

**FIRST SELECTMAN TIMOTHY M. HERBST
ADDRESS AT TOWN WIDE DAY OF OBSERVANCE
ST. STEPHEN'S CHURCH
SEPTEMBER 11, 2011**

Good afternoon:

Ten years seems like an eternity. But for all of us, it seems like yesterday.

None of us will ever forget that day. I will never forget getting ready for class and I can remember waking up with a feeling of excitement to be starting my senior year at Trinity College. That Tuesday morning was a beautiful day. As I arrived in class, I arrived to a room full of people staring at a television screen in disbelief. Some were in shock. Others welled with tears.

Thereafter, I was summoned to the office of the college president, where I watched the towers collapse on television. We soon realized that many of the students at Trinity, a majority from the tri-state area, had parents working in Manhattan that day. I watched from a window as my classmates streamed out of classrooms frantically dialing cell phones to try and reach their parents and loved ones, only to hit a brick wall, as cell phone coverage into New York was down as a result of the attacks.

Ten years later, so much has happened and so much has challenged this nation and her people. We have seen the most violent acts of terrorism ever perpetrated on US soil. We have witnessed two military conflicts half a world away and we have witnessed a financial collapse and instability like no other in our lifetime. But this is not the first time this country has seen one tragedy followed by a sustained period of challenge.

The stock market crash of 1929 yielded a sustained depression that challenged our country's economic will.

An attack on Pearl Harbor created a world war that would eventually liberate millions of people and establish America's standing as the hope of the earth.

When President Kennedy was assassinated, our people felt despair and our country sustained a decade of military conflict and political divergence. Yet, we persevered and overcame that period in our history.

Again, we are eyewitnesses to a period in our history where a tragedy was followed by a prolonged period of challenge for our nation. And as we have done before, we will do so again and rise to the occasion. We will look back on this period in our history and recognize that it was we, the people of this great country that lead America's renewal. And when we look back we will say that we did not shy away from the difficult challenges that confronted us, but met them head on.

We have come to terms with the fact that we are engaged in a global conflict that may never end. We have accepted our role as the leader of the free world, defenders of freedom, justice and equality for all.

Yet, every so often, we need a gentle reminder about the things that matter. If we have learned anything from history, we have learned that America's resilience rests upon a firm resolve.

We cannot be consumed by our petty differences any longer. We must recognize that despite our differences and our competing political philosophies, we live in the greatest nation on the face of the earth and we are all committed to advancing that ideal.

We recognize that atrocity and terror are not political weapons and we recognize that the strength of any nation lies in its freedom and equal protection of its citizens under the law.

And perhaps it is fitting that today's service includes clergy that represent all faiths and all denominations, for they represent all people.

Today, we celebrate the importance of four words that go to the core of the American experience - - freedom, faith, family and friendship.

As President Franklin Roosevelt once said, "The only limit to our realization of tomorrow will be our doubts of today. Let us move forward with strong and active faith."

And perhaps it is fate that today, as we honor the fallen and observe this momentous period in our history, that our Town's motto sustains us all as we move forward. We will always have pride in our past because we have faith in our future.

We will never forget and we will always remember so we may always be free.

May God Bless the fallen and may God continue to bless the greatest nation on the face of the Earth.

Thank you.