

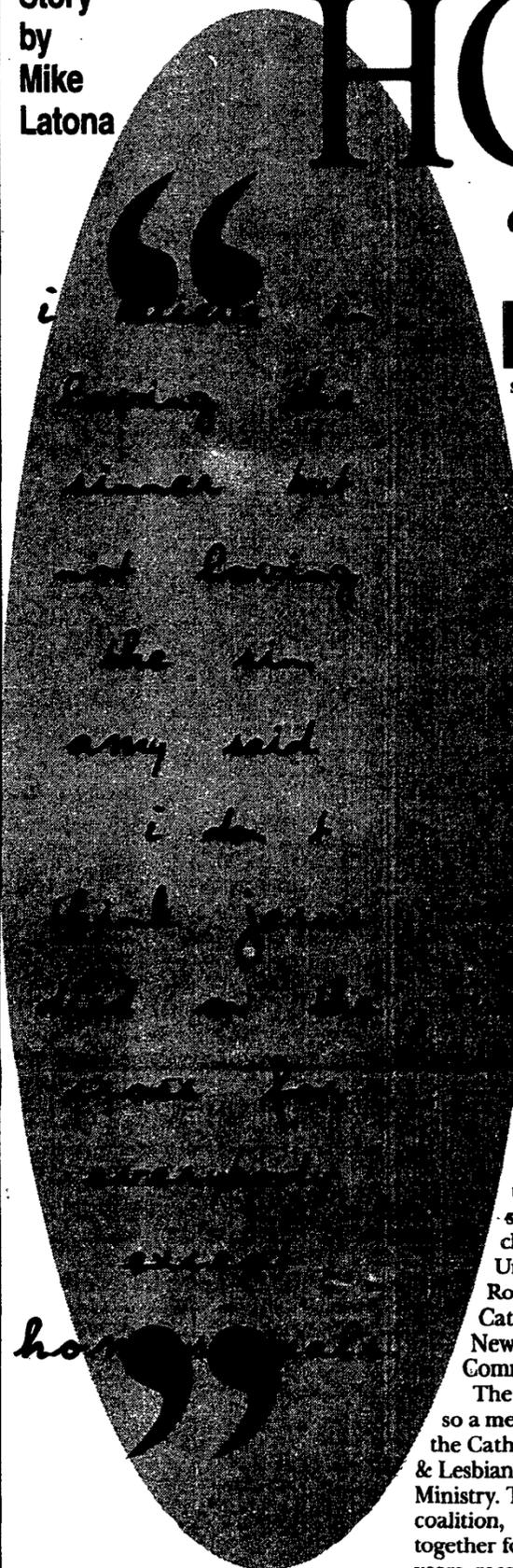
ON THE MOUNTAIN



66mikes christian philosophy is shaped by matthew 22:37-40, in whi

Story
by
Mike
Latona

HOMOSEXUALITY



“jesus never stops loving you”

It's no big news that many people get squeamish when the subject of homosexuality arises.

But those folks probably aren't aware of the discomfort homosexuals suffer because of this squeamishness.

In fact, Father Gary Tyman noted, these negative feelings can become so intense that suicidal behavior is not unusual among homosexual teens. He said that part of their anguish stems from his perception that few people in the community — including those at a Catholic teen's parish — favor open discussion about homosexuality.

“It's important to start talking about it. The silence has led teens to think, ‘Nobody loves me. Maybe God doesn't love me, either, so I'm going to think about killing myself,’” said Father Tyman, who

serves as chaplain for the University of Rochester's Catholic Newman Community. The priest is also a member of the Catholic Gay & Lesbian Family Ministry. This coalition, together for four years, recently began working on behalf of the Diocese of Rochester to offer education, support

and consultation for families in which there are homosexual members.

Father Tyman added that the fear of being judged harshly often emerges in a homosexual during his or her teen years. In a former priest assignment at a parish, he recalled, a teenage boy once approached him and revealed that he was gay.

“He was absolutely terrified of his parents,” Father Tyman remarked.

One University of Rochester student experienced similar fear while in high school. Mike — who asked that his last name be withheld — said he became aware of his homosexuality in ninth grade. He recalled that his parents surmised he was gay, but that he feared rejection if he admitted this fact.

“They challenged me on it, but they pushed me deeper into the closet,” said Mike, 19.

In addition, Mike said, he was also scared to share any of this

information with schoolmates — especially after seeing another student's locker get painted pink because he was suspected of being gay.

Twice during his high-school years, Mike attempted suicide. Although he said many issues were involved, Mike acknowledged that his

homosexuality was one of the main reasons.

Father Tyman's insight on the low self-worth that homosexuals experience rings true for Chris Nadler, 18.

“I have friends who hate their homosexuality,” Chris said.

Tim Perrotta has a good idea of what leads

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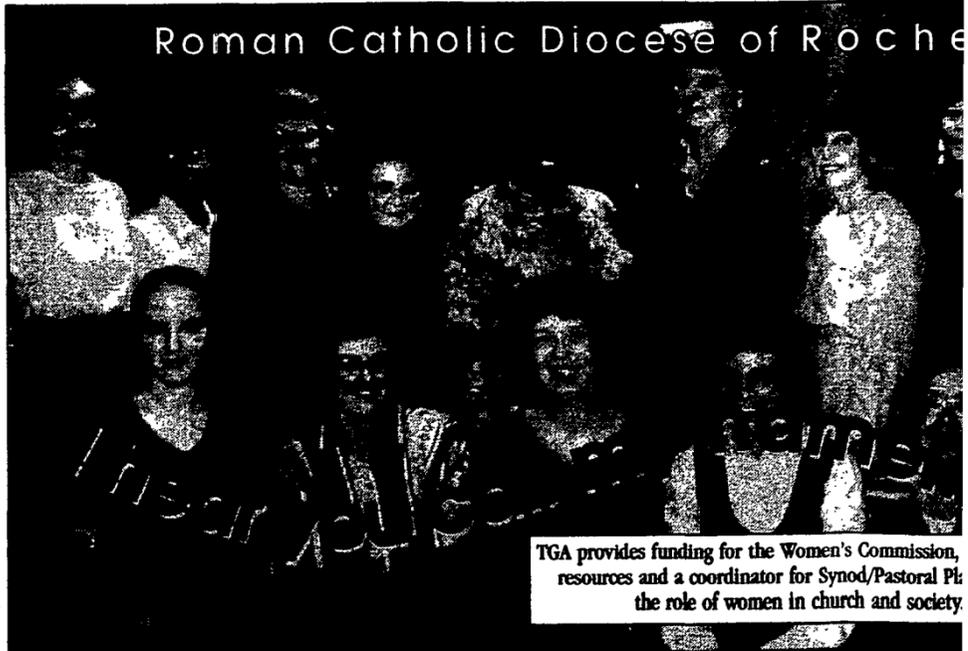
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