

Catholic priest faces expulsion for supporting women's ordination

by [David Gibson](#)

August 9, 2011

(RNS) A Roman Catholic priest who has campaigned for the ordination of women has been told he will be expelled from his religious order if he does not publicly recant.

The Rev. Roy Bourgeois was issued a "second canonical warning" on July 27, and told that he would be dismissed from the Maryknoll order within 15 days if he continues to advocate for women priests and does not recant.

The warning letter from Maryknoll Superior General Edward Dougherty was obtained by the National Catholic Reporter and said that Bourgeois has "remained unmoved" despite being asked "to consider the effects of your actions on the Society and the Church."

According to NCR, Dougherty describes the dismissal as "based on your defiant stance as a Catholic priest who publicly rejects the Magisterium of the Church on the matter of priestly ordination."

Bourgeois said he would not retract his statements, however.

"What you are asking me to do in your letter is not possible without betraying my conscience," Bourgeois wrote in a response to Dougherty on Monday (Aug. 8). "In essence, you are telling me to lie and say I do not believe that God calls both men and women to the priesthood. This I cannot do, therefore I will not recant."

Bourgeois has vowed to appeal to the Vatican, though he is not likely to get a sympathetic hearing. After Bourgeois participated in a service in 2008 in which a woman was ordained, the Vatican sent him a letter saying he had 30 days to recant or face automatic

excommunication.

In March, after efforts to broker a resolution failed, leaders of his order said that they would give him one more chance to change his position and then they would send a request to Rome for his dismissal not only from the society but from the priesthood as well. The July 27 letter represented the final notice.