

POPE COMMENTS ON ABORTION, GAYS

Last month, Pope Francis had a three-part meeting in Rome with Catholic journalists and his comments were published by *America* magazine.

The *New York Times* issued a "Breaking News Alert," followed by a story, "Pope Bluntly Faults Church's Focus on Gays and Abortion." Here is what the pope said: "We cannot insist only on issues related to abortion, gay marriage and the use of contraceptive methods. This is not possible." He also said, "when we speak about these issues, we have to talk about them in a context."

The pope is right that single-issue Catholics need to rise above their immediate concerns. He did not say we should not address abortion or homosexuality; he simply said we cannot be absorbed by these issues. Both the left and the right should heed his message.

The article in the *New York Times* said U.S. bishops would feel the pinch of these remarks as they often appear "to make combating abortion, gay marriage and contraception their top public policy priorities." This was inaccurate. It was not the bishops who made these issues front and center—it was the Obama administration. It would be more accurate to say the pope would find fault with the bishops if they did not resist these state encroachments on the religious-liberty rights of Catholics.

The pope also said the Church should be a "home to all" and not a "small chapel." Pope Francis did not mean by these words, as the *Times* alert said, that these remarks were a criticism of focusing on "doctrine, orthodoxy and a limited agenda of moral teachings." In the previous paragraph, he

spoke about "the sanctity of the militant church." In the same paragraph where he mentioned "small chapel," he cited the "negative behavior" of priests and nuns, saying their conduct is that of an "unfruitful bachelor" and a "spinster." He did not say what the *Times* attributed to him.

The pope wants each one of us to reject abortion. He also wants us to help women who have had one to find peace with God. Furthermore, Pope Francis wants us to reject gay marriage, but not gays because they are gay. Kudos to Pope Francis.