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Weakland controversy resurfaces

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A new piece of artwork that portrays former Milwaukee Archbishop Rembert Weakland is causing a stir in Milwaukee. The bronze relief pedestal to the Mary statue at the Cathedral of St. John depicts Weakland with Mary, St. John and other figures, including children.

Among those criticizing the artwork is SNAP, the Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests. Weakland resigned in 2002 after revelations that he had had a relationship with an adult seminarian whom he paid to keep quiet about the affair. He also has admitted to moving around pedophile priests.

Conservative Catholics also have blasted the pedestal as well as the fact that Weakland was on the altar at new Archbishop Jerome ListECKI's installation last week.

The archdiocese has defended the artwork, claiming it was commissioned in 2000 as part of a larger renovation project--before the revelations about Weakland, according to Catholic News Agency.

I've been a supporter of Weakland, one who has been disappointed by him surely. But this does seem like an odd choice.

The Mary Mother of the Church statue above the relief panel, by Chicago artists Jeffrey and Anna Koh-Varilla, is striking, though.

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