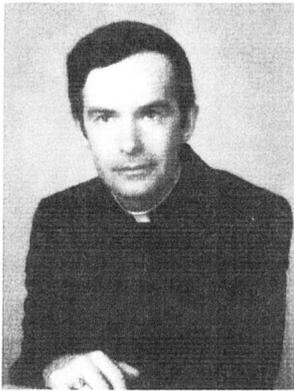


Chaplain's Corner, Hughes Camp Chaplain Richard W Rudd...

Corrected and complete reprint of Chaplain Rudd's August Article



Looking back to the Old South of the 19th century from a 21st century perspective, many, including some among our own ranks, view the Confederacy from a puritanical-Yankee-New England point of view. They imagine the Old South to have been almost exclusively Protestant in general and

Baptist in particular. While it is true that many Protestants of all denominations served the Confederacy faithfully, the loyalty, contributions, and sacrifices made by Catholics and Jews must not be marginalized or forgotten. This month's article deals with Catholics' role in the Southern Cause.

Thousands of average citizens of the Confederacy were Catholic, many tracing their roots back to Spain, France, and Ireland. Before the WBTS, Catholic cultural influence was actually stronger in the South than in the North, considering that Catholic immigrants did not settle in the North in large numbers until after the war. And when they did, they often were treated no better than the North accused the South of treating slaves. Many Protestant southerners had Catholic relatives and sent their children to Catholic schools. Gen. Lee's nephew was the founding pastor of the Catholic cathedral in Washington, D.C. It was the Dominican Order that educated Jefferson Davis at their St. Thomas School and the Sisters of Charity who offered to educate Davis' children in Savannah after the war. Although Davis was affiliated with the Episcopalians, who were more traditional and orthodox in their faith and practice in the 19th century than they are today, he followed the practice of wearing scapulars and other religious medals.

During the WBTS, southern Catholics confirmed their patriotism and loyalty to the Confederacy and, in so doing, to the values of America's Founding Fathers. All Catholic bishops in the South supported the Confederacy and encouraged their

congregations to do the same. Among the most prominent were Bishops Austin Verot of Savannah, Patrick Lynch of Charleston who served as the Confederacy's envoy to the Vatican, Martin Spalding of Louisville, John Odin of New Orleans, and William Elder of Natchez. The example set by Bishop Elder exemplified the sentiments of his fellow bishops. He noted that all attempts to reach a compromise between the North and South were rejected by the government in Washington. He believed that neither the teaching of the church nor the U.S. Constitution rejected secession as a viable solution and that such action was in agreement with Catholic understanding of morality. When Yankee soldiers occupied Mississippi in 1863 and tried to force Catholics to pray during Mass for Lincoln's success, Bishop Elder refused. His cathedral and parishes were confiscated by the Yankees and he was arrested, tried, and convicted in a court of travesty. Catholics served in President Davis' cabinet and many Confederate generals were Catholic, most prominent among them being Longstreet and Beauregard. Southern priests served as chaplains in the military. Fr. Abram Ryan was known as the poet of the Confederacy and became famous for his *Conquered Banner*. Fr. John Bannon of Missouri was known for his fierce courage on the battlefield and served as a link between Pope Pius IX and Davis. In their correspondence, the Pope always addressed Davis as "Mr. President" and granted Davis' request to advise European Catholics to refuse Yankee recruitment of them as mercenaries to fight against the South. Because of this correspondence, the U.S. Congress broke diplomatic ties with the Vatican in 1863. Before the Red Cross became famous, it was nuns who served as nurses during the war. Catholic Confederate Dan Emmet wrote Dixie, the national anthem of the Confederacy. Our hallowed Battle Flag bears the obvious design of St. Andrew's cross. As our Lord was crucified, so was St. Andrew. And, as St. Andrew was crucified, so was the South. The South still bears the stigmata of the brutal death the Confederacy endured.

At the conclusion of the war, Davis was imprisoned. During his incarceration, since Pope Pius could not visit Davis, he did the next best and sent Davis an autographed portrait of himself. To express his empathy for the fate of Davis and all Confederates, the Pope made and sent to Davis a crown formed from Jerusalem thorns with the inscription, "If a man will come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me." (Matt. 16:24) This quotation transcends time, as applicable to Christian southerners today as it was 152 years ago. Both Catholic and Protestant southerners have based their personal lives and communal society on Christian Biblical principles. In an increasingly secular nation and world that are becoming blatantly hostile to our faith, we must be prepared, if called to do so, to take up our cross in whatever form it assumes, be it the costs of resistance or the suffering of persecution, and follow in the footsteps of our Lord and the saints. At the end of the day, the ultimate source of our strength and depository of our trust and confidence is not in the governments and legal documents of men, but in Him Who promises, "Even though (you) walk through the valley of the shadow of death,...fear no evil; for (I am with you); (My) rod and (MY) staff, they comfort (you)." (Ps. 23:4)

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Fr. Richard Rudd

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