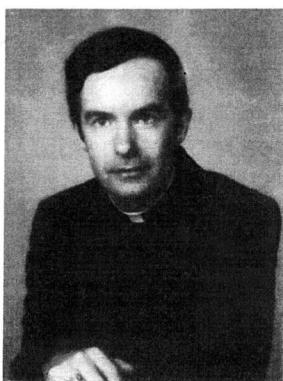


Chaplain's Corner, Hughes Camp Chaplain Richard W Rudd...



The universities of Harvard, Yale, and Princeton, among other schools, were established to provide Americans with a Christian academic education. Unfortunately, they have abdicated their Christian mandate and have become secular institutions infecting their students with a liberal virus. As an

alumnus of a Catholic university, it saddens me to see that some Catholic universities with similar origins are succumbing to the same fate, one of the most notable among them being Notre Dame University. Their administration recently made a concession to liberal fanaticism by covering a series of murals depicting major events in the life of Christopher Columbus. Like all of us mortals, Columbus was not a perfect man. To some extent, we are all influenced by the times in which we live. It is a myth to imagine that the various societies of America's Indians were ideal. Tribal conflicts and human sacrifices existed long before the evils of European culture arrived. Therefore, should all depictions of American Indians be concealed? Carol Delaney, an anthropologist at Brown University, defends Columbus' reputation and testifies that there is no historical evidence that Columbus is guilty of all of the charges fabricated against him. Historical evidence does tell us that it was Columbus, a Catholic Christian, who brought the first Christian missionaries to America to proclaim the Gospel of Christ and offer salvation to the souls he found here.

The church makes available to us the use of sacramentals, symbols that represent a reality both past and present, point to something of special value beyond ourselves, transcend time, and may produce effects that transform us. That transcendence of time and transformation of us is called anamnesis—the calling to mind a past event and experiencing the effect of it in the present. This can apply to secular as well as religious spheres. For example, Christ endured His Passion 2,000 years ago, yet the forgiveness of sin and gift of eternal life are being experienced by people today. The sacrifices made by patriots 243 years ago secured freedom Americans experience today.

Sacramentals are not magic and have no power of their own; they are only conduits. God might or might not choose to work through them. Mere intellectual knowledge of a historic event is not enough to produce a sacramental effect. Whether or not the effect of a sacramental is experienced is contingent on our disposition. We must have faith, that is trust, and believe in the source of the power producing the effect the sacramental conveys. Otherwise, it is only a meaningless symbol. If one is not a devout Christian, a crucifix inspires nothing. If one is not a patriotic American, the Stars and Stripes evokes no reaction. If one is not a son of the Confederacy, the meaning of the Stars and Bars is lost.

Sacramentals assume many different forms. The most common are objects. Examples include pictures like those of Columbus, icons, medals, crosses, statues, or flags that inspire reactions like piety, patriotism, courage, or loyalty. A second form is space. Events and emotions associated with a certain location transform how we view and experience the site. Christians make pilgrimages to shrines in the Holy Land. Americans visit places associated with the Revolutionary War and the WTBS. A third form involves actions—making the sign of the Cross, saluting a flag, reciting a prayer or creed, singing a hymn or anthem. Our participation in rituals and ceremonies mark new beginnings and commemorate past events. Another form is time. Certain times have special meanings, affecting how we experience the moment. Annual religious, patriotic, and personal anniversaries dramatize past events and recreate their original purpose. All of these forms of sacramentals enable us to make contact with the past, allow God or our ancestors to speak through them to us, and affect how we think, feel, and act.

Notre Dame's concealment of the Columbus murals is current evidence of liberals' recognition of the important influence sacramentals have on our lives. This is one explanation of why Christian symbols are being systematically removed from public spaces, streets and buildings are being renamed, and Confederate flags and monuments are being desecrated. This attack of malevolent forces on sacramentals is an attack on our Christian faith,

history, heritage, heroes, and way of life with the predetermined intent and design to manipulate our thoughts and perception of reality, emotions, and actions. Historical accounts of important events and the portrayal of them by the sacramentals that connect us to them are not just sterile, objective records of cold facts. Interpretation is an inevitable component. Certain facts are selected, portrayed, and explained in what we call commentary. Just as science must revise theories when new discoveries are made, so history must be revised only when new data surfaces that gives a more accurate and clear depiction of the past. The problem with liberal revisionists is that they sacrifice academic honesty for their personal bias and agenda. Therefore, we must compensate for this lack of responsibility and academic integrity by being critical and vigilant students of history and sources of information. In our considerations of the dimensions of time, the significance of the events that occur within them, and how all of it relates to our lives, we need to remember that the past is but one thought away; the present is only a blink of the eye; the future is but one heartbeat away.

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