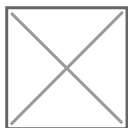




New York Archbishop Ronald Hicks delivers his homily during a vigil memorial Mass Sept. 10, 2026, at St. Patrick's Cathedral to honor the memory of hundreds of victims of the 9/11 terrorist attacks that 25 years ago brought down the World Trade Center's twin towers. (OSV News/The Good Newsroom/Steven Schwankert)

Steven Schwankert

[View Author Profile](#)



OSV News

[View Author Profile](#)

The Good Newsroom

[View Author Profile](#)

[Join the Conversation](#)

Send your thoughts to *Letters to the Editor*. [Learn more](#)

New York — September 11, 2026

[Share on Bluesky](#)[Share on Facebook](#)[Share on Twitter](#)[Email to a friend](#)[Print](#)

"Faith does not allow us to stop at remembrance," Archbishop Ronald Hicks of New York said in his homily at his first Sept. 11 memorial Mass since becoming New York's archbishop.

"Because one of the lessons we have learned over the last 25 years is that healing is not passive. Healing does not just happen. Peace does not just happen. Justice does not just happen. Unity does not just happen. We have to work for it," he said, [addressing a congregation of about 2,000 clergy and laypeople](#) at St Patrick's Cathedral on the evening of Sept. 10.

The congregation included former President Joe Biden, New York Gov. Kathy Hochul and New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani. Other civic leaders in attendance included New York Police Dept. Chief Jessica Tisch and Fire Department of New York Chief John M. Esposito, along with former New York Gov. George Pataki.

Hicks was the principal celebrant of the memorial Mass celebrated in honor of the 25th anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Bishop Robert Brennan of Brooklyn, New York, concelebrated.

The prelates were joined by Cardinal Joseph Tobin of Newark, New Jersey; Archbishop Gabriele Caccia, apostolic nuncio to the United States; New York Auxiliary Bishops Edmund Whalen and Joseph Espaillat; retired Bishop Nicolas DiMarzio, Auxiliary Bishop James Massa and retired Auxiliary Bishop Octavio Cisneros, all from Brooklyn; as well as numerous priests from the Archdiocese of New York and the Diocese of Brooklyn.

The Mass began with a procession by the NYPD Pipes and Drums, along with the parading of the colors by a color guard representing all of the city's first responder units. After an initial greeting from Hicks, Whalen welcomed all those in attendance, both in person and via livestream.

"Tonight we remember and pray for and with those who were lost on Sept. 11, and in the years following, from the illnesses related to that day. We join in prayer as one family. We join in prayer and live in hope with the families of those whom we still love, and those whom we still mourn," Whalen said. He repeated part of the welcome message in Spanish.

Advertisement

In his homily, Hicks sought to emphasize the healing that has taken place over the last 25 years, and the work that remains to be done to bring about and maintain peace.

On Sept. 11, 2001, then-Fr. Hicks was a priest furthering his studies at Mundelein Seminary in Illinois.

"At first, we attended funerals, countless funerals. We comforted grieving families and friends. We gathered for Masses and prayer services. We cared for first responders and survivors. We donated to human service organizations that led multi-year efforts of continued assistance and aid," he said.

"We read the deceased's names every year. We built memorials," he continued. "We rebuilt Lower Manhattan and the World Trade Center. We created the 9/11 Museum. We established foundations and scholarships in memory of those who died. We came together across religious traditions to pray for peace," Hicks said.

He framed healing, peace, justice and unity as active pursuits that "we have to work for ... day after day. Conversation after conversation. Relationship after relationship. Agreement after agreement. And we have to strive for it ... together," he said.

The archbishop called attention to the mural in St. Patrick's Cathedral's narthex, or entryway, artist Adam Cvijanovic's "What's So Funny About Peace, Love, and Understanding," one panel of which depicts a group of first responders.

Having earlier described hope as "knowing that God is walking with us," Hicks said, "That kind of hope sustained this city. That kind of hope sustained our country. And that kind of hope has sustained us for 25 years.

"One of the signs of that hope has been our commitment to healing together. ... In the back of this Cathedral is a mural depicting immigrants, saints, civic leaders, and first responders," he said. "Yet the section that draws most people is the one showing the first responders. ... Because it represents the very best of who we are."

At the end of Mass, Hicks expressed his gratitude to everyone in attendance.

"Before I give the final blessing, I just want to say to each and every one of you, thank you for being here. What we have done today is right, and good, and beautiful, and powerful," he said. "It is not only an expression of faith, but it is an expression of our desire for both healing and hope.

"So today," he added, "as we go our separate ways, as we continue all the prayers, memorials, and commemorations of the 25th anniversary, we do so grateful; we do so with hope, as we continue to pray for each other, to pray for those who have died, and we continue to pray for peace, peace in our hearts, in the church, and in our world."

Following the Mass, members of the Catholic Charities of New York executives, staff, and supporters held a short candlelight vigil on the steps of the cathedral to pray for the organization and to remember the work that so many of its staffers and volunteers did in the aftermath of 9/11.

On the morning of Sept. 11, 2001, four commercial aircraft were hijacked by members of the Islamic terrorist group Al-Qaeda. Two planes crashed into the World Trade Center towers, and a third crashed into the Pentagon. The fourth plane crashed near Shanksville, Pennsylvania, after passengers overpowered their captors and prevented it reaching a likely target in Washington.

In total, the attacks immediately killed 2,977, including 441 first responders.

Twenty-five years later, the human toll continues to grow. According to data associated with the federal World Trade Center Health Program, over 9,000 people being tracked by the program had died as of June 30. Many suffered long-term health consequences from exposure to toxic dust, debris and other hazardous

conditions in the aftermath of the attacks.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, more than 57,000 first responders and survivors have been certified with cancers linked to their exposure following the attacks.

This story appears in the **Sept. 11: 25 years later** feature series. [View the full series.](#)