

# NEW YORK TIMES FANS DISSENT

A few years ago, Fr. Roy Bourgeois decided to break with the Catholic Church's teachings on ordination and "ordained" a woman in an illicit ceremony. He was given three years to recant, but he refused, and was recently threatened with excommunication.

He has been considered a hero to Church critics, especially the New York Times, which recently ran a positive article about him. Had he been a reporter who decided to break with the Times' editorial position on abortion—putting a positive spin on pro-life leaders, while casting aspersions on abortion-rights advocates—he would not have lasted three weeks.

Other than the Times, not a single newspaper in the U.S. carried a story on Fr. Bourgeois that day. Indeed, in the three months prior, there were only two other stories on the renegade priest, and one of them was a front-page story in the Times a week earlier. It's the way the paper spun the story—fanning dissent—that counted most.

The story referred to Call to Action as "an organization for reform-minded Catholics." It would have been more accurate to say it is an organization of senior citizens, many of whom are ex-priests and nuns, who are so out of touch with the Church that some bishops have excommunicated its members. In 1990, it took out an ad in the Times calling for all the familiar reforms, pledging to garner 100,000 signatures. After 18 months, it wound up with 21,000.

By contrast, the story branded Opus Dei as an "ultra-orthodox group." Looks like the reporter, Dirk Johnson, has been reading too much of Dan Brown lately.

One of Call to Action's leaders, Bob Heineman, wanted to know whether the Church is the hierarchy, or the people. Either way

he loses: the rank-and-file support the hierarchy, not Call to Action.