

Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends

Better things have been written about the events of the 11th September 2001, by New Yorkers or those who witnessed the destruction, than anything I could write, who was 3000 miles away watching the TV news.

Friends of mine will be attending the US Embassy in London to pay respects later, but this year I cannot be among them.

One observation I will make. For all the sneers from the Middle East about 'decadent' western society, and for all the faults we can see ourselves in our own society, a society that can produce men and women of the calibre of the New York Fire Department who raced into Manhattan that morning, with every available appliance, every officer, from the City of New York and the towns outside (I watched and watched properly with proper attention, a documentary of the day last week) has a lot to commend it. Those firemen and firewomen went into the blazing buildings to rescue people without hesitation and nearly 500 of them died.

I am unstinting in my admiration for the NYFD and (for other circumstances which are not relevant here) the LFB. This is merely an uplifting piece of music, to gather thoughts by.

Vaughan Williams – Prelude on 'Rhosymedre' (or 'Lovely', based on an old Welsh hymn tune) played on the organ of Chesterfield Parish Church.