



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Bay Area Leads Debate on Women's Role in Roman Catholic Church

Fr. Roy Bourgeois, Noted Priest & Nobel Peace Prize Nominee, Joins Dr. Victoria Rue and Rev. Anna Lange-Soto to Speak Out for Women's Ordination

SAN FRANCISCO – “Priesthood is both a spiritual and a political act,” said Dr. Victoria Rue, a Roman Catholic woman priest ordained in 2005 who leads the Sophia in Trinity Catholic community in San Francisco. “The Catholic Church says that the invitation to priesthood comes from God and that God created men and women of equal dignity. Yet the Church’s doctrine on ordination implies that a woman cannot be a priest. This ‘stained-glass ceiling’ is wrong and must be changed.”

Rue is not alone in demanding that women play a larger role in the Catholic Church. She will be joined in a series of talks on this subject in the Bay Area by Fr. Roy Bourgeois, noted Maryknoll priest, human rights activist, founder of the School of the Americas (SOA) Watch, and Nobel Peace Prize nominee.

“If we are to have a vibrant, healthy Catholic Church, we need the faith, wisdom, experience, compassion and courage of women in the priesthood,” said Bourgeois.

“Many learned scholars have studied the issue and concluded that there is no justification in the Bible for excluding women from the priesthood. With all due respect, I believe our Catholic Church’s teaching on this issue is wrong and does not stand up to scrutiny.”

Bourgeois has been threatened with excommunication by the Vatican's Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith for his support of women’s ordination. Bourgeois and Rue will speak in support of women’s ordination at several forums in the San Francisco Bay Area January 22-25, and on local radio and television.

“The Catholic Church is at a crisis point,” added Bourgeois. “Hundreds of Churches are closing because of a shortage of priests. Yet there are hundreds of committed and prophetic women saying that God has called them to serve as priests. Having an all male clergy implies that men are worthy to be Catholic priests, but women are not. Sexism, like racism, is a sin. And no matter how hard or long we may try to justify discrimination, it is always immoral.

Rev. Anna Lange-Soto, an Episcopal priest and pastor of Good Shepherd Church/El Buen Pasto Iglesia in Redwood City, will join Fr. Roy Bourgeois and Dr. Victoria Rue as part of the program on Jan. 23 in San Francisco. She will speak on her own call as a priest as well as the history of women’s ordination in the Episcopal Church. In addition to the support of the Episcopal Church, this event and women’s ordination are supported by

the First Congregational Church of San Francisco, which is co-sponsoring the event. There is wide ecumenical support for women's ordination.

"I hope that my example will lead other women to see themselves as priests and be nourished in their own calls," added Rue. "The early Church had women priests, and Roman Catholic women priests see ourselves as continuing this important tradition. There will never be justice in the Catholic Church until women can be ordained."

RADIO:

Fr. Roy Bourgeois: Sunday, January 17, 8:00-9:00 AM, KGO AM Radio 810.

Fr. Roy Bourgeois: Thursday, January 21, 7:15-7:30 AM, KPFA FM Radio 94.1

TELEVISION:

Fr. Roy Bourgeois and Dr. Victoria Rue, Sunday, January 24, 8:00-10:00 AM, KRON-4 Television

PUBLIC APPEARANCES: Saturday, January 23, 2010 at 7:00 PM

WHERE: First Congregational Church of San Francisco, 1300 Polk Street at Bush, San Francisco.

ADMISSION: Free

Additional talks by Fr. Bourgeois in the Bay Area are scheduled for:

Kenwood/Santa Rosa/Sonoma, CA

Fri. January 22nd, 2010, 7:00 PM

Contact: Beth Jordan, BethOnIvy@aol.com

St. Patrick's Episcopal Church

9000 Sonoma Highway

Kenwood, CA 95452

Palo Alto, CA

Sat. January 23rd, 2010, 3:00 PM

The Thomas Merton Center of Palo Alto

Contact: Kay Williams, kaywill@pacbell.net

Palo Alto Art Center

1313 Newell Rd at Embarcadero

Palo Alto, CA 94303

Orinda, CA

Sun. January 24th, 2010, 3:00 PM

Contact: Eartha Newsong, enewsong@gmail.com

Orinda Community Church

10 Irwin Way

Orinda, CA 94563

Sacramento, CA

Mon. January 25th, 7:00 PM

Contact: Caryl Callsen, graycall@volcano.net

Or Rita Mize, rmize@winfirst.com

St. Mark's United Methodist Church

2391 St. Marks Way

Sacramento, CA 95864

Photos:



1. Father Roy Bourgeois. Photo by Linda Panetta. High resolution image available from media contacts.



2. Victoria Rue officiating as a Roman Catholic woman priest. Photo by Kathryn Poethig. High resolution image available from media contacts.

Sophia in Trinity is a Catholic community which began in San Francisco, CA, in January 2009. <http://www.sophiaintrinity.org>

The Roman Catholic Womenpriests movement is an international initiative within the Roman Catholic Church 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.

<http://www.romancatholicwomenpriests.org>

School of the Americas Watch is an international, grassroots movement that seeks to close the US Army School of the Americas, also known as the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation, through vigils and fasts, demonstrations and nonviolent protest, as well as media and legislative work in the U.S. Congress.

<http://www.soaw.org>

Victoria Rue, Ph.D. is a Roman Catholic woman priest ordained in 2005 who leads a Catholic community in San Francisco, CA. <http://www.victoriarue.com>

Graphic at top: An unfolding, Corita serigraph, 1971.

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<http://www.corita.org>.