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**ARCHBISHOP NELSON J. PÉREZ JOINS WITH OTHER
CUBAN AMERICAN BISHOPS TO ISSUE JOINT STATEMENT
REGARDING THE PROTESTS IN CUBA**

“In dramatic and courageous images that have been seen throughout the world, the people of Cuba went to the streets in massive demonstrations of solidarity, in towns, villages and cities on July 11 and 12. Their motto ‘Patria y Vida expressed their frustrations as they experience record cases of Covid-19, a lack of vaccines, adequate medical care and needed supplies – inhuman circumstances that add to the existing lack of food and essential human necessities. Their chant of ‘Libertad’ underscores their desire for every Cuban citizen to enjoy basic human rights, as recognized as part of our human dignity by the United Nations, and defended for centuries by the Catholic Church in its social teaching.

As Cubans and as bishops of the Catholic Church in the United States, we are ever-mindful of the constant suffering and frustration of our brothers and sisters on the Island. We recognize that, while hundreds of thousands have experienced the need to emigrate, in order to enjoy basic human rights and a future filled with possibilities, those who have not – by choice or inability to do so - as Cubans in Cuba, are to be the actors of their own future and aspirations. The right and courage of the people in Cuba to raise their voice publicly, casting away their fear of repression and revealing authentic solidarity as a people, are acknowledged and applauded.

We, Cuban-American bishops, join in solidarity with the Cuban people in their quest for responses to their human rights and needs. We are deeply troubled by the aggressive reaction of the government to the peaceful manifestations, recognizing that ‘violence engenders violence.’ Such a reaction seems to negate the basic Cuban principle of having ‘una patria con todos y para el bien de todos’ (*a homeland with all and for the good of all*). We stand in solidarity with those detained because they have voiced their opinions. We pray for their families and call for their immediate release.

Finally, we call on international governments and all charitable organizations to collaborate in assisting in this urgent humanitarian crisis for the sake of the suffering people of Cuba, especially the sick and the poor. We commend the care of *Caritas Cubana*, as it continues to mediate – with ever so limited resources – a response to the basic human needs of the people of the Island, recognizing that the alleviation of suffering is a moral imperative.

As always, together with our brother-bishops in Cuba, and our brothers and sisters inside and

outside the Island. We continue to place our trust in the motherly gaze of the patroness of Cuba, Our Lady of Charity.”

Most Reverend Nelson Pérez
Archbishop of Philadelphia

Most Reverend Manuel Cruz
Auxiliary Bishop of Newark

Most Reverend Felipe Estevez
Bishop of St. Augustine

Most Reverend Octavio Cisneros
Auxiliary Bishop Emeritus of Brooklyn