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For Release

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**Statement of The Most Reverend John J. Myers,
Archbishop of Newark,
In the Aftermath of the Shooting at Emmanuel African Methodist
Episcopal Church in Charleston, SC**

What happened in Charleston chills us because, in the faces of the victims and all who attended church last night, we saw our neighbors.

And while a continuing sense of shock will weigh on our shoulders in the coming days, we must and will resolve to act to make this incident the last.

The almost 1.5 million Catholics of the Archdiocese of Newark offer their sympathies and prayers for the victims of the Charleston attack and their families. All of the parishes of the Archdiocese of Newark will remember them in the General Intercessions at Mass in the days and weeks ahead, in the sure and certain hope that those who have died have received The Embrace of Our Heavenly Father.

We are thankful that law enforcement has acted quickly to apprehend a suspect and to begin the process of seeing that justice is done. We also offer our prayers and support to our state and national leaders, who now once again must seek to find a solution to the sin of gun violence in our society.

Security for the people who come to our churches is a priority. It is natural that some at this time may call on houses of worship to take steps to ensure against the possibility of a similar attack. I do call on all of the pastors of the Newark Archdiocese to work with their local law enforcement agencies to strengthen and implement appropriate protections in our parishes. However, we need to balance those concerns against the reality that churches, temples, and all houses of worship are places of welcome and of God's love.

I remind the people of this local Church of Newark that now is a time for consolation, for brave thoughts, and for turning fear into love – both for those who have perished in Charleston, and for our neighbors here in New Jersey.

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