



November 25, 2008

Archbishop Pietro Sambì
Apostolic Nunciature, the Holy See
3339 Massachusetts Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20008

Dear Archbishop Sambì,

It is with great sadness that we at Voice of Faithful address the rapid excommunication of Fr. Roy Bourgeois. We support the work of Fr. Bourgeois as a tireless disciple for the poor and an advocate for those without a voice. His work towards peace and justice cannot be ignored. As a priest, he has always acted in his good conscience for the Church that he loves. We feel the punishment for Fr. Bourgeois is extremely disproportionate particularly in light of how the Church has addressed the issues of bishops who transferred pedophile priests.

While the prospective loss of an active and dedicated Catholic priest is saddening in itself, the swift action taken by the Vatican is even more upsetting. Just a few months after Fr. Bourgeois participated in the ordination rite of Janice Sevre-Duszynska, he was threatened with excommunication. The speed of this action stands in vivid contrast to the action of the Holy See on what we regard as a far more damaging problem: public action on numerous priests accused of sexual abuse. Nearly 5,000 Catholic priests have abused more than 12,000 young people. Most of these priests, and the bishops who protected them, still remain active.

Fr. Bourgeois noted this contrast in his letter to the Vatican: "Many bishops, aware of the abuse, remained silent. These priests and bishops were not excommunicated." In fact, the Vatican is still delaying action over requests to laicize some of these abuser priests.

We ask Vatican leaders to take these factors into account and reconsider the excommunication of Fr. Roy Bourgeois. He has acted in conscience for the Church he has dedicated his life to for the past 36 years. He has worked tirelessly for the poor. He is an outspoken advocate for peace. We at Voice of the Faithful ask that the Vatican take a second look at who they are excommunicating, especially as the predator priests and the bishops who shield them are still among us.

Sincerely,

Dan Bartley, President, Voice of the Faithful.