

Confrontation a sign of genuine friendship

By Michael Warren
Catholic News Service

We need to confirm our friends, that is, remind them of their goodness, of their achievements and of their importance in our lives. But sometimes we also have to confront our friends and make them aware of their destructive paths.

A young man recently told me that he was dropping out of my class in order to get into a full-time alcohol-rehabilitation program. He said he had known for some time that he had a drinking problem, but it was only when his girlfriend confronted him that he eventually came to see that he had to do something about it.

I asked whether his other friends had helped him to see his problem. He said some of them were part of the problem, as it was with them that he did most of his serious drinking.

I asked about the others. Had they helped him? He said, "No, they just laughed it off as if it were a joke."

So here was a large group of people he called friends, and only one of them was enough of a friend to face him with his drinking problem. This story raised for me the issue of loyalty in friendship. Wouldn't a loyal friend have confronted him about his destructive behavior? And if such honesty is the mark of true friendship, what

would you say about all of his other "friends"?

Is there an aspect of friendship that accepts some degree of responsibility for friends and their behavior? Do you think people your own age ever confront their friends about things they are doing that are bad for them or wrong?

What about you? If you knew one of your friends was moving in a self-destructive direction, what would you do about it?

Increasingly, young people in the U.S. have been working to prevent destructive behavior among friends. This movement is called SADD — Students Against Drunk Driving — and encourages young people not to let friends who have drunk too much drive home.

They work out an arrangement that the one who has not been drinking will do the driving. This is an example of young people recognizing their responsibilities to and for their friends.

But what do we do in the more ordinary circumstances when a friend is doing something destructive to self or others? That's when confrontation is appropriate.

Many have told me they find confronting friends very hard because they risk losing the friends. I can understand that fear, but I don't think real friends have a choice.

If we ignore a friend's destructive beha-



avior and allow it to continue, then we risk losing the friend in another and deeper way. Some day the person may come to recognize his or her destructive behavior and may then see our non-interference for what it was, a lack of concern combined with an excess of cowardice.

To be there for another person can sometimes mean standing in the other person's way. It can mean challenging a friend to

admit that she is being destructive toward herself or others. It can mean insisting that he be more realistic about the consequences of his actions and also that he be more faithful to his better self.

It means saying, "You are better than this behavior you have fallen into. I see possibilities of goodness in you. I love you and challenge you to love yourself more by being a better person."

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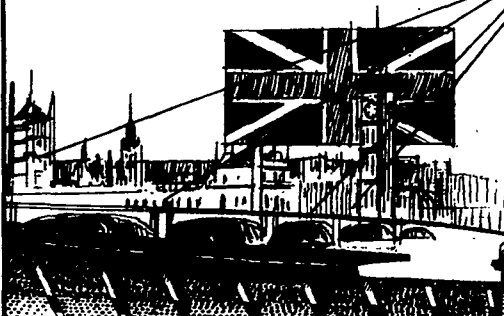
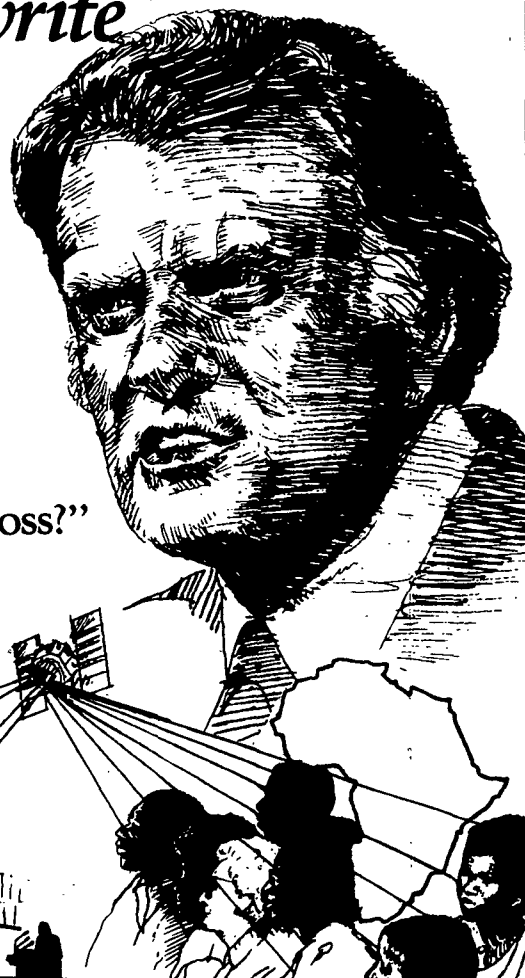
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FRIDAY 9:00PM CH 13

ATTENTION CARDINAL MOONEY ALUMNI:

All student records, transcripts, and alumni information for class reunions will be located at and can be requested from:

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Extra yearbooks, scrapbooks and class lists will be housed at the Mercy Motherhouse for use at class reunions.

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The winner was Joe Quayle of Honeoye Falls.

MUSIC TRIVIA

This week's question:

Who plays saxophone on Sting's album, "Dream of the Blue Turtles?"

A:

Name: _____
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Rules:

Each week, the Catholic Courier, in conjunction with the House of Guitars will feature a Music Trivia contest. All you have to do to enter is answer the question, fill in your name and address and the school you attend (if applicable), cut out the coupon and send it in to the Catholic Courier. If more than one correct entry is received, a drawing will be held and one winning entry will be drawn.

If yours is the winning entry, you will be mailed a coupon for a free album or tape of your choice redeemable at the House of Guitars, 645 Titus Ave.

All entries must be received within seven days of this paper's issue date. Winning names and answers will be printed the week following each drawing.

The Catholic Courier
Music Trivia
1150 Buffalo Rd.
Rochester, NY 14624