

# BUSH CHIDES CHINA

Before leaving for Beijing, President George W. Bush gave a speech in Bangkok, Thailand that cited the lack of religious liberties, as well as other human rights, that exist in China. And while in China, Bush commented on the deprivation of religious liberties there on several occasions.

Bush made it clear that “America stands in firm opposition to China’s detention of political dissidents, human rights advocates and religious activists.” Moreover, Bush said, “I have spoken clearly, candidly and consistently with China’s leaders about our deep concerns over religious freedom and human rights.”

The plight of the Catholic Church is particularly distressing. There is an officially sanctioned “Catholic Church” in China, but there is also an underground Church, one that authentically represents the teachings of Catholicism. The members of the underground Church are in constant danger of being persecuted.

We were quick to applaud what President Bush did, but we also cited Pope Benedict XVI’s remark: He pleaded with Chinese leaders “to open [China] to the Gospel.”

By contrast, Sen. McCain and Sen. Obama looked weak. For example, McCain was on record imploring the president not to be “confrontational” with Chinese officials about the issue of human rights. When Bill Donohue appeared on “Fox and Friends” to discuss this, he asked, “Should he be obsequious?” Donohue also criticized Obama for saying nothing about the massive abuse of religious liberties in China.