

Liberty and truth overlooked in article on gays

To the editors:

I question the motives of your article "Gays strive for complete acceptance by church" (*Catholic Courier*, Aug. 23). Though it attempts to enclose itself in an aura of impartiality by supposedly presenting both sides of the issue of homosexuality, the article cannot only be criticized for its incomplete presentation of the subject, but for its failure as a presumably Catholic publication to clarify the true teaching of the church. Indeed, the *Courier's* studied neutrality — fence straddling — would do credit to any secular newspaper.

What then was lacking? It was the complete absence of any reference to liberty and truth, and the role they play in the treatment of homosexuality. These elements of liberty and truth are inextricably bound together in all facets of life. To ignore them as you have in your article

Negative marketing injures whole family

To the editors:

Unity is a vital element of the church as a faith community. With this in mind, I was extremely disturbed by the *Catholic Courier's* use of a graph entitled "The Current Picture" on page (10A) of its supplemental section on Catholic Education '90 (Aug. 16). The graph made a contrast between Catholic high school seniors and public high school seniors. As a person who experienced 12 years of excellent (and values-supported) education in public schools, as a Catholic parent of a public school student, and as a parish Director of Religious Education, I was very offended by the graph's implication that public school students are religiously and morally inferior to Catholic school students. During my 11 years as a DRE, I have interviewed and worked with hundreds of students, both Catholic and public school. It is my observation that these students are equal in terms of moral judgment and religious practice. The critical variable seems to be religious formation within the family. Consequently, I am outraged whenever I hear or read inaccurate and unjust generalizations made about one group versus another. This kind of negative marketing technique (a "we" versus "they" posture) is extremely detrimental to the well-being of our faith community.

In our words and actions, let us recognize the equal dignity of all persons and ministries within the church. "Catholic Education" encompasses a wide variety of programs and ministries, including Catholic schools, Religious Education classes, Youth Ministry, sacramental preparation, adult education, etc. As Bishop Clark notes in his letter about Catholic Education (page 3A of the supplement): "Our diocesan church is strengthened by the emergence of broad-based catechetical ministries; we as church are committed to providing many and varied opportunities for faith formation for all the people of God." As members of God's family, let us work together to share the Word of the Lord with each other and with everyone we meet.

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EDITORS' NOTE: We acknowledge that the four charts appearing on pages 10A, 12A and 14A were less than ideal for a supplement intended to salute Catholic education for both public- and Catholic-school students. Unfortunately, last-minute circumstances caused us to fill space in the back of the supplement with a small amount of copy provided by outside sources — in this case, some promotional material sent to all Catholic newspapers by the National Catholic Educational Association. We regret any offense that may have been given by our inclusion of this material.

is comparable to a mason working without cement.

The great Pope Leo XIII was well aware of the forces of liberty and truth in his encyclical "On Human Liberty" (*Libertas Praestantissimum*) when he referred to liberty as "the highest of natural endowments." He goes one step further and notes the difference between natural liberty and moral liberty.

He defines natural liberty as the power to choose, which man has by virtue of that God-like spiritual faculty, his free will. Since choice can go either way as Lucifer and our First Parents demonstrated, Leo XIII stated we must consider another kind of liberty which he termed moral liberty in order to present a balanced image of liberty. Moral liberty is the freedom to choose within the constraints of right reason informing us of what is truly for our good.

However in order to exercise our free

will liberties — natural and moral — we have to know the truth. God provided for this when He sent His Son as Redeemer Who founded a teaching Church to inform our darkened intellects on what is truly good and as a font of grace to bolster our weakened wills to make proper choices. ...

... Liberty without truth is abysmal license. This is the trend, the current, the deluge that carries us along today. Every man decides what the truth is for himself and that's ersatz truth. Where is the logic of this alternative to God's plan of liberty qualified by truth?

So is it any wonder that in this milieu, many homosexuals have determined that they are badly done to, because they are being denied the "right" to decide what the rules and standards — morality — should be?

And where are the dikes that any rightful civilization might expect to withstand these

