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**STATEMENT OF MOST REVEREND NELSON J. PÉREZ
REGARDING YESTERDAY'S VIOLENT PROTESTS
AT THE UNITED STATES CAPITOL**

Like so many Americans, I watched the violent protests and vandalism unfold in the United States Capitol with shock and dismay. Yesterday was a truly sad day for our country—a day that I hope and pray never repeats itself. In the midst of our shared sorrow, we must remember that what we saw is not a reflection of who we are. We are better than this and the actions of a few do not represent us or our values.

As citizens of this great country, we are blessed. We share common rights to freedom of speech and freedom of assembly among others. While differences of opinion often emerge on a variety of political and societal issues, those differences cannot under any circumstances degenerate into lawlessness and chaos. Regardless of political affiliation, we are united by democracy. Should it devolve into what we witnessed yesterday—violent disorder and chaos—the rights we cherish will disappear into the abyss of anarchy.

In the name of the people of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, I express my prayerful gratitude to all government law enforcement agents who worked to restore order to the Capitol as well as our elected officials and their staff members who lived and worked through a dark day in our history to ensure the peaceful transition of power.

May God grant us wisdom as we seek common ground as Americans and may He bring peace to our land. Today is a new day. It is a call for all people of faith to lift their hearts in prayer for our country and for healing in a spirit of unity rooted in who we are—citizens of the United States of America.

+Most Reverend Nelson J. Pérez
Archbishop of Philadelphia