

# Weathering the Storm



By Robin Kroll, Psy.D

It's winter 2015. Officer Stan begins his midnight shift and he's hoping he'll have a partner. This hadn't been a concern in the past. He thinks to himself:

*The climate has certainly changed.*

He isn't referring to the weather.

With a heightened sense of awareness, he starts his tour and is grateful to be in a two-man car. He thinks about the incident in Ferguson, Missouri, on August 9, 2014, and contemplates how that day has impacted relationships between law enforcement and the communities they protect across the nation.

Many thoughts run through Officer Stan's head - thoughts he has never had in his fifteen years on the job.

*Do I feel safe policing?*

*Can I do my job without hesitation?*

*Do I want to do my job anymore?*

*Is the job worth it?*

Officer Stan feels disillusioned for the first time.

He begins to reminisce about his early career and suddenly everything changes. He remembers why he wanted to be the police. He entered the academy with the absolute belief that he wanted to help others and make a difference. He chuckles as he recalls standing in front of the mirror, admiring himself in his uniform. How he wore his badge with such pride and appreciation for what it symbolized: a shield that is the hallmark of a protector of peace and of the people.

He looks over at his partner and silently says the Saint Michael Prayer for the two of them...

*Saint Michael, Heaven's glorious Commissioner of Police, who once so neatly and successfully cleared God's premises of all its undesirables, look with kindly and professional eyes on your earthly force.*

*Give us cool heads, stout hearts, and uncanny flair for investigation and wise judgment. Make us the terror of burglars, the friends of children and law-abiding citizens, kind to strangers, polite to bores, strict with law-breakers and impervious to temptations.*

*You know, Saint Michael, from your own experiences with the devil that the police officer's lot on earth is not always a happy one; but your sense of duty that so pleased God, your hard knocks that so surprised the devil, and your angelic self-control give us inspiration.*

*And when we lay down our night sticks, enroll us in your heavenly force, where we will be as proud to guard the throne of God as we have been to guard the city of all the people.*

*Amen*

Like the seasons in a year, the climate will change. Have faith in yourself, your fellow officers, and your department. Don't forget why you became the police. Remember the good you have done, the lives you saved, the arrests that put the bad guys away.

Reflect on your recognitions and honorable mentions. Remind yourself of your sense of duty. Recall a letter you received from a grateful citizen or a child that looked at you in awe, hoping they could one day be a police officer. Remember those in the community that appreciate your service and rely upon you to keep them safe. They are out there in abundance.

Be Safe. Be Proud.

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