
Remarks made in Duke University Chapel on September 11, 2011

on the occasion of the 10-year Commemoration Concert of the Mozart *Requiem*

Dr. Richard H. Brodhead, President of Duke University

Ten years later, who will ever forget it: the 9/11 attack came out of the clear blue sky. Not only was there no clue of what was impending: It was a sparkling early fall morning, the sort of day when the world seems perfectly blessed.

Like all terrorist acts, the World Trade Center attack aimed to destroy the sense of security in the existing world; and in that measure it succeeded. That tall tower was a symbol, a visible image of American global preeminence. Through a calculated act of symbolic violence, we saw that eminence brought low. The shattering of the morning's calm carried a further message. It said: no matter how peaceable things seem, you can never be sure that violence is not at hand, ready to break in on even the most tranquil scene.

But after awhile, that day came to have another meaning, very different from the attack's malice intended. I am sure I am not the only one who remembers the New York Times Portraits of Grief in which, day after day, week after week, the thousands who lost their lives were remembered one by one. These were not formulaic obituaries. As they told stories of baking bread, fixing up old cars, and coaching Little League, they were glimpses of what each man and woman had especially loved.

The portraits reminded us that those who were killed were not embodiments of some abstract, collective entity—America, or Secular Civilization, or The West. Such dehumanized thinking led to their killing; in reality, these were actual people, each endowed with a distinct and marvelous humanity. They included young and old; bosses and office workers; fathers and mothers, husbands and wives, boyfriends and girlfriends and fiancés; people of every religion, ethnicity, national origin, physical type. If they embodied anything collectively, it was a society of inclusiveness and open opportunity, where individuals aren't defined by abstract labels, and all kinds of people come together every day.

Ten years after September 11, 2001, we remember those who lost their lives that day, and Duke University particularly remembers our six alumni killed in the attack: Rob Lenoir, Peter Ortale, Todd Pitman, Todd Rancke, Fred Rimmele, and Michael Taylor. In Mozart's solemn Requiem, we pay tribute to the lives we have lost. But the deep lesson of 9/11 is that the power to dehumanize is best countered by our ability to recognize and respect the humanity of others. This university has the privilege of drawing together people from every part of American culture and the world, deepening their understanding, and sending them forth to be a force for good. On this day, we rededicate ourselves to advancing mutual understanding and mutual respect.

William V. "Bill" Bell, Mayor of Durham, NC

Good afternoon! It is my solemn honor as Mayor of Durham to welcome you on behalf of the Durham City Council and the citizens of Durham at today's commemoration concert as we pause together – as a community and as a nation – to remember and reflect on the day in our collective conscious where our world stood still and our nation's history changed forever.

I want to thank Duke University President Richard Brodhead, Duke University Chapel Dean Sam Wells, and Duke University Muslim Chaplain Abdullah Anteppli for inviting me to bring you welcoming remarks. It is truly my privilege to be here and to share in this commemoration event.

Ten years ago today, I was glued to my TV set, like so many of you, watching in disbelief, in horror, in anger, in fear, and in terrible sadness at the events that were unfolding in our nation's capital, in New York City, and in that windswept field in Pennsylvania.

For those of us who witnessed that time in our nation's history, we probably can remember exactly where we were and what we were doing when the first news reports flashed across our TVs, Radios and the Internet. Just as the assassination of President Kennedy forever marked a time in American history for those of us who witnessed through the media, that violent act...the atrocious acts of 9/11 leaves an indelible mark on our collective memories.

As a father and grandfather, my heart continues to grieve for the parents that lost their children that fateful day, in an act of violence against so many innocent Americans. Young and old....men, women, and children...from different religions and many races and ethnicities. The aftermath of that day continues to ripple through our nation a decade later.

As our country struggled with grief and outrage, Durham and Duke University came together less than a month after the 9/11 attack to share music and silence. To begin the long process of healing the wounds inflicted that day, not just on the families who lost loved ones, but on a nation that until that time, lived blissfully unaware of the hatred toward our country and the danger that lurked and waited for a time and a place to strike.

Our community still mourns the lives lost on that day. In fact, the Durham Fire Department respectfully displays a piece of the World Trade Center in its administrative office as a standing symbol to remember the lives lost during the attacks...not only the innocent civilians, but the fire fighters and police officers who rushed headlong to the scene as others ran away...many losing their lives in the aftermath in service to their community and their fellow man.

But, as aptly put many years ago by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, ***"As Americans, we go forward, in the service of our country, by the will of God."*** And, so after 9/11, our country carried on, wounded in our souls, but strong in our resolve to come together to defend our country and nurture our way of life.

Here in Durham, I feel great pride in our community and how we come together, more so than ever, in the face of danger and in times of crisis. We support each other, we care for each other, and we work together to find solutions to make Durham a place where great things happen.

I've witnessed it over and over again during my almost 40 years in office. This community truly sets the bar for how to turn community concerns into citizen action. I've seen what we can do when we put our minds and hearts together to answer a need.

Durham has always tackled social problems and inequities with heart, determination, and grit – working side-by-side regardless of our race, gender, or annual income. Durham is a community like no other...I can think of no other city that enjoys the rich diversity and acceptance for different ideas, religions, and ethnicities that we have here.

Today, 10 years later, we come together again to pause, listen, reflect, and remember. As Americans, it is our duty to stop and remember our fellow Americans that perished that day. It is our privilege to be here for the moving performances that are to come.

