

Blessed
Week 36 – Sept. 5-11 2021

The other day, my daughter came to visit. She came in and gave me a big hug and said, “Dad, I love you. I’m so glad you’re here.” Now, it’s not unusual for Alanna to hug me or even tell me that she loves me, but the hug seemed a little more than the usual platitude and the “I’m glad you’re here” caught me off guard. Where else would I be? Had something happened? I didn’t make much of it. We began to talk. It was sorority rush time and she was involved with the recruitment and concerned about what sorority apparel she should wear that showed up well on the computer screen. (COVID times meant on-line pledging.) She showed me a shirt with the Gamma Phi Delta letters embroidered on it and said she thought she was going to wear that. What did I think? Of course, she had to run through her wardrobe of various sorority attire first. She mentioned a patriotic themed shirt she had but had never worn. I said she should have worn it for the Fourth of July or Memorial Day. Then it dawned on me it was 9/11. I mentioned it to her. She said, “I know Dad. Why do you think I said, I am glad you are here?”

You see, it was a bright, beautiful morning, much like today as I write this. A little on the cool side, but not too much. Summer was leaving and Fall was trying to push its way in. I was sitting in a meeting in the Pentagon. We had all just seen on the various televisions in the surrounding offices what happened in New York. Anxiety was growing after the second crash into the World Trade Center and no one was paying much attention to what we were really there for. Most of us in the room were aviators and realized the chance of coincidence of two such impacts was virtually non-existent. Then it happened! We felt the room shake slightly like the aftershock of a mild earthquake and heard the explosion like the rumble of distant thunder. My buddy across the table and I looked up at each other and I remember saying, “that can’t be good.” About 30 seconds later, the door to the room burst open. A Pentagon Security Forces guard stuck his head in and announced, we’re evacuating the building. Fortunately for those of us in that room, we were directly on the other side of the building from where the aircraft impacted, so we were not really in danger, but I can remember as I exited the Pentagon rounding the building and looking across the vast parking lot at the other side, flames lapping at the sky and smoke billowing, and knew there were a lot of people less fortunate than me that day.

I remember standing in church that Sunday, the service focused on the tragedies that had just befallen our nation, holding my 5-year-old daughter, and tears started streaming down my face as I thought of the carnage and how fortunate I was that God spared me. I tend to find more joy in things now, for I too am glad I am here, for God has blessed me.

Gerry

Madigan

Scripture:

Psalm 100

Colossians 3: 15-17

Psalm 28: 7

Psalm 9: 1-2

Romans 15:13

Colossians 4:2

1 Thessalonians 16-18