the wounds." Therefore, I respectfully ask that we tend to the many women and gay people in our Church who have been seriously wounded by Church teachings that demean and discriminate against them.

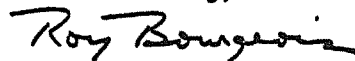
**1. Women in the Church:** Our Church teaches that men and women are created equal. Catholic priests say that the call to be a priest comes from God. However, devout Catholic women who believe God is calling them to be priests are rejected because of their gender. How can men say that their call from God is authentic, but God's call to women is not? Let's face it. The problem is not with God or women, but with an all-male clerical culture that views women as lesser than men.

**2. Gays in the Church:** In answering a question about persons who are gay, Pope Francis said, "Who am I to judge?" While we are grateful that the Pope does not judge people for being gay, our Church certainly does. The official teaching of the Catholic Church states that homosexuals are "objectively disordered." For millions of gay people, this teaching instills shame and self-hatred. It has contributed to gay people being expelled from their families, fired from their jobs, and even killed. The teaching has contributed to suicides, too, especially among teenagers. Let's face it. Being gay is not a problem with our all-loving God who created everyone of equal worth and dignity. The problem is with Church leaders who view homosexuals as lesser than heterosexuals.

**When there is injustice, silence is complicity.**

As Catholics, let us stop making God our partner in discriminating against women and gay people. I ask that you contact Pope Francis and your local bishop and priests. Request that our Catholic Church ordain women, accept LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) people as equals, and recognize gay marriage.

**In Solidarity,**



**Fr. Roy Bourgeois and friends**

P.O. Box 3330

Columbus, GA 31903

706-682-5369

**For more information,** read *My Journey from Silence to Solidarity*, available at [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) and [www.roybourgeoisjourney.org](http://www.roybourgeoisjourney.org)