"Courage is the standing army of the soul."

Good Afternoon to you and to each of my esteemed listeners! Welcome to EWTN's Open Line Tuesday edition! Barbara McGuigan here, doing the show today from South Riding, Virginia, thanks to the kindness of my producers at EWTN radio who got me all set up! God is good and here are the numbers to call:

In North America call 1-800585-9396
Outside North America call 1-205-271-2985
Our email address is always Openline@ewtn.com.

Because my Number One Grandson, John Paul, graduates in a couple of days, my husband and I flew in ahead of time so that I could give a mini-retreat to his 8th grade class. Graduation presents such special moments and memories. It seems like only yesterday that this beautiful chubby little boy was born; and today he's a very handsome young man with a picture-perfect smile towering over me! Life is precious and the milestones, even 8th grade graduations, are most significant. As the poet E.E. Cummings wrote: "It takes courage to grow up and become who you really are." And I might add, "To become who God really intends for you to be."

And in this cultural madhouse we live in today, it will truly take every bit of courage you can muster up. "Courage is the standing army of the soul," wrote Henry Van Dyke. Without it, how can a person be honest, when it's so much easier to lie? How can a person be pure, when it's so much easier to fall into sins of the flesh? How can a person exercise true love, when false love abounds? It takes courage to live uprightly. Only a fool would think otherwise. It takes courage to die to self when the whole world is singing, "I did it my way." I always say, that's the song an unrepentant sinner sings as he falls into hell.

It's no secret, the future of our country and of our world is very precarious when men have made themselves gods. Oh, they may give lip service to the one, true God; but, filled with arrogance, righteousness and relativism, they act as if He doesn't exist.

Which reminds me of an incredible commencement address, filled with Catholic wisdom and frank talk, which Dr. Charles E. Rice, Professor Emeritus at Notre Dame Law School, gave to the graduates at Christendom College in Front Royal, Virginia, on Saturday, May 15, 2010. Dr. Rice entitled his address, "God is not dead. He isn't even tired."

Professor Rice is a straight shooter. He begins by pointing out that:

> **We are living through a transformation of our federal government. A one-party regime, the leader of which was elected with 54 percent of the Catholic**

> **vote, is substituting for the free economy and limited government a centralized command system of potentially unlimited jurisdiction and power. Its takeover of health care, against the manifest will of the people, not only funds elective abortions and endangers the elderly and conscience rights. It was enacted in disregard of legislative process and by a level of bribery, coercion and deception that was as open as it was unprecedented.**

He says a "comparable example of the rapid concentration of power by a legally installed regime" was that of Germany in 1933, when the Enabling Act of March 23 "ceded full and irrevocable powers to Hitler."

Professor Rice said, "Unlike Germany in 1933, we have legal means of redress. I am proud to say I am a Tea Party guy." But he knows that the "root problem is not political or economic. It is religious." He quotes Fr. Tom Euteneuer: "The social crisis happens when we elect people to rule over us who are immoral... People who don't have a moral bearing to elect other moral people, elect immoral politicians to serve over them... So immoral lifestyles produce immoral leaders."

In other words, said Professor Rice, "we elect immoral, rather than moral, people because we have lost the ability, or the desire, to tell the difference."

Brothers and sisters, therein lies the problem! When God is not at the center of our lives, we lose the ability to examine reality with closer scrutiny and perfect clarity. Sin makes you stupid! In such a state, we forfeit discernment for what appears to be a quick fix... or in this case, hope and change. If our hope is in a human being or a system of government, have we not in essence lost Real Hope? Scripture tells us: "Put your trust in no man. Put your trust in God alone."

Professor Rice explains,

> **We rightly urge fidelity to the Constitution. But no paper charter can survive the disappearance of the morality that produced it...You graduates will enter a culture in which the intentional infliction of death upon the innocent is widely seen as an optional problem-solving technique. The Columbine shootings set a precedent. If you have a grievance against your classmates, fellow employees or IRS agents, the answer is to blow them away. Legalized abortion is the prime example of murder as a problem solver. And the execution of Terri Schiavo occurs routinely, without public notice, when the family and caregivers agree to withhold food and water because it is time for the patient to "die with dignity." The separation of morality from killing has counterparts in the separation of morality from economics, from sex and from personal decisions in general.**

He goes on to explain the three lies of the Enlightenment culture: secularism, relativism and individualism. He says,

Those three lies are weapons deployed by our enemy, Satan, the father of lies. Your job, for which you are well equipped, is to counter his lies with the truth. If you speak the truth, you will have an impact beyond what you know. Cardinal Edouard Gagnon described a conversation he had with John Paul II:

