

Holy Family Mass Schweitzer Remarks

As we conclude this 25th Remembrance of September 11th, the Hicksville Fire Department thanks each of you for joining us for this very special Mass.

We extend our sincere gratitude to Father Sullivan and to the entire Holy Family Parish community for welcoming us this evening, and we thank all of our neighbors, families and friends who have joined us in remembrance.

This Sunday, the Hicksville Fire Department will hold its annual September 11th Memorial Service at the monument at Station 3 on Strong Street, beginning at 10:00 AM. All are welcome and encouraged to attend.

Following tonight's Mass, anyone who would like to continue in fellowship with us is also warmly invited to join us at Station 3.

Tonight has been about remembering.

Remembering the firefighters, police officers, emergency medical personnel and ordinary citizens who ran toward danger while thousands of others were desperately trying to escape.

Above all, it has been about remembering the lives that were lost.

On September 11, 2001, thousands of innocent people and hundreds of first responders lost their lives. Yet the devastation of that day did not end when the fires were extinguished.

In the twenty-five years since, first responders, recovery workers and survivors have continued to suffer – and to die – from illnesses caused by their exposure at and around the World Trade Center.

Tonight, we honor the 16 individuals who once called Hicksville their home and who lost their lives on September 11th. We remember them not simply as names on a monument or names read aloud at a ceremony, but as individuals who were loved – sons and daughters, husbands and wives, fathers and mothers, relatives, friends and neighbors.

Their absence continues to be felt by those who knew and loved them.

Twenty-five years may have passed, but time does not diminish their importance, their memory, or the lives they touched.

We also remember the 4 individuals who once called Hicksville home who survived that terrible day, or answered the call to assist in the rescue, recovery and cleanup operations, but later died from illnesses associated with the conditions created by the attacks.

Their sacrifice did not end when the fires were extinguished.

It did not end when the recovery operation concluded.

For many, September 11th continued through years of medical treatments, uncertainty, suffering and sacrifice.

Their deaths remind us that the human cost of September 11th did not end on that September morning. They, too, are victims of September 11th, and their courage, their service and their sacrifice must always be remembered.

But this 25th Remembrance is not only about looking back.

It is also about looking within ourselves.

It is a time to reflect upon the promises we made in the days following the attacks – that we would never forget, that we would stand together, and that

we would honor those who were lost through the way we live and through our service to others.

For our children and grandchildren, many of whom were not yet born on September 11, 2001, we have a special responsibility.

We must tell them the stories of that day.

We must teach them not only about the tragedy, but also about the extraordinary courage, unity, compassion and kindness that followed.

We must tell them about the Hicksville residents who never returned home.

We must tell them about those whose lives were ultimately taken by 9/11-related illnesses.

And we must tell them about the countless men and women who placed the safety and well-being of others before their own.

September 11th reminds us that tomorrow is never guaranteed.

Your presence here tonight demonstrates that, even after twenty-five years, the passage of time has not diminished our commitment to remember and honor those we lost.

To their families, we offer our continued love, prayers and support. Their loss can never be measured simply by the passing of years.

Twenty-five years later, the pain remains.
But so does our resolve.

We will remember their names.

We will tell their stories.

We will honor their sacrifice through our service to others.

We will teach future generations what happened, what was lost, and what our nation discovered about courage, sacrifice and unity during its darkest hours.

And we will never forget.

On behalf of the Chiefs, Commissioners, Officers and members of the Hicksville Fire Department, thank you for being here tonight, thank you for remembering with us, and may God bless all those we remember

Sunday, Opening Remarks Monument Address (Schweitzer)

As we gather to commemorate the 25th remembrance of September 11, 2001, it is difficult to comprehend that a quarter of a century has passed since the day that forever changed our nation, our fire service and our community.

For those of us who remember that morning, the images, sounds and emotions have never truly faded. We remember the confusion and disbelief. We remember the smoke rising above the New York skyline. We remember the firefighters, police officers, emergency medical personnel and ordinary citizens who ran toward danger while thousands of others were desperately trying to escape.

Above all, we remember the lives that were lost.

September 11 holds a deep personal meaning for every first responder. We lost 343 members of the Fire service that day, along with 60 members of law enforcement and 8 members of the emergency services.

In the years that followed, many more responders, recovery workers and survivors have died from illnesses caused by their exposure at the World Trade Center and the surrounding area.

