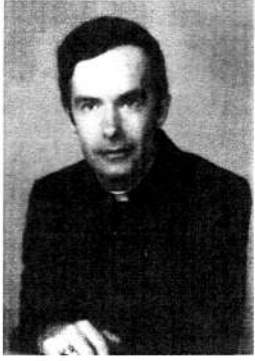


# Chaplain's Corner, Hughes Camp Chaplain Richard W Rudd



Happy New Year! Just when we are feeling some relief that the 2022 election is finally over, some campaigns for 2024 have already begun. However, elections are not just about which candidates win an office. They change the lives of citizens and the status of the nation, one vote at a time.

We have celebrated the twelve days of Christmas. When the angel Gabriel announced to Mary that she was to be the mother of Christ, she consented, saying, "... (L)et it be to me according to your word." (Lk. 1:38) By this single act, she participated in the first advent of Christ and the availability of forgiveness of sin and salvation to all mankind. In three months, we will celebrate Easter (Pasch). As the result of the Passion and resurrection of Christ, a small group of apostles were emboldened to propagate, by their individual actions, the Gospel that changed the world. Thus, a single act in the present of one ordinary individual can have far-reaching and reverberating consequences that create the content of history and shape the form of the future. That is why our vote is so important.

Change is being facilitated in many ways, technology being a prominent instigator of change today. Most of us mistakenly assume that the Internet and World Wide Web are synonymous. The Web was created by one man—British computer scientist Tim Berners-Lee in 1991. In conjunction with the Internet, this one man's creation has revolutionized and expedited the dissemination of vast amounts of information and mentally constricted the world. Before the Internet, Web, and even TV and radio, change came in more gradual increments, allowing people to make orderly adjustments in their lives. Today, change is coming at such a rapid pace that we sometimes feel overwhelmed, confused, and disoriented. The more things change, the wider the chasm between what was and is and the more unpredictable what is yet to be. As the Wuhan virus visibly demonstrated, so new ideas can quickly encircle the globe, being as contagious as laughter and changing our ways of life, how we vote, and our beliefs. We can choose how these forces

affect us by how we choose to respond to them. Rather than polls, elections are the most reliable barometers of current political philosophies that are shaped by the values and moral standards of the US populace. Our values govern such personal characteristics as intelligence, talent, courage, perseverance, etc. These can be utilized to effect change for good or bad. It is our moral standards that determine which one. As the 6th century BC Greek philosopher Heraclitus said, "Character is destiny." Our spiritual IQ is as vital as our mental IQ. As Americans, we are not just engaged in a struggle between colliding cultures in a smaller world; we are engaged in a spiritual struggle between a society based on Judaeo-Christian morals and a secular society based on heresy and relativity. How can the course and destiny of America, which is becoming increasingly secular, less civil and free, be changed?

Electing different officials, enacting more legislation, and instituting new programs in Washington will not be enough. As our Founding Fathers and Confederate ancestors knew, political power should originate and ascend from the citizens to government officials, not descend from global and national government officials to the people. Goethe, the German writer, said, "The best of all governments is that which teaches us to govern ourselves." American author Emerson agreed, "The less government we have the better... The antidote to this abuse of formal government is the influence of private character, the growth of the individual." The individual best equipped to decipher the truth from vast amounts of information in today's technological environment and freely govern himself responsibly is one whose character is grounded in Judaeo-Christian morality. Christ said, "I am the...truth..." (Jn. 14:6) If you...are truly My disciples, ...you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free." (Jn. 8:32) Consequently, "... (W)here the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom." (II Cor. 3:17) In this way, better personal lives would create better families. Better families would create better communities. Better communities would create better nations. And, better nations would create a better world.

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