

BLUE MASS 2010

*Sponsored locally by The Knights of Columbus, Sandusky Council #546, the annual **Blue Mass** is a celebration of faith to honor the dedicated law enforcement officers, firefighters and emergency medical providers who protect and serve our communities in Erie County.*

According to local custom, prayers of remembrance and a wreath-laying ceremony at the Police and Fire Memorials outside the Erie County Courthouse preceded the grand procession with personnel and equipment south on Central Avenue to St. Mary's Catholic Church. This afternoon the scene was a memorable as it was meaningful.

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Most historians rate Abraham Lincoln as our greatest president. Despite Lincoln's obvious familiarity with certain passages from Sacred Scripture, did you know that he was never baptized, never joined a church, and rarely mentioned the name of Jesus? After his death, his widow, Mary Todd Lincoln, explained that "He [Abraham Lincoln] was a religious man always but he was not a technical Christian."

Still, Lincoln sometimes attended church services. After leaving a church on one of those occasions, the president was asked by his law enforcement guard what he thought about the sermon he just had heard.

Lincoln mumbled something to that effect, "it was ok."

The guard picked up on the president's hesitation and asked further, "Sir, you didn't like it?"

To which Abraham Lincoln responded, "The pastor never asked us to do something great."

At Gettysburg, Lincoln spoke about a completely different situation than what brings us together this day in Sandusky for the annual Blue Mass. But the words of Lincoln *then* are packed with meaning for us *today*:

"The world will little note nor long remember what we
say here, but it can never forget what they did here."

Friends, the brave soldiers whose names long since have been forgotten made the greatest sacrifice. Their greatness is not from being remembered nor is it due any speech given to honor them. No!

- Their greatness arises from what they dared to do.
- Their greatness arises from who they dared to be.
- Their greatness arises not from what they had been given but rather from what they chose to give away.

Police, Firefighters and Emergency Medical Responders: hear the call to be great by means of your service to our local community.

Let's face it: most of us are not born great. For the vast majority of us here, the achievement of greatness is made by *sacrifice*. Greatness hatches when we put what we have and who we are at the service of others.

You probably will not become famous — most of us do not — but you stand to be known for how you respond to your call to service as police, firefighters and emergency medical responders.

Let your response be seen in your willingness to sacrifice confidently and regularly for what is right – no matter how difficult doing the right thing is in your service of our community. Greatness is seen every time you do the right thing. You stand to inspire others toward greatness every time its truth and justice that mark your service to people.

Hear the call to be great by means of your service to our community and let nothing – no thing - stop you from making this happen.