

On Violence Against Police

The Rt. Rev. Eugene Taylor Sutton, Bishop of Maryland

September 4, 2015

As many of you know I have been one of the leaders working towards the reduction of gun violence in our communities. I released a statement following the death of Freddie Gray that lamented the use of violence to solve social problems and grievances. Since we believe that all lives matter, we need to pray for the safety of all people, including our police officers. In the past few weeks we have been reading reports about indiscriminate violence against police officers which has resulted in the death of several officers of the law.

The targeting of police and first responders is not only deplorable, but an attack on the very fabric of the communities most in need of their help. We have many faithful Episcopalians in this diocese who serve as first responders: uniformed and active officers of the law; firefighters, both paid and volunteer; and members of local rescue squads, paid and volunteer. Others have retired from active service or have children and spouses serving in these helping professions. These folks willingly put themselves on the line to respond at all hours, and in all conditions. They are immensely dedicated to their work, and we applaud their courage and service.

We know, of course, that no profession is exempt from having to deal with the few of its members who fail to adhere to the highest standards of conduct. That is why I believe it's so important to express our gratitude and support for the many men and women who have chosen to place themselves on the front lines in our towns, cities and communities, and who serve with distinction, honor and sacrifice.

In the coming weeks, and perhaps especially on or near September 11, please remember these public servants in your congregational Prayers of the People. Some churches are choosing to distribute small blue ribbons, or are hosting special services around the time of the Feast of St. Michael and All Angels (September 29) to which they invite local first responders and honor them with public recognition or small gifts.

We live in a "sinful and broken world" (*BCP* p. 429), yet there are so many faithful community servants who quietly and gracefully attend to the needs of the citizens they have chosen to serve. Remember to thank them in these coming weeks, and pray for their safety.

Blessings and peace,

The Rt. Rev. Eugene Taylor Sutton
Bishop of Maryland