

Should the American bishops refuse communion to each other for saying the very thing that many of us have been saying for years?

“Sometimes morally flawed laws already exist. In this situation, the process of framing legislation to protect life is subject to prudential judgment and “the art of the possible.” At times this process may restore justice only partially or gradually. For example, Pope John Paul II taught that when a government official who fully opposes abortion cannot succeed in completely overturning a pro-abortion law, he or she may work to improve protection for unborn human life, “limiting the harm done by such a law” and lessening its negative impact as much as possible (*Evangelium Vitae*, no. 73). Such incremental improvements in the law are acceptable as steps toward the full restoration of justice.” (32)

From *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship* by the USCCB.

Excerpts from *Weapons Come Second: Can Obama Take on the Pentagon?* by Frida Berrigan

Obama is not about to go toe-to-toe with the military-industrial-complex.

On the campaign trail, his stump speech included this applause-ready line suggesting that the costs of the war in Iraq are taking away from important domestic priorities: "If we're spending \$10 billion a month [in Iraq] over the next four or five years, that's \$10 billion a month we're not using to rebuild the U.S., or drawing down our national debt, or making sure that families have health care."

But the "surge" that Obama wants to shift from Iraq to Afghanistan is unlikely to be a bargain. In addition, he has repeatedly argued for a spike in defense spending to "reset" a military force worn out by war. He has also called for the expansion of the size of the Army and the Marines. On that point, he is in complete agreement with Defense Secretary Robert Gates. They even use the same numbers, suggesting that the Army should be augmented by 65,000 new recruits and the Marines by 27,000. The Congressional Budget Office estimates that these manpower increases alone would add about \$10 billion a year -- that same campaign trail \$10 billion -- to the Pentagon budget over a five-year period.

... As a candidate, Barack Obama stirred our imagination through his calls for a "new era of international cooperation." The United States cannot, however, cooperate with other nations from atop our shining Green Zone on the hill; we cannot cooperate as the world's sole superpower, policeman, cowboy, hyperpower, or whatever the imperial *nom du jour* turns out to be. Bottom line: we cannot genuinely and effectively cooperate while spending more on what we like to call "security" than the next 45 nations combined.

A new era in Pentagon spending would have to begin with a recognition that enduring security is not attained by threat or fiat, nor is it bought with staggering billions of dollars. It is built with other nations. Weapons come second.

This article, and the next one, appeared on CommonDreams.org. You may find the full articles there.

Women's Ordination on the Docket Again

by Olga Bonfiglio

The Vatican recently threatened to excommunicate Father Roy Bourgeois for his position that women be ordained priests. **(According to the article printed in November 2008(9), this has already occurred)** This out-of-the-blue, extreme measure against a prominent social justice advocate seems strange and ill-conceived. On the other hand, it serves as an opportunity to re-visit the issue since Pope John Paul II suspended all talk on it in 1994.

Father Bourgeois, 70, who began his 36-year ministry as a Maryknoll priest in Bolivia, has been an outspoken critic of U.S. foreign policy in Latin America since 1980 after a Salvadoran death squad raped and killed four American churchwomen. In 1990 he founded the School of the Americas Watch (<http://www.soaw.org/>), which has been holding weekend vigils annually at Fort Benning, Ga., to demand closure of the U.S. Army's combat training school for Latin American soldiers. The School of the Americas (renamed "Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation" in 2001) "has trained over 60,000 Latin American soldiers in counterinsurgency techniques, sniper training, commando and psychological warfare, military intelligence and interrogation tactics," according to the SOAW.

What led to the altercation between the Vatican and Father Bourgeois was the fact that he showed his support for women's ordination by delivering a homily at the ordination of Janice Sevre-Duszynska, 58, on August 9 in Lexington, Ky. She was the sixth woman ordained this year in the United States, according to the National Catholic Reporter.

Actually, Sevre-Duszynska is among 60 other women who have been ordained since June 29, 2002, when the first seven women stepped forward, according to the Women's Ordination Conference. Four of these women priests have become bishops and nearly 100 more are in preparation programs sponsored by the Roman Catholic Women Priests.

It is no small matter that these women seek ordination. As priests they are demanding that women be seen as equals to men in the eyes of the Church. Women's ordination reflects secular society's movement toward gender equality that sprouted in the late 1960s and which we largely take for granted today. During this time women all over the world have made bold strides in taking on various roles to show that they ARE equal to men. One who was well-schooled in that idea almost made it to the White House!

However, the process for change in the Church is long and difficult because theology and tradition hold a lot of sway. For example, the Church's case that the priesthood remain male is summed up this way: Jesus was a man, his 12 apostles were all men and the Church has never had women priests. Many theologians and Church

historians have differed on this judgment and on Thanksgiving weekend 1975, hundreds of people met for the first Women's Ordination Conference (WOC) in Detroit to hear them respectfully and logically make the case that women be ordained.

... Admittedly, it's difficult for an institution to change, especially one as huge, as old and as steeped in tradition as the Catholic Church. But traditions are man-made, not God-made. And one might conclude that this confluence of events in both secular and religious society signals God's call for the Church to change.

The Church has endured difficulties in the past and it has adjusted. Quite frankly, today's problems are so great, we need every leader we can get. To eliminate half of the population from priestly ministry is to see the world with only one eye or to fix it with only one arm.

Gender shouldn't determine whether or not a person is fit to be a priest. Neither should class, race, ethnicity or sexual orientation for that matter. The priesthood should be open to men and women who are called to it. We need to concentrate our energies on the things that matter!

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