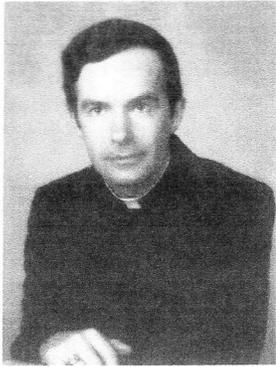




## Chaplain's Corner, Hughes Camp Chaplain Richard W Rudd



We all believe what we freely choose to believe, be it the truth or a lie, and must bear the responsibility. Our system of beliefs determines the order of our values. The effects of these two critical factors are so pervasive that they can be observed in every facet and aspect of life, be it political, religious,

economic, or social, from attitudes regarding the use of alcohol, tobacco, and drugs, the consumption of food, sexual practices, how money is spent and votes are casted, to what is worshipped and how. In recent years, it has become increasingly evident that people, especially those who choose to believe in lies, have become so dedicated to and obstinate in their beliefs that they harden their hearts and stiffen their necks in vindictive anger when confronted with obvious and incontrovertible evidence of proof of truth to the contrary. Negative consequences of erroneous actions are either denied, ignored, or passively and fatalistically accepted. It is insisted that life be lived however one chooses, even if it kills you, because it is one's right and exercise of freedom. But, how free are those who choose to believe and live a lie?

Christ, addressing a group of such irrational people, told them that if they would heed His word and become His disciples "...you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free." (Jn. 8:32) In spite of living under occupation by the Roman Empire, they protested that they were free and in no need of truth, defending their claims by boasting of their pedigree saying, "We are descendants of Abraham..." (Jn. 8:33) Almost every community is populated by some who cling tenaciously to a family's decaying social status or hereditary practices predicated on nothing more than the fading accomplishments and reputations of distant ancestors. Having accomplished little or nothing in their own right and even failing to think for themselves, they are prisoners of the past and captives of ignorance rather than free. They continue to think, live, make decisions and vote within the context of contemporary times and issues in bondage to old customs and habits, out-dated or fabricated information

oblivious to the truths of reality. "The way of a fool is right in his own eyes..." (Prov. 12:15) For example, during the previous general-election year, a car parked in a shopping center lot sported two bumper stickers. One opposed abortion and the other supported BO. When asked to explain the obvious contradiction of voting for a candidate who favors abortion, the only justification they could muster was that they and their progenitors had always voted for the Democratic Party.

Exercise your First Amendment right to proclaim such truths as abortion is murder, marriage is the life-long union of one man and one woman of the same race, capitalism offers more prosperity than socialism, the WBTS was not about slavery, Islam is a terrorist organization of hate and death, America was established as a Christian society based on Biblical values, and trust exclusively in the crucified Blood of the resurrected Christ is the only way to receive pardon for sin and eternal life. Like those who accused Christ of being demonic (Jn. 8:48) and "...took up stones to throw at Him..." (Jn. 8:59), these 21<sup>st</sup>-century Pharisees will seek to threaten, silence, slander, and destroy all of those who advocate truth and freedom of thought, speech, and action. Why? Christ explained when He said that it was "...because My word finds no place in you." (Jn. 8:37) "It is because you cannot bear to hear My word." (Jn. 8:43) Today's Pharisees are devoid of truth and freedom because they refuse to hear and accept them, their thought process being skewed by political correctness, greed, or a false sense of security. "Therefore God sends upon them a strong delusion, to make them believe what is false, so that all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness." (II Thess. 2:11) This does not mean that God causes evil, but rather that after a period of time He withdraws His protection from those who are stubborn and lets them have their own way which leads to their own ruin.



### **Richard Rudd continued...**

Appomatox was 149 years ago, but the battles between lies and truth, bondage and freedom are still being fought. The weapons have changed and the conflict has shifted from fields and streets to the ballot box, classroom, media, and internet. Each generation that loses its battles re-looses the war, but the struggle continues and must until the victory denied our ancestors is won. St. James described our calling and mission when he wrote, "But he who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer that forgets but a doer that acts, he shall be blessed in his doing." (Jas. 1:25)

***Fr. Richard Rudd***

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