



ROMAN CATHOLIC  
**DIOCESE**  
**OF CHARLESTON**  
OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

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My Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The nation of Afghanistan is in the midst of a critical emergency. The state take-over of the lawful Afghani government by the insurrectionist Taliban forces poses a threat to global security and has led to a widespread humanitarian crisis. I cannot adequately express the seriousness of the situation. Foreign nationals are making life or death decisions in absolute desperation. We have seen the images and videos coming out of the country, and they are nearly impossible to watch.

Thousands of people who have worked as interpreters, translators, and in other capacities alongside American military over the past 20 years now find themselves and their families in danger. The United States is currently evacuating diplomats and other government employees and has authorized use of the Emergency Refugee and Migration Assistance Fund for meeting the urgent needs of Afghan refugees and Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) applicants. Staff from the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, Catholic Charities USA, and other partners have been at Fort Lee, Va., for the past few weeks to assist the federal resettlement of SIV applicants and their families. I urge government and military officials to continue coordinating strategic plans to assist the citizens of Afghanistan, especially the most vulnerable and at-risk.

This situation demands attention and prayer. As Catholic faithful, I ask for your prayers for our brothers and sisters in this time of crisis. Their lives are being threatened at this very moment. Together let us pray:

*Almighty and merciful God, we ask that you create peace in our world and to keep the devastation of war far from innocent lives. We ask for your mercy for all victims of terrorist attacks this week in Afghanistan and throughout the world. Be with those who are suffering and wrap them in the mantle of your divine mercy to find solace in you. We ask for the powerful intercession of Mary, our mother and consoler, of St. Joseph, the mighty defender of the Church, and of all the angels and saints, that they may intercede for a world torn apart by evil, that peace be restored and the defenseless of the Middle East be protected. +In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

In the Lord's Peace,

Most Reverend Robert E. Guglielmo, DD  
*Bishop of Charleston*