

Prelate seeks debate on shortage of priests

By Laurie Hansen
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — Archbishop Rembert C. Weakland of Milwaukee said he would like to see the U.S. bishops take time to discuss "honestly" and "fully" the U.S. clergy shortage.

"We've not done that yet," said Archbishop Weakland Nov. 10 in an interview on the eve of the Nov. 11-14 annual bishops' meeting in Washington.

He said that he didn't think the severity of the clergy shortage "has hit people yet" and wondered aloud why the bishops had not yet taken up the subject in a serious manner.

"Perhaps the urgency isn't there all

over the nation," he said.

Archbishop Weakland expressed hope that a pastoral letter focusing on his archdiocese's clergy shortage would be a catalyst for action on the issue.

Days earlier the Milwaukee prelate had made public the Vatican response to his statement that in priest-short areas he would be willing to consider ordaining married men.

The married-clergy proposal was published in January in the first draft of a pastoral letter titled "Facing the Future with Hope." The final draft was published in the Nov. 7 issue of the *Catholic Herald*, newspaper of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee.

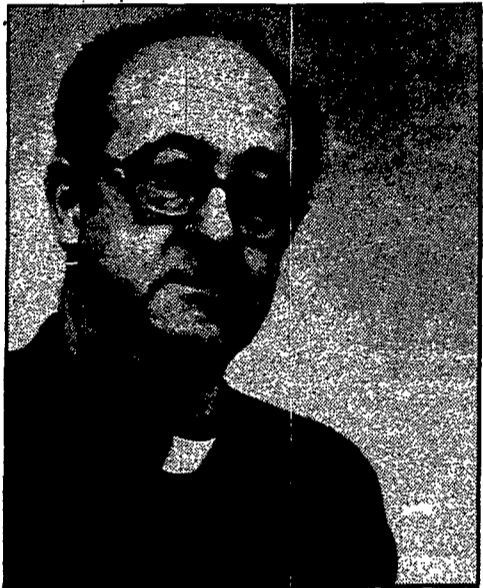
The 30-page final draft focuses on the clergy shortage in the Milwaukee archdiocese and on ways in which lay and ordained Catholics may be called upon to address it in the future.

Archbishop Weakland proposed that when a priestless Catholic community met certain conditions of faith and vitality, he would be willing to present to Rome a married male candidate for the priesthood. The proposal prompted international headlines when it was made public in January.

In the subsequent final draft, Archbishop Weakland reported that he had been "informed by the Vatican Secretariat of State that my suggestion of proposing a married man was regarded as 'out of place.'"

He said Nov. 10 that the letter came from Cardinal Angelo Sodano, Vatican secretary of state.

Regarding his personal reaction to the Vatican response, he said he was



File photo

Archbishop Rembert Weakland

Eminent religious educator dies at age 60

LEUVEN, Belgium (CNS) — A funeral Mass was celebrated Nov. 2 for internationally known Catholic religious educator Christiane Brusselmans, who died Oct. 29 at the age of 60. She was the victim of an apparent suicide.

She was among the founders of efforts to restore the catechumenate and establish the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults.

She is perhaps most widely known for her work in teaching children about the church. She created a eucharistic preparation program and most recently coordinated development of an acclaimed Sunday liturgy series for children.

Born Nov. 1, 1930, in Belgium, Miss Brusselmans studied theology at the University of Leuven, where she organized teams of students to work in priestless parishes in the countryside. She held a master's degree in catechetics and liturgy from the Institute Catholique in Paris and a doctorate in religious education from The Catholic University of America in Washington.

She taught catechetics at the University of Leuven and the International Catechetical Institute of Lumen Vitae and was a visiting professor at Fordham University in New York, Harvard Divinity School, Catholic University and several other colleges and universities.



