

Reflections on September 11

by Audrey Clarkin

For the past week, the only thing on television has been images and sounds of the destruction in New York, Washington, D.C., and Pennsylvania. Pictures have been replayed so many times that I can't close my eyes without seeing them. More heartbreaking than those images are the countless stories and tears of those who are missing their loved ones, or those who already know that their loved ones did not survive this terrible tragedy.

Tonight is different. For whatever reason, my parents don't have the television on in the background. This has given me time to think. Obviously, I am not as affected by the events of September 11 as others were, but I have changed. Since that day, I've been thinking a lot about my family and friends. I didn't realize how important they are to me until I saw the suffering of others who no longer have their loved ones in their lives. Many people will say that you don't know what you have until it's gone. But, I realize what I have before it's lost, and I'm determined to cherish those people who are special to me every day.

Before the attack, I worried about getting new shoes, having control over the television remote, and even if we had the right flavor of Pop Tarts (brown sugar-cinnamon) in the house. Compared to children worrying if their parents are alive, parents searching around the clock for their child, and especially husbands and wives cherishing that last phone call from a spouse, my brown sugar-cinnamon Pop Tarts are nothing. I'm not saying that I will never have these little worries again; I hope I do. That would mean that things are getting back to normal, but I think that I won't be as quick to sweat the small stuff.

This wasn't just a building that had caught on fire. It was even far more than a terrorist attack. This unforgettable moment changed the lives of many people, all people, including me.