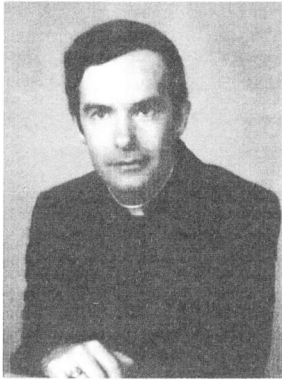


## Chaplain's Corner, Hughes Camp Chaplain Richard W Rudd



"And I saw, and behold, a pale horse..." (Rev. 6:7) Considered to be the deadliest plague in history, this epidemic seemed to simultaneously spread across Europe, Africa, and America. Its exact source remains unclear. It is estimated that, globally, at least 50 million people died. In Kansas City,

Mo., the mayor and health officials issued orders closing all schools, theaters, and churches. Officers were utilized to enforce quarantines. Groups in public places were limited to 20 people. Weddings and funerals were delayed or limited. Hospitals were under stress and there were shortages of medical personnel. People wore masks in public or withdrew into isolation. Healthy people, within hours, could develop a cough leading to pneumonia with fluid in their lungs, making it a struggle to breathe due to depleted oxygen. Under these conditions, society as one knows it seems to degenerate. And, unethical profiteers are always available to sell fake cures at inflated prices. This is a description of the Spanish Flu or Great Influenza epidemic of 1918.

In AD138, the Black Death or Bubonic Plague swept across Europe. Endemic among rodents in the Caspian Sea area, this plague began in central Asia. Reaching Genoa, Italy, it spread throughout Europe and Africa, killing 20% of the world population. In China, 13 million died. European towns lost over half of their population. This plague also affected the economy. The labor force was reduced and food shortages developed. Prices rose and economic stagnation resulted. Governments enacted laws affecting labor, prices, and wages. People became restive and the social order was changed.

Plagues can have either natural or man-made sources. H.G. Wells, an English historian, made the following statements about conditions, also in 1918 and at the end of WWI, in his book *The Outline of History*: "Everywhere there were unwonted privations; there was mourning." "Men felt they

had come to a crisis in the world's affairs." "But there was a widespread realization that everywhere the essentials of the huge problems that had been thrust so suddenly and tragically upon...the world were insufficiently understood." "They were not sure whether they were facing a disaster to civilization or the inauguration of a new phase of human association..."

Beginning in 1861, another man-made plague engulfed the South. Marauding bands of Yankees invaded like locusts, leaving in their wake suffering, death, economic upheaval, and social disruption in epidemic proportions. The scars can still be seen on what was the corporate body of the Confederacy.

Thucydides, the 5th century BC Greek father of historians, said that a historian creates a written record of "...the events that happened in the past and that will, at some time or other and in much the same ways, be repeated in the future." Without history, we would have no landmarks, points of reference, foundations on which to build, or perspective from which to view time. But history is more than mere dates and facts; the landmarks should not become our primary focus. History is the story of all men, the renowned and the unknown, and their past actions, public and private, that have occupied real time and space. Man not only makes history, but also witnesses and records it. It is a composition of man's thoughts, works, feelings, ideas, hopes, votes, goals, accomplishments, and failures. That is why history is not a neat and simple series of isolated events. It is complicated and messy with lives, actions, and events colliding, overlapping, and blending into each other. It will not always give us definite answers to our questions, but it will enable us to better understand the present and plan for the future. Thoreau, the 19th century American poet and writer, said, "Time is but the stream I go fishing in." We all go fishing in the current of people, places, and events that flows past us. History inescapably surrounds us and is kinetic, constantly moving, not static and devoid of the rhythm of life.

From the early 20th to the 21st century, America and the world have experienced catastrophic events, heralds of an approaching apocalyptic age: WWI, the Spanish Flu epidemic, the Great Depression, WWII, the advent of the atomic bomb, Viet Nam, rise of the militant Islamic terrorism, and now the China virus, the unseen enemy. St. Paul wrote, "For we are not contending against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this present darkness, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places." (Eph. 6:12) When we think we have things under control, these unexpected disruptions in the flow of events erupt and make indelible changes in our way of life. Again, St. Paul wrote, "When people say, 'There is peace and security,' then sudden destruction will come upon them..." (I Thess. 5:3) The plagues that Egypt experienced during the life of Moses bear similarities to the plagues that will come in the prophetic Tribulation era. Among those who did not heed the warnings of the times and prepare, "...there was not a house where one was not dead." (Ex. 12:30) Those who did heed the warnings and prepare marked their doorposts and lintels with the blood of the lamb, symbolic of Christ the Lamb of God, making the earliest known sign of the Cross. Just as history will not always give us the definite answers and explanations we so desperately want, being a follower of Christ will not always give us immunity from the perils of life in this world. But, as knowledge of history will assist us in having a better understanding of our present circumstances and planning for the future, so our Christian faith will enable us to deal with the trials we encounter now and determine our eternal destiny. But we must heed the warnings and properly prepare; we must, by faith in Christ, mark the doorposts and lintels of our soul with the blood of the Lamb of God.

***Father Richard Rudd***

***Hughes Camp Chaplain***