

Catholic Courier

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Letters Policy

The Catholic Courier wishes to provide space for readers throughout the diocese to express opinions on all sides of the issues. We welcome original, signed letters about current issues affecting church life.

Although we cannot publish every letter we receive, we seek, insofar as possible, to provide a balanced representation of expressed opinions and a variety of reflections on life in the church. We will choose letters for publication based on likely reader interest, timeliness and a sense of fair play. Our discerning readers may determine whether to agree or disagree with the letter writers' opinions.

Letters must not exceed 500 words. Anonymous letters and the use of pseudonyms are unacceptable. We reserve the right to edit letters for legal and other concerns. With respect to errors in submitted text, we will correct spelling only.

Mail letters to: Catholic Courier, P.O. Box 24379, Rochester, N.Y. 14624. Please include your full name, phone number and complete address for purposes of verification.

What's the point of using Jewish date?

To the editors:

As Catholics and other Christians lumber along, ideologic reformers have been busy effecting the removal of Christian influence from public life. Christians, offering little resistance and only minor complaint, have simply acquiesced to the suppression of even the most modest expressions of Christian culture.

Public education, the trophy of secular humanists, provides stark example of the wholesale capitulation of Christians to philosophies often intolerant of Christian faith and values. Despite the holding of majority enrollments — and concomitant tax receipts — at most public schools, Christians have, nonetheless, surrendered principles, traditions, and history to the self-proclaimed "multi-culturalists" and guardians of political correctness.

Did most Catholics think that it would just stop with the ban on prayer in public schools? Or maybe after the implementation of variant sex education programs, or the revision of history texts diminishing and distorting Christian influence? Are Christians sufficiently stunned by the arrogance and presumption of those "champions of tolerance" who insist on the removal of Christmas trees from public schools because such ornaments are "offensive?"

Well, the beast has an insatiable appetite, and next on the list of Christian effects to be jettisoned are the historical dating appellations B.C. (Before Christ) and A.D. (Anno Domini, Year of the Lord). These terms are to be replaced by B.C.E. (Before the Common Era) and C.E. (Common Era). B.C. and A.D. recognize Christ as the Lord of history, and are designations of the Christian calendar in use in America, until now.

The New York State Department of Education has determined that the honor due Christ, as well as the respect accorded tradition and convention, be replaced with something more appeasing of anyone but Christians. The new designations of C.E. and B.C.E. are now being used for dates on New York State Regents tests and other statewide competency examinations. These tests, produced by the New York State Department of Education, are administered to almost all public and private high school students in the state, including all Catholic high schools. And what, if anything, has been the Christian response?

Perhaps the *Catholic Courier* will explain that June 25th front page story, "Daily Life in Jesus' Time," and all of those generous doses of the B.C.E./C.E. designations. Some readers might reasonably conclude that the unqualified introduction and liberal use of those new titles was, in fact, the primary and only



purpose for that story.

For general consideration, what of our Catholic faith do we truly value when we so willingly abandon or trade away our religious patrimony when pressed by aggressive ideologues? Where is our treasure when we so readily withdraw from the defense of our Lord's rightful place in our lives?

Our Lord does not receive glory from men, but Christ did counsel that whoever denies him before men, he also will deny before his Father. The Common Era (C.E.) denies Christ, and that is the prominent feature common to its proponents.

W. Randolph Smith
Rochester

EDITORS' NOTE: According to *Catholic News Service's "Stylebook on Religion,"* C.E., or Common Era, is the Jewish equivalent of A.D., and was "adopted by Jews to deal with the Gregorian calendar without accepting the Christian perspective of viewing Christ's birth as the central event of history."

CNS advises Catholic publications to use C.E. "only in quoted matter or in stories dealing with Judaism or Jewish-Christian relations..."

For our story "Daily life in Jesus' time," the writer decided to use C.E. for effect because his subject was first-century Jewish culture. The necessity of using C.E. in that context is debatable, and it clearly was a mistake to use the term without explanation. No "hidden agenda" was at work, however.

Encourages church to rethink its reliance on bingo revenues

To the editors:

Your recent spread on bingo was interesting. I realize that many parishes, ours included, may be hard put to replace bingo income were it to be abolished. I also notice that many parishioners have become rather "dependent" on this "recreation" and might be rather perturbed should bingo be stopped. This is readily understood, as bingo is after all a form of gambling and therefore can be addictive.

The point of this letter is that I felt one glaring omission in the article after I finished it. The nature of giving, of charity was not mentioned. I'm no theologian, but any form of gambling appeals not to free will, genuine sacrifice or spirituality, but rather to our physiology. The rush, the anticipation, the agony or ecstasy are false gods, are they not?

I realize that bingo is rather popular and that many mildly enjoy it and realize

that the money is going to a great cause. Some people however are hooked. Why? Because it's dangerous. Nature of the beast. This also deprives many of the opportunity to sacrifice freely. I think there's a substantial difference between a baked food sale and putting dancing girls in front of the Church on Sunday morning. I think it's time that our Churches took a hard look at both bingo and our call to Charity.

Mark Scipioni
Caves Place, Rochester
via e-mail

EDITORS' NOTE: We don't dispute Mr. Scipioni's point, but we are having a tough time determining to which Courier article he refers. The most likely possibility was a March 5 article that mentioned bingo in passing, but focused on church opposition to casino gambling in New York state. For that very reason, it did not address parish concerns.

Contumacious Error?

To the editors:

Sunset, June 26, 1998 A.D.

The troublesome aspect of Lee Strong's article of June 26 ("Daily Life in Jesus' Time") was his use of the time designation as C.E. (Common Era) in place of the universally accepted A.D. — Anno Domini, in the year of Our Lord.

Are we to assume that the Rochester Diocese is abandoning the normal time designation in favor of the modernist system of new affirmation currently in vogue. If so, I would substitute C.E. — Contumacious Error — for Common Era.

A.J. Annunziata
Holiday Drive, Horseheads

Keep column coming

To the editors:

Thanks for continuing Father McBrien's column. He always brings us back to the heart of Christ's teaching — Matt. 25, as he did in the June 26 paper.

Speaking of Matt. 25, could you run a feature on the latest Catholic-Lutheran accord on salvation? How does the "new" Catholic position square with Matt. 25, James and parts of Revelation? What is the reasoning? Enjoy your paper.

H. Stewart

South 21st Street, Philadelphia

EDITORS' NOTE: The "Joint Declaration of the Catholic Church and the Lutheran World Federation on the Doctrine of Justification" was released June 25, but Cardinal Edward Cassidy of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity said at that time that it will not be formally signed until this fall. The Courier has been saving Catholic News Service articles concerning the document and hopes to run something about it in the near future.

Use RICO on NOW

To the editors:

On July 6, three women were arrested as they allegedly prepared to deface a pro-life billboard erected by Feminists for Life of New York. According to a recent interpretation of the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act (RICO), the National Organization for Women must be held responsible for conspiring to create a climate that encouraged these women to break the law.

Christine Basso-Cullen
Dryden, via e-mail