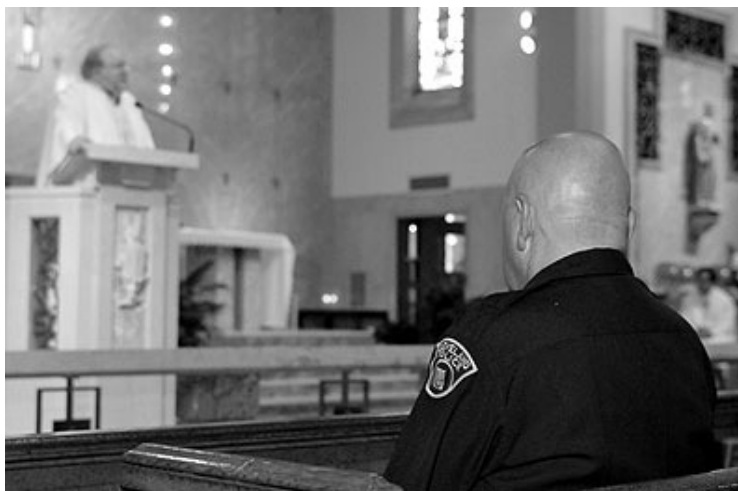




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News



Paul Juliano, a member of the Cleveland Police Department, listens as the Rev. Michael Lanning delivers the homily during a Blue Mass for public safety forces Friday at St. Angela Catholic Church. (West Life photo by Larry Bennet)

Safety forces, 9/11 victims remembered at St. Angela Mass

By Kevin Kelley
 Fairview Park
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When the Rev. Michael Lanning worked in New York City in the 1990s, he worked in lower Manhattan and got off the subway everyday at the World Trade Center stop.

Lanning, pastor of St. Angela Merici Catholic Church, related his memories of the now destroyed twin towers to the children who attend the parish school during a Blue Mass Friday.

Named after the uniform color often worn by public safety forces, a Blue Mass includes prayers specifically for police officers, firefighters, paramedics and other first responders.

Lanning also told the children of the Rev. Mychal F. Judge, a Franciscan priest who ministered to victims and rescue workers of the World Trade Center attack. Judge was struck and killed by debris when the south tower collapsed. Lanning said he knew Judge when he lived in New York.

“This is an anniversary of an event that happened a long time ago in your lifetime,” Lanning told the schoolchildren. However, he added that it was an event that most people remember where they were when it happened.

Before the Mass, Lanning remarked to West Life that it was amazing that today's eighth-graders were only in kindergarten on Sept. 11, 2001.

He noted that the attacks at the World Trade Center and the Pentagon were the first major attacks on U.S. soil in decades.

"People were very much afraid because of what had happened," Lanning told students during his homily. "So many innocent people lost their lives because of the terrorist attack."

But he also noted that in response to the attacks, Americans – "everyday, regular people" – came together to help the victims.

Noting that the Blue Mass emphasizes issue of peace and justice, Lanning asked the schoolchildren to consider how they could be peacemakers.

He said individuals could be peacemakers by recognizing everyone in their neighborhood as deserving of respect.

"Peace doesn't come from outside us," he said. "Peace comes from our hearts."

Lanning urged the children to become heroes and heroines for peace. He also asked them to pray for an end to violence and terrorist attacks anywhere and against discrimination.

A special blessing was given to public safety force workers from Fairview Park, Westlake and Cleveland who had been invited to attend the Blue Mass.

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