

# Pope Benedict offers blessings on 9/11 anniversary

WASHINGTON - Pope Benedict XVI offered his blessings to U.S. Catholics as they prepared to observe the 10th anniversary of the Sept. 11, 2001, terror attacks.

In a message to Archbishop Timothy M. Dolan of New York, president of the U.S. bishops, the pope said, "I join you in commending the thousands of victims to the infinite mercy of Almighty God and in asking our heavenly Father to continue to console those who mourn the loss of loved ones."

Pope Benedict told Archbishop Dolan, "I extend my most affectionate greetings to you, your brother bishops and all those entrusted to your pastoral care, and I gladly impart my apostolic blessing as a pledge of peace and serenity in the Lord."

The message, dated Sept. 11, was released Sept. 9 in Washington.

"The tragedy of that day is compounded by the perpetrators' claim to be acting in God's name," Pope Benedict said. "Once again, it must be unequivocally stated that no circumstances can ever justify acts of terrorism."

He added, "Every human life is precious in God's sight and no effort should be spared in the attempt to promote throughout the world a genuine respect for the inalienable rights and dignity of individuals and peoples everywhere."

Pope Benedict said, "The American people are to be commended for the courage and generosity that they showed in the rescue operations and for their resilience in moving forward with hope and confidence. It is my fervent prayer that a firm commitment to justice and a global culture of solidarity will help rid the world of the

grievances that so often give rise to acts of violence and will create the conditions for greater peace and prosperity, offering a brighter and more secure future.”