

Boston Archdiocese says ordination of women brings automatic excommunication

BOSTON – After an organization called Roman Catholic Womenpriests announced it would hold a Boston ordination ceremony for three women, the Boston Archdiocese said all those involved in the ceremony would “by their own actions” be “separating themselves from the church.”

The Boston Globe daily newspaper reported that the ceremony took place July 20 at a Protestant church and was to be performed by Dana Reynolds of Carmel, Calif., who the paper said became a bishop in Germany in April.

“The organization calling itself ‘Roman Catholic Womenpriests’ is not recognized as an entity of the Catholic Church,” the Boston Archdiocese said in a July 18 statement. “Catholics who attempt to confer a sacred order on a woman, and the women who attempt to receive a sacred order, are by their own actions separating themselves from the church.”

The Globe said the three women seeking ordination were Gabriella Velardi Ward of Staten Island, N.Y., Gloria Carpeneto of Baltimore and Mary Ann McCarthy Schoettly of Newton, N.J.

The archdiocesan statement reiterated the church’s teaching against the ordination of women, saying that “the ordination of men to the priesthood is not merely a matter of practice or discipline within the Catholic Church, but rather, it is part of the unalterable deposit of faith handed down by Christ through his apostles.”

It also said that the church is “made up of women and men, equal in rights and diverse in gifts and ministries” and “is committed to, and sustained by the many important contributions of women each and every day.”

Women religious and laywomen serve in numerous leadership roles in the church and “are helping to shape the course of our church in following the will of God,” it added.

“We pray for those who have willingly fallen away from the church by participating in such activities,” the statement said, adding that the church “is prepared and eager to welcome back those who seek reconciliation.”