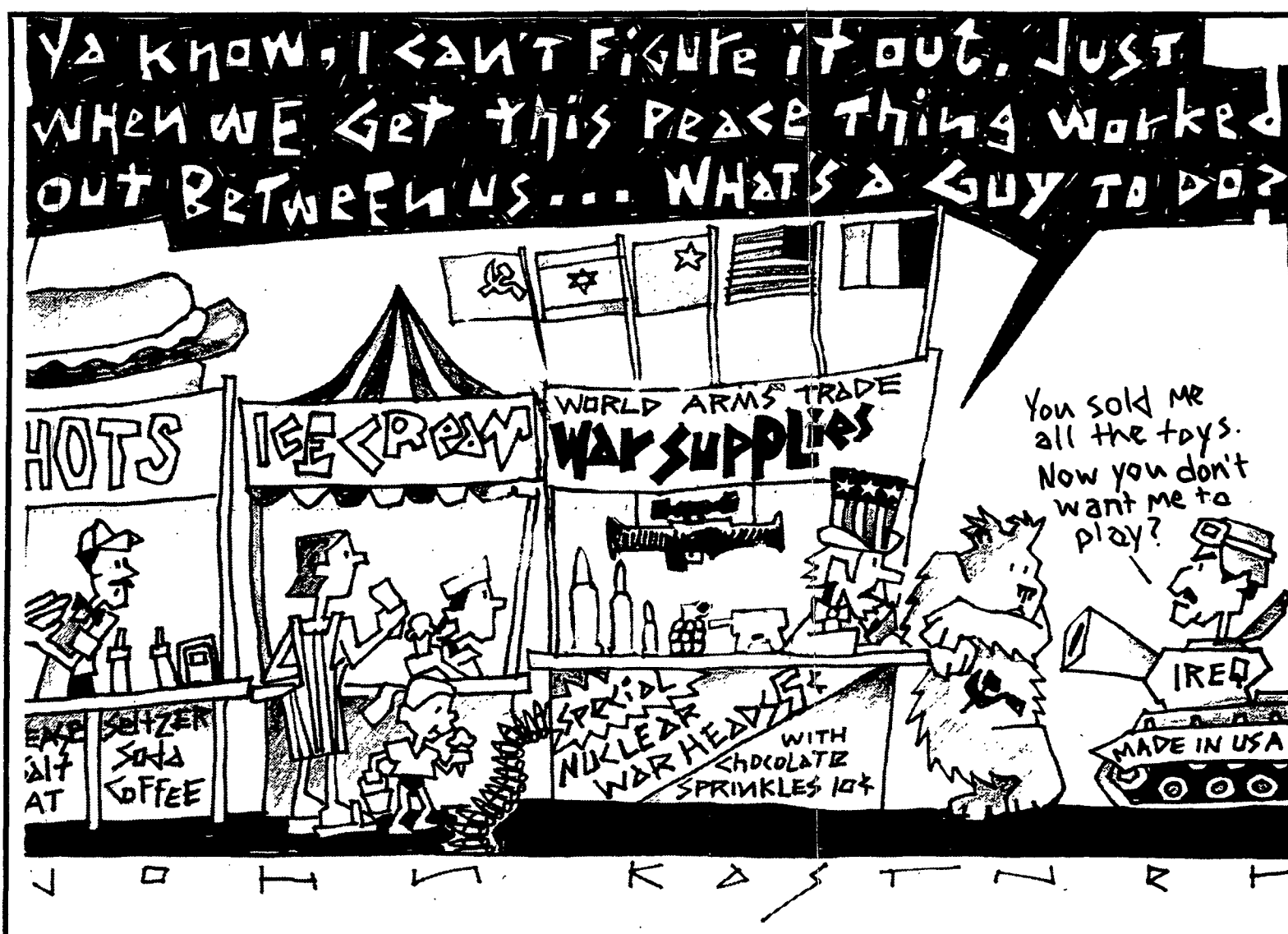
forces of chaos and destruction? You will not find them in the courts, the legislatures, nor in many of our churches.

As for the American Catholic Church from which some of us would expect only the best, we must endure the equivocation, omissions, and silence of the greater percentage of our bishops plus the skewed and unreflective statements of so-called theologians such as Curran and McBrien.

And of course your article is a concrete demonstration of offering deference to the glorification of liberty without real truth, that is present in the thinking of the Rochester Diocesan authorities today.

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Rochester

EDITORS' NOTE: This letter has been edited to comply with space limitations.



Puzzled by 'ambiguous' article on use of penance

To the editors:

Your front page article in the Aug. 2 edition entitled "Catholics adapt to evolving penance rites" is a masterpiece of puzzlement. I've read it several times, and I'm still not sure what it means.

You say the studies showed a confusion over the natures of sin and morality and attribute this to poor catechesis. No wonder,

when articles such as this appear in a newspaper called *Catholic Courier*.

The title of the article alone is ambiguous and further along it suggests that other means of reconciliation are acceptable such as reception of the Eucharist (is that instead of, and without confession?) and personal prayer. Since when has personal prayer replaced confession?

Your newspaper could do much in the way of helping Catholics to understand the true form of worship. Surely we have not reached the point where our conscience alone dictates how we are to practice our religion?

This Mr. David Leege suggests "The decline in availability of priests," as one of the reasons that fewer people go to confession. I would invite him to The Assumption of Our Lady in Fairport, every Saturday afternoon between 5 and 6 p.m. There he will find two priests and maybe, maybe, three penitents.

I have found a wonderful booklet that has helped me in my search for answers. It is written by Father Albert Shamon, "Our Lady Says: Monthly Confessions — Remedy for the West." It is available from: The Riehle Foundation, P.O. Box 7, Milford, Ohio 45150. It's the best \$1 you'll ever spend. Send a little extra for postage.

We are so blessed by having this scholarly man in our midst. Why not take advantage of this blessing?

Gloria Bischoff
Alpine Knoll
Fairport

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