> **The Holy Father...told me, "error makes its way because truth is not taught. We must teach the truth...not attacking the ones who teach errors because that would never end – they are too numerous. We have to teach the truth." He told me truth has a grace attached to it. Anytime we speak the truth...an internal grace of God...accompanies that truth. The truth may not immediately enter in the mind and heart of those to whom we talk, but the grace of God is there and at the time they need it, God will open their heart and they will accept it. He said, error does not have grace accompanying it.**

Professor Rice then commented,

> **Remember that Truth, with a capital T, is a person, Jesus Christ. And Christ is not some lawyer, CEO or community organizer. He is God. Cardinal Avery Dulles described three foundational principles: "that there is a God, that he has made a full and final revelation of himself in Jesus Christ and that the Catholic Church is the authorized custodian and teacher of this body of revealed truth." The Catholic faith is not a set of doctrines. It is a lived encounter with Christ, who lives in and teaches through the Church.**
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> **The Magisterium, or teaching authority of the Church, is a great gift, not only for all Catholics but for others to whose conscience it appeals "on the basis of reason and natural law." The forces of evil concentrate their fire on the Vicar of Christ, who is the authoritative interpreter of the moral law. We must respond with loyal defense of him and of the Church. We are not, to borrow Fr. Euteneuer's phrase, the Church Impotent. We are part of the Church Militant. Our job is to fight for the Truth. Don't be conned by their lies...**

Brothers and sisters, I was particularly blessed by Dr. Rice's focus on the evil of contraception, which we've discussed much on Open Line and The Good Fight. Dr. Rice again brings in the premises of the Enlightenment, which was built on the idea that God does not exist and man can determine his destiny on a whim because man is supreme. Professor Rice said:

> **The link is clear between the premises of the Enlightenment and of contraception and such evils as pornography, promiscuity, divorce, in vitro fertilization, cloning and others. Scientists at Newcastle University, in England, announced last month that they had created a "designer embryo" with the DNA of one man and two women, a child with two mothers. Our scientists are probably not far behind.**

He quotes Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, now Benedict XVI:

> **[People are now] starting to pick from the tree of life and make themselves lords of life and death, to reassemble life...[P]recisely what man was supposed to be protected from is now...happening; he is crossing the final boundary...[M]an makes other men his own artifacts. Man no longer originates in the mystery of love, by… conception and birth...but is produced industrially, like any other product...[W]e can… be certain of this: God will take action to counter an ultimate crime, an ultimate act of self-destruction, on the part of man. He will take action against the attempt to demean mankind by the production of slave-beings. There are indeed final boundaries we cannot cross.**

Brothers and sisters, only a fool would deny the serious state of affairs here. "Nineveh repented, prayed and was spared," said Dr. Rice. "Sodom and Gomorrah did not and were destroyed. Those options could be ours."

At the closing of his masterful commencement address at Christendom College, Professor Rice said,

> **If we look at all this in merely human terms, our cause is hopeless. But we don't depend on our own strength. And we don't know everything. Don't be discouraged when bad things happen. "God permits everything," said St. Maximilian Kolbe, "in view of a greater blessing." Trust God. Fr. Walter Ciszek, S.J. who spent 23 years in Soviet prisons, said what God wants, especially in times of adversity or danger, is "an act of total trust," demanding "absolute faith: faith in God's existence, in His providence, in his concern for the minutest detail, in his power to sustain me, and in his love protecting me."**
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> **Trust God. And pray, especially to Mary, His Mother and ours. At Lepanto in 1571, the odds against the Christian fleet were so great that Las Vegas would've taken that bet off the board. But they prayed the Rosary and Mary gave the victory. She can take care of our problems today. This really is a great time for us to be here. We know we are on the winning side. God is not dead. He isn't even tired.**

My dear brothers and sisters, I've only been able to give you some of the highlights of the good professor's address. You deserve to read all of it; you can find it online at www.christendom.edu/news

Know that I welcome your comments and questions. Here are the numbers: 1-800-585-9396 and 1-205-271-2985.

Closing: It was great to be with you today! Thanks very much for your excellent calls and insightful emails. Without you, there would be no Open Line, yes?

Just to mention a few final words to all graduates: Do whatever it takes to grow in virtue and grace. And in the process, make a concerted effort to develop courage, because you're going to need it. "Courage," said the brilliant C.S. Lewis, "is not simply one of the virtues, but the form of every virtue at the testing point." And you will be tested. So, go forth boldly to proclaim your Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. You have nothing to lose and everything to gain. Many people will disappoint you; He never disappoints. He promises to prepare a place for you for all eternity. What a graduation that will be! And your "pomp and circumstance" has already begun!

Until next week on Open Line, Blessed be God and may He bless you abundantly! Bye for now!