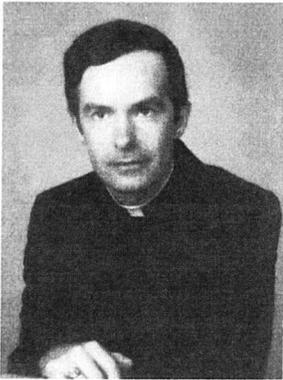


Chaplain's Corner, Hughes Camp Chaplain Richard W Rudd



Plato, in his Republic, relates the allegory of the cave, contrasting darkness with light and naivete with knowledge. Unable or perhaps unmotivated and unwilling to turn around or leave the cave, the occupants face a wall on which

are projected the shadows of objects behind them by the light shining through the entrance. They consider the dimness of their vision to be normal and mistake the shadows for reality. If one of the occupants were to turn and leave, they would enter the light, experience clearer vision, see and experience the objects directly, not their shadows and reflections. Returning to relate this experience to those who remained in the cave, they would have greater awareness of the darkness with their former ability to see dimly now impaired and recognize the shadows for what they are. Their companions, not having ventured from the cave into the light, would no doubt ridicule the messenger, insist it was they who saw more clearly, reject the truth revealed to them, and refuse to change their faulty concept of reality.

Light has essence. It can produce solar energy and be measured. Conversely, darkness has no essence; it is merely the absence of light, knowledge of truth, and understanding. The eye contains rods, cones, and nerve endings that record light. The lens, like that of a camera, organizes the light reflected off of objects so that we can visually perceive them. The image formed in the eye stimulates nerves that the brain interprets, enabling us to comprehend an image. Light is crucial to seeing, conceptualizing, and understanding. So, light enables us to see, to envisage objects with our eyes. It also signifies knowledge of truth, enabling us to envision concepts in our minds and become enlightened or illuminated. And, light represents Christ Who proclaimed, "I am the light of the world..." (Jn. 8:12) "and the truth..." (Jn. 14:6) Thus, to see means to visually perceive with the eyes and to mentally know and understand with the mind.

Within our world there are many who, like the residents in Plato's cave, whether by choice or circumstance "...sit in darkness and in the shadow of death..." (Lk. 1:79) and ignorance. They are "...burdened with sins and swayed by various impulses, who will listen to everybody and can never arrive at a knowledge of the truth." (II Tim. 3:6) As the lens of the eye clouds vision and causes blindness as a result of cataracts, so such vices as biases, bad habits, sloth, worthless distractions, inordinate desires, false information, and ignorance cloud the lens of reasoning which focuses the light of knowledge and truth in the mind, ultimately resulting in blindness of understanding. The afflicted live "...in the vanity" or "futility of their minds; they are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart; they have become callous and have given themselves up to licentiousness, greedy to practice every kind of uncleanness." (Eph. 4:18) Of these who would aspire to be leaders, one must ask, "Can the blind lead the blind?" (Lk. 6:39) Just as none of us is able to see our own face, but only a reflection, there are those who refuse to face themselves or the truth. Which is worse, a child who is afraid of the dark or an adult who is afraid of the light?

We are experiencing God's warning "...that in the last days perilous times" or "times of stress shall come. For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, inhuman, without natural affection, trucebreakers, reckless, slanderers, profligates, fierce, haters of good, traitors, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, holding the form of religion but denying the power of it.

Avoid such people." (II Tim. 3:1) We are to avoid their seduction and proselytizing, their practices, false message and promises, and not be in alliance with them. "Blessed is the man who sits (not) in the seat of scoffers..." (Ps. 1:1), those who deride and mock the truth. Truth is historical, relating an accurate record of the ideals and deeds of America's Founding Fathers and our Confederate ancestors. It is current, portraying honestly political and social events as they occur. It is spiritual and prophetic, proclaiming the good news of the Gospel that there is no salvation but through trust in the crucified Blood of the resurrected Christ for the forgiveness of sin and the promise of eternal life.

In spite of the resistance we encounter, we who have seen the light have a responsibility to transmit its message by being courageous enough to "...set...an example in speech and conduct..." (I Tim. 4:12) to those who sit in darkness that they might have the opportunity to experience teshuvah or repentance, turning from ignorance and despair to truth and hope. In doing so, we demonstrate fidelity to our convictions, honor our ancestors, our fellow men, and our Lord, and can look forward to hearing Him say, "Well done, good and faithful servant..." (Matt. 25:23)

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