

Remembering the Tragic 9/11 Terrorist Attacks, and the destroyed St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church



On this day 9/11 in 2001, two planes flew into the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center in New York City.

Today, 19 years later, the sad and emotional memories resurface for families and friends of the victims who unjustly lost their lives.

As the Twin Towers horrifically collapsed from the impact, St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church in Manhattan was also buried.

St. Nicholas was the only other building besides the Twin Towers completely destroyed during the 9/11 terrorist attack.

Saint Nicholas Church, which commenced services in 1922, was named after Agios Nikolaos, Patron Saint of Sailors, as it was the first stopping point for many Greek migrants after they left Ellis Island, the United States' busiest migrant inspection station.

For 85 years, the Saint Nicholas Church stood at 155 Cedar St, New York City, until

the shocking terrorist attack occurred.

No one was inside the church during the September 11 attack, as a committee member and electrician were able to escape minutes before the south tower came crashing down destroying the church.

Amongst the rumble, only a little bit remained of the church including the damaged icon of St. Dionysios of Zakynthos, the icon of The Mother of God of the Life-giving Spring and a small handful of other religious items.

The church's most valuable physical possessions, including the relics of St Nicholas, St Catherine, and St Sava which had been donated to the church by Nicholas II, the last tsar of Russia, were never recovered after the attack.

A devastating number of 2,753 people were killed in the 9/11 attack, including 36 Greek-Americans.

After the 9/11 attacks, it was said that the Church would reopen as a national shrine. Designed by architect Santiago Calatrava, the church's new look is inspired by Hagia Sophia and the Church of the Holy Savior in Chora, two Byzantine-era shrines in Constantinople.

The rebuilding and reopening of Saint Nicholas is referred to "a beacon and some kind of miracle."

Construction of the new Church was halted when the money ran out and according to reports, a lot of the funds donated for the construction of St. Nicholas Church was used to cover unrelated expenses.

Earlier this year, [Archbishop Elpidophoros of America used sprigs of basil and holy water to bless the restart of construction works](#) at the St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church. Construction was set to resume in the spring, then COVID hit, grounding all non-essential projects statewide to a halt for months.

The aim is to have the new St. Nicholas open on September 11, 2021 — the 20th anniversary of the attacks — to offer comfort to New Yorkers of all faiths.

On the 19th anniversary, we remember those who lost their lives in the tragedy.

[60 Minutes showcases the rebuilding of the Saint Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church](#)







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