

Good morning,

In today's readings, psalm and gospel we are taken through, if we are really open to it, a tumultuous series of emotions. First, in a stinging series of rebukes in Jeremiah at how lost we are. Next, we are in the midst of an impassioned plea for mercy from our God's righteous wrath. In Timothy we hear of Paul's sincere gratitude at the LORD's mercy and grace at his forgiveness. Lastly, we are quickly reminded not to judge but to be about the work the LORD has called us to. Can we do this? Out of Darkness, light.

Twenty-one years ago today, an event like no other, took place on American soil. That was the deadliest terrorist act in world history, 9/11. That day 2,977 lost their lives including those of nineteen people that precipitated these attacks. It is likely that some of us many have known someone that died that day. Among those lost were: Albert Joseph aged 79 a maintenance worker for Morgan Stanley, Richard Pearlman an eighteen-year-old medical tech, Lieutenant General Timothy Maude (who was the architect of advances in LGBTQIA2S+ causes in the military) his offices and only been moved a few days before, Mohamed Atta 33, Marwan al-Shehhi 23, Ziad Jarrah 26 and Hani Hanjour 29 (he wanted to help people and even worked as a relief worker in Afghanistan as an aid worker after the Soviet invasion). It is believed the youngest fatality was that of a 2-and-a-half-year-old on flight 175 and the oldest was 85 on flight 11. At reading these names and mentioning briefly who they were we have to remember ALL of these people had hopes and fears just as we do. They are not nameless to us anymore. Out of darkness, light.

I am sure all here remember that day and also went though a series of emotions, shock, sadness, anger and fear among others. I felt all these and I also felt failure and shame. As most of you know I served in the Army and in so doing I pledged to support and defend the Constitution and our way of life. At the time I wanted nothing more than to do something. Sadly, at the time it was not God's work I wanted to be about. But how many of us would have been able see past our outrage, our pain and our need to react instead of reflect? How many of us could see past all these "normal" feelings ad be abnormal, be true to our Christian calling and lead with love as Jesus did? Out of Darkness, light

In times of fear and doubt we often do not lead with our best selves. We are those as in Jeremiah lost. I know I was lost in my feelings of failure and shame. I would have to come face to face with those soon but more on that in a moment. Out of darkness, light

As fate would have it, I was ordered to Ground Zero very shortly after September 11, 2001. I was truly not ready for what I saw. Now I had seen destruction caused by violence before but not like this. Not inflicted upon innocent civilians whose thoughts were: "just trying to get to work on time, "pick up drycleaning" or "remember the anniversary flowers". Something in me cried out in pain at the failure to protect and safeguard. It would be a rather unlikely, for me at the time, that would be the source of healing for me. Out of darkness, light

From darkness, light. Our LORD has a way of calling to us sometimes in such a soft voice we can often miss it as we live our "Busy Busy" lives. Chaplain Williams was and is a very interesting man. A Baptist minister that had the call of the LORD at an early age but the call to the military much later. A light in darkness.

I was just finished checking my guard posts with my sergeant when a man walked up asking for Lieutenant Dermody, Me. He wanted to schedule services for my soldiers knowing that even after a couple weeks after the attacks we all needed some kind of reassurance. We had to look at where the towers would have been each day and it was not easy to cope. Now, I was not really a practicing Christian at the time. I had become lost. I had lost sight of God in the pain of post combat deployment doubt and pain.

We scheduled services but we did more than that. We talked and talked and although I did not recognize it at first, I was letting go of my anger. I was beginning to open up to a message I really needed. I was beginning to lead with love and not fear or hate. I would make it a point to always be ready when Chaplain Williams would come to the Lincoln Tunnel where I had my command.

I have a firm belief that things happen for a reason, although I did not always think so. I have seen my fair share of events that could make anyone wonder, "what's the point"? And now I know it. We are called to love and light. We are called to action not passivity. We are called to reach out and encourage and

support. By living our LORD's plan, we can be those at turning points for those in need. We can have that difference we seek by being different than we were before. By being found and no longer lost. Light and no longer darkness.