AP/Wide World Photos

FORCED REPATRIATION — Security officers drag a weeping Vietnamese woman Nov. 8 during the removal of 59 Vietnamese from the Hei Ling Chu detention center in Hong Kong for return to Vietnam. This is the first group to be repatriated under an agreement signed last month by Vietnam and Great Britain involving boat people who have been denied asylum. The Vatican appealed to the United Nations Nov. 7 to stop the involuntary repatriation.

"glad the response came as soon as it did so our planning (for the future) would not be based on false hope."

Archbishop Weakland said it was necessary to make the Vatican response public because the proposal had been published in the first draft. "I couldn't come out with a second draft without bringing it up again," he said.

Controversy similarly swirled around the Milwaukee archbishop before last year's meeting when it was revealed that the Vatican had stopped a Swiss pontifical university from bestowing on Archbishop Weakland an honorary degree.

The pastoral letter's final draft said that the Vatican response noted that an "apostolic exhortation" currently being prepared by Pope John Paul II would lay out "universal church orientations and directives to face adequately the same delicate issue." This appeared to make reference to the question of married priests.

"We look forward to publication of that document," Archbishop Weakland wrote in his pastoral letter.

He wrote that many *Catholic Herald* readers were unhappy with his assertion in the pastoral letter's first draft that "only in extreme necessity and

under very rigid conditions" would he be open to presenting to Rome a married candidate for ordination.

He said proponents of a married priesthood argued that he had not treated on its own merits the possibility of a married clergy.

Others, he said, "mistook" his intention as "that of promoting a married clergy to take the place of the current celibate tradition."

"For the record let me say that I remain convinced that celibacy for the sake of the kingdom, in its long and venerable tradition and especially as an essential aspect of religious life" is a "valuable" way of following Christ who was celibate, the Milwaukee prelate wrote.

"Lived fully, the celibate life has so many advantages for the person committed totally to ministry in the church," Archbishop Weakland wrote.

In the pastoral letter's first draft the archbishop said that if — in light of a clergy shortage — he were in the future to present to Rome a married candidate for the priesthood, "we would have done all possible at the local level and could feel that we had been responsible stewards of God's goods and graces."

Vote on holy days draws protest at U.S. bishops' annual meeting

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Holy days of obligation, lay preaching and a new children's lectionary appeared likely to prompt the most lively debate at the U.S. bishops' annual fall meeting in Washington Nov. 11-14.

As the meeting opened, those issues brought the most questions to the bishops introducing them to the assembly. Formal debate and votes were not scheduled until Nov. 13 or 14.

Among other topics to be considered by the bishops were statements on the environment, children and the concerns of Native Americans during the Columbus quincentenary; documents on priests' councils and the teaching ministry of diocesan bishops; and funding questions such as a call for responsible in-

vestment policies by the bishops' twin conferences.

A small band of protesters marched Nov. 11 outside the Omni Shoreham Hotel, the bishops' meeting site in Washington. They sang hymns, prayed the rosary and carried signs with messages such as "Yes for holy days," "Don't dump Our Lady," "Holy days yes, liberal bishops no" and "No doctrine, no dollars."

At issue was whether to retain the obligation of U.S. Latin-rite Catholics to attend Mass on four of the six currently observed holy days of obligation. Any decision of the bishops to change holy days must be confirmed by the Vatican.

EDITORS' NOTE: The *Catholic Courier* of Nov. 21 will provide full coverage of developments at the bishops' meeting.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED HIGHLAND HOSPITAL PATIENT INFORMATION RECEPTIONISTS

There are several exciting, high-visibility volunteer positions available at Highland Hospital, 1000 South Avenue. As a Patient Information Receptionist, the volunteer will be offered a comprehensive training program which includes computer operations, phone skills, and general hospital orientation. The volunteer should be friendly, courteous, enjoy working with people, and able to handle diverse activities. Available hours include weekdays 8:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon and 12 noon - 4:00 p.m. Training sessions are now available.

For more information, please contact Carol Steppe or Jodi Zaccour, Human Resources at Highland Hospital at 461-6700, Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.