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Women's ordination advocates: Benedict was 'step backward' for equality

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NCR Today

Benedict Resigns

While the main group which advocates for the ordination of women to the Roman Catholic priesthood said it is "saddened" by news of Pope Benedict's deteriorating health, it also said the pope "used his power to take significant steps backwards for women."

"A staunch opponent of women's leadership, during Pope Benedict's tenure he declared women's ordination the gravest crime against the Church, excommunicated all Roman Catholic Womenpriests, and personally had Fr. Roy Bourgeois dismissed from his Maryknoll community for supporting women priests," wrote the Women's Ordination Conference in a statement.

"As Roman Catholics worldwide prepare for the conclave, we are reminded that the current system remains an 'old boys club' and does not allow for women's voices to participate in the decision of the next leader of our Church," the statement continued.

"WOC members plan to host vigils and raise "pink smoke" during the conclave as a prayerful reminder of the voices of the Church that go unheard."

Founded in 1975, the Women's Ordination Conference describes itself as "a visible feminist advocate for the ordination of women as priests, deacons and bishops into an inclusive and accountable Roman Catholic Church."

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