



Sept. 10, 2021

Dear Friends,

In the Madonna della Strada Chapel, on a wall next to the main entrance, a plaque is dedicated in loving memory of members of the University family who lost their lives on September 11. In sacred space, this plaque quietly and profoundly reminds us of the direct tragic impact this day had on our community – an impact shared by countless other communities across the nation.

For many of our students, they learned of the day as they grew up. Others among us recall vividly where we were on that fateful morning in 2001, as we watched the unthinkable unfold before our eyes. Fear, shock, sadness and worry filled our hearts as we prayed for those caught in the World Trade Center and Pentagon and for the safety of brave first responders who placed themselves in harm's way to save them. Later, we mourned the loss of airline passengers on a field in Shanksville, Pa., who sacrificed themselves to save others.

As the days unfolded, we discovered ways that each of us was touched directly or indirectly by the loss. The University community learned that five alumni perished on 9/11, as did dozens more with close family ties to our community.

In the months and years that followed, we searched for understanding and made efforts to remember loved ones lost. We built memorials to tell of the events that we vowed never to forget. And, we carried on with our lives, rebuilding as we remembered.

As we mark the 20th anniversary of 9/11, let us recall in memory and prayer our faithful alumni, family and friends who lost their lives on this tragic day. Let us pray for peace and understanding in a world still filled with unrest. Let us also pray for our students today and the faculty and staff who educate and serve them. May they may go into the world as a voice calling for peace and justice and change the world for the betterment of all.

Let me close by quoting from a September 2001 message by my predecessor, Rev. Joseph M. McShane, S.J., the 23rd President of the University, who provided such capable and pastoral leadership through this crisis:

“As a community of faith, we also pray -- and pray fervently -- that God our Lord will strengthen us in this time of sorrow so that, guided by His wisdom, we will be able to build a world in which the reign of love overcomes hatred, suspicion and violence.”

Yours faithfully,

Fr. Marina