

DailyViewpoint

12 • MONDAY, MAY 3, 2010 • HERALDNEWSONLINE.COM

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Thank police for their sacrifices

In 2009 fewer police officers died in the line of duty, 129 nationwide, including two in Illinois.

For 2008, 144 police officers were killed.

But 2009 still was a very brutal year against law enforcement officers in our nation. Just in five separate multiple death incidents, 14 police officers were killed. The worst was in Lakewood, Wash., where four police officers were preparing for their morning shift and having coffee in a restaurant, which was owned by a retired police officer. A man walked in and gunned down all of them.

We also had three officers killed instantly in Pittsburgh at one time. Okaloosa County, Fla., had two deaths in one incident and Seminole County, Okla., had two deaths at the same time. Also, three Drug Enforcement Administration officers were

killed at once in one incident.

As National Law Enforcement Memorial Fund Chairman Craig W. Floyd said, "Many of the cold-blooded career criminals our officers confront each and every day do not think twice about assaulting or killing a cop."

In addition to deaths, there have been 66,000 officers nationwide injured in the line of duty, some of them with permanent disabilities. Last year, two Joliet police officers sustained serious injuries. They may not be able to return to active duty as a result of these injuries.

In this post-Sept. 11, 2001, world and economically depressed society, our law enforcement officers are already



Rev. Vytas Memenas

Guest View

stretched to the limit.

The city of Joliet reduced 35 officer positions. The governor threatens to lay off more than 400 state troopers.

Police are the last defense for the people of Illinois against any terrorist's threats. Police protect the health and welfare of the people of our

state. On Thursday in Springfield, we will honor the two officers killed in the line of duty in our state in 2009.

The 30th Annual Will County Law Enforcement Memorial Day will be on Saturday with 5:30 p.m. Mass at St. Mary's Nativity Church, on Broadway Street, followed by a candlelight service at the Will County Law Enforce-

ment Memorial at the Will County Courthouse.

On May 15, the Grand Lodge of the Fraternal Order of Police in Washington, D.C., will honor the 129 police officers that were killed in the line of duty in our nation in 2009.

Law enforcement is the deterrent to chaos. Police officers are the line that separates society from anarchy. As a society, we need to lead by example and teach our children to respect these heroes that risk their lives every day for us.

Police Week, which starts Sunday, is a good time for all of us to think about these men and women that are committed to protecting our rights and thank them for their sacrifices to keep law and order in our society.

The Rev. Vytas Memenas is chaplain for the Will County Sheriff Department and the Illinois State Lodge of the Fraternal Order of Police.