

Gumbleton, reflects on Bourgeois, calls for tolerance, openness

Patrick O'Neill | Nov. 23, 2008

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While nothing was said about the impending excommunication of Maryknoll Fr. Roy Bourgeois at Saturday night's massive Jesuit vigil mass, concelebrant, Detroit auxiliary Bishop Thomas Gumbleton did offer words of support for the founder of the School of the Americas Watch movement.

In an interview with *NCR* following the Mass, Gumbleton said Bourgeois will be excommunicated for his support and for his participation in the Aug. 9 ordination of Catholic priest, Janice Sevre-Duszynska.

"He's going to be excommunicated, there's no question about it," Gumbleton said. "I think it's an unnecessary penalty."

The Pax Christi USA cofounder and Detroit bishop said the Church does not typically excommunicate people for all sorts of moral wrongs.

"If you're going to excommunicate somebody for something like that, you probably ought to excommunicate people for being willing to use nuclear weapons. And we have lots of people in the military that are committed to using them if the order comes.

"If you're going to be a Church that pushes penalty against people, well then there's lots of penalties you could impose for many different kinds of terrible things.

"In the eyes of the Holy See, this seems to be a very grave matter. Well, if it is so grave it deserves excommunication, well then there are certainly other things that are graver that deserve excommunication."

Gumbleton said the Church needs to return to the mood of tolerance and openness expressed during the Pontificate of Pope John XXIII, who said the Second Vatican Council "is not going to issue any condemnations. It's going to be a pastoral council. We're going to try to draw people in, not drive people away. And that's the kind of Church we need right now very much."

Quoting Cardinal Carlo Maria Martini of Milan, Gumbleton said: "The Church is losing its credibility because they focus on issues of sexuality and don't have a good understanding of it, that doesn't touch the lives of people, and he mentions *Humanae Vitae* specifically. He said we turn people away, and we should be drawing them back. I agree with him."