

Every Day is Memorial Day
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Years ago, we lived in southern Illinois, not far from the birthplace of John A. Logan. He had been a union general during the Civil War, a US Congressman before the war, a US Senator after the war. A community college named for Logan was just a few miles down the road.

As a born and bred Wabash Valley Hoosier, I know what is referred to as Memorial Day in other states, is really another name for “Race Day!” Although it falls on Memorial Day, Race Day is kinda about decorating graves. But Race Day is really about 33 cars circling a 2.5 oval track at record breaking speeds in search of a glass of cold milk.

However, in southern Illinois, I quickly learned they are as proud of their native son John A. Logan as they are of Abraham Lincoln—and that’s saying a lot. On May 5, 1868, Commander in Chief of the Grand Army of the Republic, John A. Logan, issued the first official Memorial Day Order. May 30, 1868, was designated as a day for strewing flowers and/or decorating the graves of fallen Civil War soldiers. Logan’s purpose was for “preserving and strengthening those kind and fraternal feelings which have bound together the soldiers who had suppressed the late rebellion.” Logan said their graves should be “guarded with sacred vigilance and no wanton foot tread rudely on such hallowed grounds.” Logan wanted Memorial Day to be kept every year in order to honor the sacrifice and memory of those who had died.

It’s not hard to understand why those in southern Illinois love John A. Logan. Memorial Day survived because of his influence.

The good news is, that for a Christian, every day is Memorial Day. Every day we should give praise and honor and respect and love in memory of the sacrifice Jesus made for us. We should guard every day with sacred vigilance. No wanton foot should tread rudely on the hallowed ground of His sacrifice for us.

Jesus left heaven—left the presence of the Holy God—to dwell with us, the flawed sinners. He came, knowing He would be ridiculed, spat upon, burdened with the weight of our sin, and die a horrifyingly cruel death. But He came anyway.

Jesus willingly became like us—flesh and blood—to experience fatigue, hunger, thirst, pain, loneliness, and rejection. But He came anyway.

Jesus came to serve and not be served. To love and not be loved. To understand and not be understood. To be tempted and not give in to temptation. To call us His friend, and to show us the way to the Father. He came to fulfill the law and save us from our sin. Jesus gave up everything so we could gain everything. And He came anyway.

There’s an old hymn that goes like this: “Man of Sorrows! What a Name/For the Son of God who came/Ruined sinners to reclaim. Hallelujah! What a Savior!”

What a Savior, indeed. Because He came anyway. For you and me. A Savior like that deserves His own Memorial Day.