October 30, 2016

To my Brothers in Christ, The Rev. Dr. William Lupfer and the Reverend Philip Jackson, and to all the faithful of Trinity Parish and St. Paul’s Chapel,

Anniversaries enable us to view our lives at a crossroads. We can see with greater clarity the rich heritage we have received from the past, as we glance into the fertile challenges we face in the future.

St. Paul’s Chapel has existed in just such a crossroad now for 250 years. It has stood in witness at the creation of a great city, and indeed in the creation of our nation. But perhaps at no time during those many years was its Christian ministry lifted in starker terms before the world than in the days which stretched into months following the tragic events of 9/11. Indeed, those days were my own introduction to the Diocese of New York, and in the weeks I spent at Ground Zero and in Saint Paul’s Chapel I felt that I had never seen a more brilliant witness to the possibilities of the gospel than I did when the world showed up at this chapel and ministered to the most broken, the most exhausted, the most aggrieved and the most hopeful. These grounds were made even more holy than they already were, by the provision of respite to the hearts, minds, souls and even the very bodies of those who labored in the aftermath of that horrible, horrible day.

We are told in scripture that when the nations of all creation are gathered before our Lord at the end of time, some of those gathered will be told by Jesus: “Inasmuch as you have done it unto one of the least of these, you have done it unto me.” For as long as stories are told, St. Paul’s Chapel will be known as a sacred place where such ministry took place.

I very much regret that long-standing commitments have made it impossible for me to be at Saint Paul’s today, but I look forward to sharing with you in this year of celebration. It is my sincere prayer that this 250th anniversary of St. Paul’s Chapel will be a time of renewal for you at the crossroads where we stand now as a church, a city and a people. In this most magnificently renovated and restored place, may your worship be enriched, your common life in an every-changing neighborhood nurtured, and your mission grow in ways that we cannot yet ask for or imagine. All of this, so that you may be seen to be the People of God in all you do. May you enjoy abundant blessings at this historic moment in your communal life, and as always, I remain

Yours,

The Right Reverend Andrew M L Dietsche
Bishop of New York