



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Ruben Diaz

## In Memory of 9/11

RUBEN DIAZ September 8, 2011

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by Senator Reverend Ruben Diaz

There hasn't been a single day in the past 10 years that I haven't thought about the 9/11 terrorist attacks on our country and how it has changed our lives and our world forever.

Like most New Yorkers, it troubles me greatly that Mayor Michael Bloomberg intends to bar first responders and religious leaders from the NYC 10th Anniversary Memorial Ceremony at Ground Zero.

I thank the Lord for the NYC Firefighters, NYPD, Port Authority Police, EMS workers, and the NYS Court Officers who were not put off by falling buildings or falling debris 10 years ago as they put the lives of others first. I thank the Lord for every person who gave of themselves in the days, weeks and months that followed 9/11 to clean up the mess and help the survivors and their families.

It is such an insult to religious New Yorkers to bar religious leaders from this 9/11 Memorial Ceremony, especially since they played an important role on 9/11 and continue to play a vital role ten years later.

The very fact that the first officially recorded fatality from the terrorist attack was a Catholic priest makes it incomprehensible that Mayor Bloomberg can get away with discriminating against religious leaders at the 9/11 Memorial Ceremony.

In days and weeks that followed the 9/11 attacks, New Yorkers filled churches, temples, synagogues, and mosques – turning to their faith communities to heal their hearts.

I applaud former Mayor Rudy Giuliani for opposing Mayor Bloomberg's clergy ban with his message that: "the microphone will not melt" if religious leaders are invited to participate.

If Mayor Bloomberg could just respect the wishes of religious New Yorkers and allow one leader from the Jewish, Christian, Catholic and Muslim faiths to participate in this Sunday's event, we would all benefit.

The event belongs to the people – including people of faith and including those who were there and survived. They deserve to be there. This is not Mayor Bloomberg's event.

Please join me as I continue to pray for the families and friends of the innocent lives that were lost that day, and for all of the physical and emotional suffering that so many people still experience.

Please join me in prayer that Mayor Bloomberg will have a change of heart and let go of his indifference to our surviving first responders and welcome them to be part of NYC's 9/11 Memorial Ceremony.

Please join me in prayer that Mayor Bloomberg will respect New Yorkers' right to freedom of - not against - religion, and permit an interfaith coalition of religious leaders to be a part of NYC's 9/11 Memorial Ceremony.