



## ***A Prayer of Remembrance:*** **Twenty Years Since September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001.**

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**Call to remembrance:** For some, the story of September 11, 2001, is personal. For others, the memory of this day is as vivid as yesterday. For those too young to remember, September 11, 2001, is not a lived memory, but an event learned among the many narratives that compose history.

**A Moment of Mindfulness:** Take a few moments to reflect on the events of September 11, 2001. What images, memories, stories, events hold feelings / meaning for you at this 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary time? What/Who do you want to remember?

**Litany:** After a few names, events, feelings, images, are briefly shared, the response will be:

**We hold these in compassion. We pray that peace will prevail.**

**Reading: A 9/11 Story** Kimeli Naiyomah was a Kenyan student from the Masai tribe in Kenya who was a student in lower Manhattan when the terrorist attacks on the Twin Towers occurred. I don't know if any of us could fully imagine the incomprehensibility of this event for a young man from a corner of Kenya where the tallest features on the horizon are the acacia trees and the giraffes that feed on them.

***Compassion is a force that can transform lives, modify, if not eliminate the impact of suffering, and halt the replication of cycles of violence and exploitation that can root themselves within us, among us, and in throughout our world.***

So, when Kimeli returned to his village that summer of 2002 to give an account of his studies for the year, he found that his fellow villagers had only the vaguest understanding about what had happened in that far-away place called New York on that fateful September 11th.

Through his stories, September 11th and New York became very proximate for the Masai. While they felt relief that Kimeli was unscathed, they also felt sadness and compassion, especially for the widows of orphans of 9/11. They decided to do something.

There are three most cherished possessions that the Masai can give as a gift—a child, a plot of land, and a cow, which is far more to them than a source of milk and meat. So, shortly after their hearing the 9/11 story, the Masai elders met and decided to bless and give 14 cows to the people of the United States. After their ceremony of giving, the cows were handed over to the deputy chief of mission of the United States Embassy in Kenya. The NY Times reported that the U.S. embassy representative was understandably tentative as he held a rope attached to a rambunctious bull, but the people of the United States were deeply touched and awed by the solidarity and compassion extended to them by a so-called “primitive” tribe in the outskirts of Kenya.

One complication— The Masai fully expected that the American ambassador would take the cows to New York City where they would be given to the widows and children of 9/11. But when the ambassador explained that there were insufficient grazing grounds in this place, the Masai's distress for the victims was irrepressible. To

live in a place without grazing grounds upon which to feed livestock was unimaginable for the Masai. What will these poor people do!

Eventually an agreement was struck, and Sotheby's was recruited to auction off the Masai's gift of cows on the international auction exchange. A large amount of money was raised, and with these funds, the

United States embassy purchased Masai jewelry which in turn was auctioned at an event in New York that raised a large amount of money for the widows and orphans fund of 9/11.

**Reflection/Sharing:** Where do you find solace, hope, meaning in this story of the Masai?

**Closing Prayer:**

Take a few moments of silence and be mindful of what is stirring in your heart.

**Prayer of St. Francis:**

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace,  
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;  
Where there is injury, pardon;  
Where there is doubt, faith;

Response: Make me an instrument of your peace

Where there is despair, hope;  
Where there is darkness, light;  
Where there is sadness, joy;

Response: Make me an instrument of your peace

O Divine Master,  
Grant that I may not so much seek  
To be consoled as to console;  
To be understood as to understand;  
To be loved as to love.

Response: Make me an instrument of your peace

For it is in giving that we receive;  
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned;  
And it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

Response: Make me an instrument of your peace

