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Winthrop University

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# Father Roy Bourgeois Returns to Winthrop To Lecture on Gender and Militarism

## Quick Facts

- The life-long social activist will speak in Plowden Auditorium at 7 p.m. on “Gender, Militarism, and U.S.-Latin-American Relations.”
- Father Roy will talk about his journey growing up in a small-town in Louisiana, going to Vietnam in the 1960s as a U.S. Naval officer and discovering the horror of war. He later joined the priesthood and was sent to South America where the poor became his teachers.



*Father Roy Bourgeois*

ROCK HILL, S.C. - **Father Roy Bourgeois**, who was expelled from his religious order last year for supporting the ordination of women as priests, will speak at Winthrop on Jan. 14.

The life-long social activist will speak in **Plowden Auditorium** at 7 p.m. on “**Gender, Militarism, and U.S.-Latin-American Relations.**”

Father Roy will talk about his journey growing up in a small-town in Louisiana, going to Vietnam in the 1960s as a U.S. Naval officer and discovering the horror of war. He later joined the priesthood and was sent to South America where the poor became his teachers. He found the **School of the Americas (SOA) Watch** in 1990, an organization that has become a diverse, intersectional solidarity movement to end human rights abuses and achieve social and economic justice in Latin America.

The militarism was the topic of the first two visits to Winthrop’s campus over the past decade. More recently, he has spoken out for women’s participating in the Roman Catholic Church. On Nov. 19, 2012, Roy Bourgeois learned he had been expelled from the **Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers**, his religious order and faith community for 46 years, and that the Vatican had revoked his priesthood – all for his refusal to be silent about his support for women’s ordination.

“They can dismiss me but they can’t dismiss the issue of gender equality,” Father Roy said this week. “This discussion will go on.”

Movements such as this – women’s suffrage and civil rights, for example - are unstoppable, he said.

Father Roy lives in Columbus, Ga., and has been active in leading the movement to close the **School of the Americas** in Georgia since the 1980s because of its reputation as a school that teaches Latin American soldiers how to commit human rights abuses against its own citizens. He was personal friends with two of the four U.S. churchwomen who were killed in El Salvador by soldiers who were trained at the SOA.

He also witnessed firsthand the abuses of a Latin American military dictatorship while serving as a priest in Bolivia in the 1970s.

“I learned that silence is the voice of complicity and so I have to speak out,” Father Roy said, adding that it was painful to be kicked out of his community.

His speech is free and open to the public. This global cultural event is sponsored by the **Peace,**

Justice, and Conflict Resolution Studies and the Women's Studies Programs, the Departments of Political Science and History, the Global Learning Initiative, and The John C. West Forum on Politics and Policy.

For more information, contact **Judy Longshaw**, news and media services manager, at 803/323-2404 or e-mail her at [longshawj@winthrop.edu](mailto:longshawj@winthrop.edu).

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