

A Pilgrim in a Pilgrim Church: Memoirs of a Catholic Archbishop

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For many people, the name of Archbishop Rembert Weakland brings to mind only connotations of scandal - the titillating tale of a prominent priest disgraced. But that whiff of dishonor barely begins to tell the whole story. / In these pages Archbishop Weakland recounts his life from his childhood in rural Pennsylvania to his retirement from the archbishopric in 2002 at the age of 75, all in the context of the Church that he long served. Weakland takes readers with him to Rome, where he discovered the splendor of a whole new intellectual world, and then to New York for his extensive musical study at Julliard and Columbia University. From his early days in the priesthood to his struggles with pontiffs, Weakland details how he learned to become a leader and minister to his people and how his famously liberal beliefs affected his ministry. While he presents an honest account of the scandal he is so often recognized for, the complete picture beyond rumor and accusation may come as a surprise to many readers. / Throughout his memoir Weakland describes with poignant honesty his psychological, spiritual, and sexual growth. Candid and engaging, *A Pilgrim in a Pilgrim Church* offers a fascinating inside look at both Pope Paul VI and Pope John Paul II even as it tells the story of a life fully lived.

Rembert G. Weakland, O.S.B., was elected Archabbot of St. Vincent Monastery, Latrobe, Pennsylvania, in 1963, and Abbot Primate of the International Benedictine Confederation in 1967, and he served as Archbishop of Milwaukee from 1977 to 2002. He is the auWhen Weakland resigned as Milwaukee archbishop in 2002 after revelations of a past homosexual relationship and a confidential payout, it was seen as another stunning episode in the unfolding clergy abuse scandal. It was especially painful to liberal Catholics who viewed Weakland as their champion. Weakland was publicly penitent, but other events that year-chief among them the resignation of Cardinal Bernard Law in Boston-made Weakland's drama a footnote. With this frank and well-told memoir, that's no longer the case. A Benedictine monk, Weakland is up front about his homosexuality in a church that preferred to ignore gays, and about his failures in overseeing pedophile priests. But this is really the poignant journey of a soul, not a mea culpa about sex, with chapters on his hardscrabble boyhood and fascinating, and sometimes sobering, insights into the life of a bishop and the tensions between the American Catholic Church and the Vatican. At points the narrative has more than enough detail on the life of a globe-trotting abbot. But overall this is an invaluable historical record and a moving personal confession. (June)

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