

# Prelate clarifies abortion views

MILWAUKEE (CNS) — Responding to press reports on his May 20 statement on abortion, Archbishop Rembert G. Weakland of Milwaukee wrote to a local paper, "I ... strongly uphold Catholic teaching and that certainly includes the church's teaching on abortion."

"Abortion is the taking of human life and therefore morally wrong," he added.

Archbishop Weakland made his comments in a letter to the *Milwaukee Sentinel*, the city's daily morning newspaper, after the paper ran a page-one story in its May 21 edition that carried portions of an interview with him under the headline, "Weakland: Pro-choice could be OK." A subhead declared the archbishop's stance

"at odds with U.S. conference of bishops."

"Some clarifications are necessary," said Archbishop Weakland's letter.

According to the *Sentinel* article, when Archbishop Weakland was asked if one could be a good Catholic and still hold a pro-choice opinion, depending on the definition used for "pro-choice," he replied: "Yes. There are possibilities there. One could reconcile their stance with a church position. I think that is a possibility."

He declined in the interview to spell out a universal dividing line that would determine who is in or out of the church, saying "that is very dangerous." He would have

to "talk with each one" individually, he said.

The article also included follow-up reaction from others regarding the 5,000-word statement Archbishop Weakland had released the previous day in which he reflected on what he had heard during six "listening sessions" on abortion he conducted with Catholic women in the archdiocese this spring.

In his letter to the newspaper, Archbishop Weakland described the terms "pro-life" and "pro-choice" as "so highly associated with the political agenda of many in this country that to use them results frequently in bitter polarization.... Too often 'pro-life' has become 'anti-abortion' and 'pro-choice' has meant 'pro-abortion.'"

"To the Catholic women attending the abortion listening sessions," he continued, "these terms had far broader meaning. To many, pro-life means upholding the dignity of all human life, from the womb to natural death. To many, pro-choice means recognizing the freedom with which the Creator has endowed women and men of good conscience to face all moral questions."

He said few of the women at the sessions "would have categorized themselves as being either 'pro-life' or 'pro-choice' in the

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## USCC supports limited renewal of trade agreement with China

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Extending most-favored nation status to China offers "an opportunity that should not be missed" for emphasizing that nation's obligations to ensure human rights and religious freedom, Archbishop Roger M. Mahony of Los Angeles told President Bush May 22.

The archbishop, chairman of the U.S. Catholic Conference Committee on International Policy, commented in a letter released by the USCC, the public policy agency of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Bush announced May 24 that he was providing a one-year renewal of the preferential-trade status for China, which crushed a pro-democracy movement in 1989 and is suspected of widespread religious repression and other human-rights abuses.

Not extending the trade benefits would harm the Chinese people as well as American business interests and Hong Kong, which acts as an intermediary for much of China's trade, Bush said.

Archbishop Mahony told Bush "we believe that the annual renewal of China's most-favored nation trade status, which requires your certification, provides an opportunity which should not be missed of ensuring that China's leaders understand that their continuing denial of human and religious rights has a price."

The USCC supports "a time-limited certification conditioned on significant improvement in human rights and in freedom of religion, which, at the very least, should include the early release of all imprisoned religious leaders and political prisoners," the archbishop added.

He noted that "we have evidence that as many as 50 Roman Catholic bishops and priests may be under various forms of detention or house arrest in China today."

"In addition," he continued, "there are the many hundreds of Chinese students and workers who are still being held without charges or trial in the aftermath of the crushing of the popular cry for justice at Tiananmen Square one year ago."

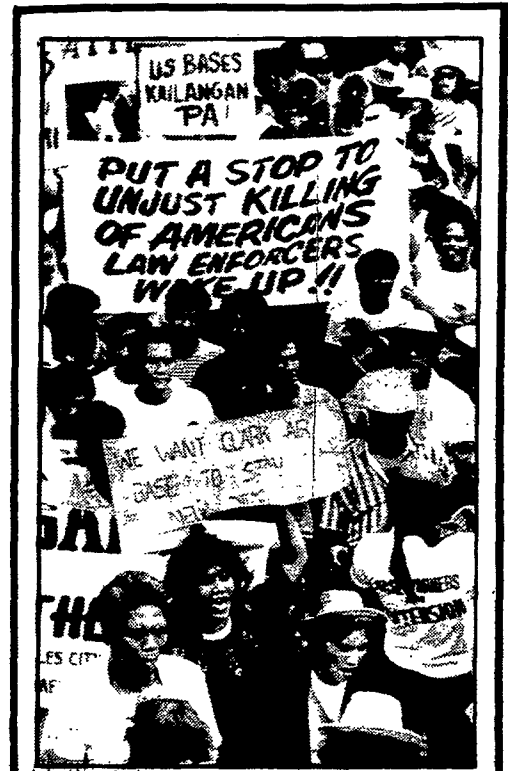
"The millions of Chinese who seek to practice their faith without fear and work for a just and democratic society deserve our support," he said.

According to U.S. law, the president must provide annual certification in order for most-favored status to be conferred annually on countries such as China with non-market economies.

Most-favored-nation status means that

the recipient foreign country enjoys the lowest permissible tariffs on its goods imported into the United States. Despite its exclusive-sounding name, the status is granted to many U.S. trading partners, including South Africa and Iraq, whose human-rights records also have been questioned.

Bush said that most-favored-nation status is "not a special favor" but the basis of commonplace worldwide trade.



AP/Wide World Photos  
**ENOUGH WITH KILLINGS —** Approximately 3,000 people gather in front of the Senate building in Manila Friday, May 18, to urge the government to extend the lease for U.S. military bases. Supporters also condemned the recent killings of two American servicemen outside one of the military bases north of Manila.

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