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Bourgeois meets with fellow Maryknollers

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Father Roy Bourgeois, who the Vatican says automatically excommunicated himself and who is now facing dismissal from his order, spoke with fellow Maryknoll priests and brothers during an impromptu gathering at the order's U.S. Regional Assembly Tuesday.

He didn't have much new to say, but the comments of other Maryknollers are telling.

The event, attended by 38 members of the community, was reported by Father Joe Veneroso, a retired journalist, on the Maryknoll blog, "Knollnews."

A number of the priests who spoke (all named, by the way) admitted they agreed with Bourgeois on the injustice of ordination being denied to women in the Catholic Church--not surprising, perhaps, from a justice-centered order like Maryknoll. Still, I was a bit surprised to see priests willing to go on the record about this issue, especially given what's happening to one of their own.

But more seemed concerned about how Bourgeois' actions affect Maryknoll. One used the analogy of a man deciding on his own to move to another country and expecting his family to go with him, without consultation. Former superior general Father John Sivalon noted that there had been some consultation with the previous administration. Others, however, wondered why a larger, open discussion on this issue couldn't happen within the order.

In Venerosa's opinion, Bourgeois didn't fully answer questions and concerns about how his actions affect the larger Maryknoll community. Instead, he kept emphasizing how he must follow his conscience. "We [Maryknoll] are on the wrong side of history on this issue," he said. "Unless we change, we are going to die."

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