

HOMILY

September 11, 2001 Commemorative Service

September 11, 2007

Rev. Andrew A. Czajkowski
St. John the Evangelist Parish
Davison, Michigan

It's hard to believe that it was only six years ago today that the world witnessed one of the most tragic acts of terror in humankind. Within a matter of a few minutes, over three thousand innocent people were killed—not to mention the hundreds of other men, women and children who became victims of one of the rarest acts of terrorism.

The events of 9-1-1 have made an indelible mark upon the American people, joining the bombing of Pearl Harbor, the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, the Oklahoma bombing, the Columbine rampage, and the recent Virginia Tech massacre. Like each of these events, the human heart cries out, "How much more? How much more will evil and violence seek to enter into our world and destroy the very base of our existence?"

There are some who would not want to revisit the events of six years ago but rather would seek to forget the nightmarish chapters of our history. But it is so important we remember. It is important we remember so we do not forget the lessons, forget the innocent victims, and forget the call to become one nation under God.

I remember that in the early hours after 9-11, we heard from so many corners of the earth. Not only did barriers seem to come down, but the world seemed to be aware of an alliance. In our sorrow, so many reached out to us.

We began to reassess our own manner of living and acting—a wake up call to ask if our hearts are set on that which is true and that which is lasting, of that which is noble and just and right. And even in that moment of sorrow, it was hoped that people would return once again to a world where there is family, God and country all in one.

As I spoke about this past weekend in my homily,

*I am only one,
But still I am one.
I cannot do everything
But still I can do something;
And because I cannot do everything
I will not refuse to do the something I can do.
(Edward Everett Hale)*

At times when one faces events like 9-11, one wonders “What can anyone do? It’s so overwhelming.” But to the people of God who are called to be a people of hope, there is always hope. And one candle can cast through the darkness and one person filled with light can make a difference. Each of us who is part of this parish, part of this community, part of this country, part of this world, and part of this chapter in history can do something to be a peacemaker and a peace giver.

And so, how wonderful it is to come together to look back, to remember, to be renewed, to be rekindled and recharged. And above all, to be filled with a new hope that God gives to those who call upon him. And so, on the anniversary of this historical day, let us remember as we call to mind all that has been, all that is, and all that will be.