To all of you that are performing for us today...thank you for providing this community with music that has become symbolic with mourning and consolation since that tragic day 10 years ago. Your voices helped us begin to heal a decade ago and will help us continue to heal and find genuine hope that our nation and our world will be better --- that we as Americans --- can make it better and safer for the sakes of our children and our grandchildren.

Thank you for participating in today's event. May God bless you all and may He continue to bless Durham and the United States of America.

The Prophet Joseph and 9/11.

Abdullah Antepi, Muslim Chaplain at Duke University

The story of Joseph almost identically narrated in both Bible and the Qur'an. As an American Muslim, I have been deeply reflecting over one of the climactic scenes of Joseph's story as we go through the 10th anniversary of the heinous and tragic terrorist attacks of 9/11. Joseph meets with his brothers for the second time, as one of the most powerful men of Egypt, and finally reveals his true identity to them. He looks in the eyes of the very same people who not long time took despicable set of aggressions against him and says: "You meant evil against me but God Almighty turned them into blessings for me and for others..."

Ten years after these barbaric attacks, which rocked our boat as a nation, can we (as all Americans) look at the evil forces behind 9/11 and say the same: "You meant evil against us but with God's help we turned them all into blessings for ourselves and for others"? As we reflect over the eventful decade after 9/11, can we feel the intense pride and gratitude that Joseph felt when he faced his aggressors?

My personal and honest answer to these Joseph questions is: Not yet. Despite very encouraging signs in that direction, ten years later our water is still muddy and the dust hasn't settled down yet in our nation in response to 9/11. However, ten years is not a very long time in the life of nations. The real question for us to ask today is: Within a decade or so, can we get there? Can we have a Joseph like moment in the face of our enemies in our recent future? Even though, current realities may provide very few reasons to be hopeful, I am very hopeful that inshallah (God willing) we certainly will.

I still truly believe that this nation is one of the healthiest at its heart and those foundational ideals that US society has been built will not be destroyed by 9/11 and post 9/11 hurricanes. This is not the first time that this great nation found herself hitting to seen and unseen brick walls. As we grew out of our previous calamities, as the forces of exclusion, hate and revenge always have been defeated by the forces inclusion, love and grace in our lands, inshallah we shall overcome this one too. We will turn these challenges into blessings for ourselves and others and like Joseph, we will humble our enemies by responding to their evils actions with something better. Inshallah.

The Power of 9/11 and the Power of God

by the Revd Dr Sam Wells, Dean of Duke University Chapel

We live in a culture that is an orchestrated denial of death. Our diets are designed to keep us young, our benefactions are intended to preserve our name forever, our calendars are crammed full so we need never stop and contemplate our mortality, our personal and national budgets are chronically weighed down by the

cost of navigating the last days of our lives, our vocabulary is awash with euphemisms that avoid naming the oblivion and finality and inevitability of death.

This was what made the hijackers of 9/11 so powerful. This was the hold they had and continue to have on our imaginations. They were not afraid to die. And so they acted beyond our society's comprehension. They believed that something was more important than preserving their own lives. That was their power. It was a power that continues to hold us in thrall.

But they used that power so cruelly. Their last moments were spent turning themselves and others into guided missiles directed toward sudden, apocalyptic, and indiscriminate murder. But as we grieve that massacre and lament that horror, let's not miss the source of those hijackers' power. We can't overcome that power by simply making ourselves better at death-dealing than the hijackers were. We can only transcend that power.

The passengers on the planes transcended that power by spending their final moments telling their cherished ones how much they loved them. That's how to die. In the chaos of Ground Zero, the firefighters and first responders hurried towards the scene that everyone else was running away from, making their lives a human bridge others could cross to safety. That's how to face death. Those on board United Airlines 93 contrived to make their plane crash in Pennsylvania rather than cause further carnage in Washington. That's called laying down your life that others might live.

The heart of the Christian faith is that in his resurrection, Jesus transcended the power of death, so that henceforth, we might do the same. A requiem is an occasion for inhabiting this new reality – of envisaging and praying for a truth and a life beyond our comprehension. 9/11 showed the worst that humanity is capable of. But it also showed us the best. Look into the face of a firefighter, look into the face of a selfless hostage, look into the face of a prisoner whose dying words are, "I love you." Look into the faces of each of those people, and hear them quietly say, "You want to know what Jesus looks like? He looks like me."

A requiem is a time to mourn the deaths of others and to contemplate our own. Our culture denies death. On 9/11 the hijackers manufactured death in unspeakable quantities. But many people that day showed us how to die, how to transcend death, and so how to dissolve its power. May our lives, and our deaths, be worthy of theirs.

Requiem Invocation by Sam Wells

Holy God, look with mercy on the lives shattered by the attacks of 9/11.

Be in the imagination of anyone who works or lives in a tall building, and wonders, or who regularly boards or works on an airplane, and dreads, or who resides in New York City or Washington DC, and can't forget, or who sees the face of a stranger, and fears.

Be among all who mourn, and will continue to mourn; who feel hatred and fury, and search for targets and culprits; who seek to offer security, at airports, in espionage, on the battlefield, or in diplomacy.

Bless Muslims, who feel shame at what was done in their name; bless all who work for a new relationship between Christianity, Judaism and Islam, and between America and the Arab world; and empower all who, like today's choirs and orchestra, seek to make beauty out of ashes and find you in the dust.

Look with favor upon those whose lives lie in the dust of 9/11. Let eternal light shine upon them, as with your saints in eternity. Grant them eternal rest, O Lord, because you are merciful. Amen.