

Chaplain Reflection – starting September 2 – by Chaplain Jeremy Eubanks

The US Open tennis tournament is currently going on in New York City. At the risk of revealing my age, whenever I think of tennis I often think of John McEnroe. McEnroe is one of the all-time greats, but his temper and outbursts at times overshadowed how great of a player he was.

He had one of the “all-time” rants at Wimbledon in 1981, where he shouted, “You cannot be serious!” His frustration boiled over in a match and a tournament he would eventually win. If you haven’t seen the rant, you should look it up on Youtube.

You might not be a tennis fan or even know John McEnroe, but I’m guessing there are times where we all can relate to his diatribe, “You cannot be serious!” I think that’s true in a lot of areas of our lives – parenting; dealing with insurance companies; a boss we think is unreasonable; drivers we see on the highway; but I imagine that line might be a common one in the life of a police officer.

You see people on some of the worst days of their lives. You see some of the most awful behavior humans can conduct. You see tragedies that seem to happen for no good reason and part of you wants to shout, “Seriously?!”

One of Jesus’ most famous stories is often called the Parable of the Good Samaritan, and it is one that might have had a few moments where people wondered if he was serious. The story he tells is one of a man traveling who has one of those worst days. He is robbed, beaten, and left for dead. In the next few hours there are groups of people that encounter that downtrodden man—people that should have helped and they don’t.

But there is a man who stops and cares for the man. He bandages his wounds and takes him to another location for him to heal. (The story is in Luke 10 if you want to read it.) This man goes above and beyond, not only does he step into the dangerous situation, he provides extra care.

In Jesus’ telling of the story, that man who did the rescuing was a Samaritan—who was part of a group that the people hearing the story despised. Jesus intentionally made this despised person the hero of the story. Then he told his hearers to go and “do likewise.”

One of the things that I recognize in so many of you officers, whether you share my faith or not, is that you so often do the things that the Samaritan is praised for. You go into dangerous situations, often assuming personal risk – and at personal sacrifice many of you look to make those situations better. Even in situations where unfortunately some consider you some type of enemy.

Know that the chaplains are praying for you as you enter into those situations. We pray for your safety and we pray for your courage to continue to “do likewise” for our fellow citizens. We are Seriously Grateful for your presence in our community.