The tragedy was also felt deeply here at home. Hicksville lost 16 people who once called Hicksville their home on September 11, 2001. They were our relatives, friends, neighbors and coworkers. They left their homes that morning expecting to return to their families at the end of an ordinary day. Instead, their lives became forever connected to one of the darkest days in our nation's history.

We honor the 16 members of our community not merely as names on a flag next to our memorial or listed on a sign, but as individuals who were loved and whose absence continues to be felt by their families and friends. Twenty-five years may have passed, but time does not diminish their importance, their memory or the lives they touched.

We also remember the 4 members of the Hicksville community who survived that terrible day or answered the call to assist with rescue, recovery and cleanup operations, but later died from illnesses attributed to their exposure to the toxic conditions created by the attacks. Their sacrifices did not end when the fires were extinguished or when the recovery work concluded. For many, September 11 continued through years of medical treatments, uncertainty and suffering.

Their deaths remind us that the human cost of September 11 did not end on that day. It has continued for families throughout our community and across the nation. These ten individuals are also victims of September 11, and their courage, service and sacrifice must always be included in our remembrance.

Within our own fire department, we remember Honorary Chief George Howard and Ex-Chief Terrence Farrell. They were not simply names associated with a national tragedy.

They were our brothers, our friends and members of this community. Their courage, sacrifice and dedication continue to represent the very best of the fire service.

The 25th remembrance is not only about looking back. It is also about looking within ourselves.

It is a time to reflect upon the promises we made in the days following the attacks – that we would never forget that we would stand together and that we would honor the fallen through our service to others.

Every time our members answer an alarm, assist a neighbor, mentor a younger firefighter or support a family in need, we help fulfill that promise. We honor those who came before us by continuing the tradition of courage, compassion and selfless service that defines the fire service.

For our younger members who may have been children – or may not yet have been born – on September 11, it is our responsibility to share the stories of that day. We

must teach them not only about the tragedy, but also about the extraordinary bravery, unity and kindness that followed.

We must tell them about the residents who never returned home. We must tell them about the lives that were ultimately taken by 9/11-related illnesses. We must tell them about George Howard, Terrence Farrell and every person who placed the safety and well-being of others before their own.

September 11 reminds us that tomorrow is never guaranteed. It reminds us to appreciate our families, support our fellow members and never take for granted the privilege of serving our community.

Your presence at this remembrance demonstrates that the passage of time has not diminished our commitment to honor those we lost.

On this 25th memorial, we stand together in remembrance of all who were taken from us. We offer our continued love and support to their families, whose loss can never be measured solely by the passing of years.

Twenty-five years later, the pain remains, but so does our resolve.

We will remember their names.

We will tell their stories.

We will honor their sacrifice through our service.

And we will never forget.

Thank you

Schweitzer Sunday, Monument Final Remarks

Once the Department has rendered its final salute and the colors have been dismissed, I remind everyone gathered with us today that you are invited to come forward and place a single carnation at the memorial. As you do, I ask that you take a quiet moment to reflect upon what this day means to you, to your family, to our community, and to our nation.

As we conclude our ceremony today and remember the events that took place twenty-five years ago, we must also recognize that there is now an entire generation of Americans who were not yet born when that horrific day occurred.

They may learn about September 11th in school, through history books, photographs, videos, and the lessons taught by their teachers. But for them, September 11, 2001, will always be history.

For those of us who lived through that day, it is much more than history.

It is a memory.

And because we remember, it has become our responsibility to make certain that they understand what happened that day – and that they understand the extraordinary bravery, courage, and sacrifice of those who ran toward the danger while thousands of others were desperately trying to escape.

We must tell them about the innocent people who simply went to work on a beautiful Tuesday morning. They were ordinary people simply living their lives, never imagining that September 11th would become one of the darkest days in our nation's history.

We must tell the generations that follow us about the firefighters, police officers, emergency medical personnel, members of our military, and ordinary citizens who demonstrated extraordinary courage when our nation needed them most.

And we must tell them about the families who lost someone they loved – and about the thousands of responders, recovery workers, survivors, and others who continue to live with the lasting consequences of that day.

So, as we leave this memorial today, let us make a promise – to those we lost, to their families, and to the generations that will follow us.

We will tell their stories.

We will remember their courage.

We will honor their sacrifice.

And we will teach our children and our grandchildren why the words **“Never Forget”** must never become simply a phrase.

They are a promise.

Twenty-five years have passed, but the lives of those we lost remain forever a part of our community, forever a part of our history, and forever a part of our hearts.

May we always remember them.

May we always honor them.

And may we truly Never Forget.

Thank you.