

The following piece is dedicated to Michigan's Law Enforcement members and their families. Thank you, *Merry Christmas and may your new year be full of the hope of Jesus.* - Amy

OP ED: SALUTING THOSE AMONG US WHO DEMONSTRATE GREAT LOVE

The Key Person at the epicenter of this holiday season, Jesus Christ, has a powerful statement noted in John 15:13, "*Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends.*"

The Savior we recognize and remember this holiday season, born in a humble community, who lived among the everyday citizens of his time, would go on to choose a profession - a task, a role - that would demand for Him, His very life. He was born, He lived, and He died so that we might know eternal life. He gave of Himself so that we might possess something better. He served so that we would know peace. He sacrificed so that we might be safe. They may not realize it yet but Law Enforcement are a living example among us of the love of God.

Over the past few years, as Law Enforcement are being pummeled all around us, I have worked hard to rally citizens to demonstrate their support for America's Law Enforcement. I was raised in a family that taught me: freedom is not free, responsibility is part of life, and many serve so that I might enjoy convenience. These lessons laid a strong foundation in me to honor and celebrate Law Enforcement. Sadly, in my day, it has become a profession that is not understood and gravely underappreciated.

This role Law Enforcement step into is, for most of them, a calling. It is not an obligatory task. It is not something most of them feel forced to do. It is a profession they *chose* and most of them *love* because they want to help people and they want to give back to their community. For most of them they would probably say "This is what I was born to do."

We have become a society that - at large - is self focused. Too many citizens in our culture make their "self" a priority even to the detriment of their family and community. They let feelings guide them, they toss virtues to the side in the face of convenience, and they disrespect those who go above and beyond to serve them.

For most of us, this holiday season symbolizes similar things: a reflection on the birth of Christ, a time to gather with those who matter most, a reminder to give more than we take. But this year I find a parallel between Christmas and Law Enforcement, as well. No, I'm not saying or suggesting they take the place of my beloved Savior, but I am **recognizing how their actions as a profession signal to me the love of a Wonderful selfless Savior.**

Law Enforcement choose to step into a profession, and put their lives on the line, sometimes losing their lives, for the sake of precious individual lives. They stay calm when others are not. They act professionally when others behave poorly. They go back to help a person again and again and again even if they will not help themselves. They give of their own resources to aid hurting individuals when they can give nothing in return. This is love. *And love is why Jesus came.*

These examples of love (and many more) that Law Enforcement demonstrate, is the love that we are reminded about from our Savior during this holiday season. He came as a baby so that He could give His life to be a bridge for us, to pay sin's penalty, so we can spend eternity with

Him. He came not because of what “He would get out of it” or for “His convenience” or for “His comfort.” Jesus Christ came for the benefit of you and me.

I’m not naive: yes I know this is a paying job for Law Enforcement. It is their choice and they get financially compensated. But as you get to know them you will discover, this role for them is in their DNA. This is deeper than a job title, it is part of who they are and their nature. They love people and they are willing to help for the betterment of others even when it may personally cost them. And in a day and age when their profession is being mocked, bullied, and demoted faster than you can blink, how fitting to take this holiday season to pause and recognize them and their ongoing, self-less love and say *thank you*.

Our officers show us love every day as they patrol the prison wards to care for the inmates, as they monitor the roads to make sure we stay the course for following the laws of safety, as they do home visits to check in on family members, as they come to a crying child’s aid when they are in need, and as they protect citizens from themselves when wrought with addiction.

They demonstrate to us *daily* what love looks like, what selfless behavior looks like, what sacrifice looks like - *in tangible form*. No, Law Enforcement (or any human for that matter) cannot take the place of what our Savior offers. But there are people on earth that demonstrate His heart in significant ways and I think Law Enforcement as a whole do an outstanding job of sharing their lives for the good of their fellow humans.

So as you go about your holiday festivities and you come across Law Enforcement, thank them for their service. Drive slower around their vehicles out of care for their safety. Go out of your way to love on and watch their backs. And, let their presence be a *reminder to you of Who we celebrate this season **and that you are loved***.

Law Enforcement are a walking, talking, reminder that God loves us more than we can ever know. Jesus came so that we might have eternal life. Officers serve so that we might be safe, cared for, and secure. There is no greater love given than by those who are willing to lay down their lives for their friends (or strangers).

To those who serve in this arena, we salute you and we thank you for being a living example of what love looks like in the here and now. To most of America, including myself, you are His angels among us.

P.S. If you are a Law Enforcement member you should know - we see you, we appreciate you, we are praying for you. The Savior is your best and only avenue for great hope, peace, and eternal safety. God loves you as you love those among us - whom He loves more than we can ever know. Your life matters to God and to us!

- Amy Hawkins (Jackson Michigan) is the founder of Police Week Michigan, a 501c3 that works to honor the spirit of President John F. Kennedy’s 1962 vision that we celebrate the men and women in Law Enforcement every year. PWM works to inspire citizens to speak up, stand up, and show up for Law Enforcement. She is not Law Enforcement, but just a grateful citizen.