9/11: 20 YEARS ON

It is difficult to believe that tomorrow will be two decades since that cool, bright blue morning when the unthinkable happened: almost three thousand people lost their lives as the result of terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in Lower Manhattan, at the Pentagon in Arlington, Virginia and a field in Shanksville, Pennsylvania.

But twenty years have indeed gone by.

Some things, alas, remain the same. Terror is still used to intimidate and to kill; the world is still torn apart by sectarianism, ignorance and greed, both here and abroad.

But the goodness of the human heart remains the same, too – and untold acts of individual and collective charity and compassion have eased suffering and mitigated pain over the course of those twenty years. We need only think of the nation's medical workers, who have given so much in the fight against the pandemic, and a dozen other examples could easily be named.

While recognizing the reality of how hatred divides, I remain firmly committed to the belief that love unites, and in that union we find hope – for ourselves, for our country, for the planet we share with the rest of humanity.

Twenty years on, we remember those who died on that fateful September day. We acknowledge with gratitude the soldiers, firefighters, police, doctors, nurses, and civilians who came to the aid of their fellow New Yorkers. And, in a city recovering from the depredations of COVID-19, we are reminded once again of the importance of service and kindness.

"Island," by the great American poet Langston Hughes, is a perfect distillation of how we navigate this troubled but remarkable world.

Wave of sorrow,
Do not drown me now:
I see the island
Still ahead somehow.
I see the island
And its sands are fair:
Wave of sorrow,
Take me there.

In remembrance,

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