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**RUSH TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO DELIVERS REMARKS FOLLOWING MEETING
WITH CLERGY ADVISORY COUNCIL**

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Welcome. Welcome, everyone.

We just had our first meeting with my Clergy Advisory Council. I want to thank all the members of the Council who are here. I thought it was a very positive and productive first dialogue – and a lot of relationships here that many of us have had – long, close relationships – and some new and important relationships are starting today as well.

But the spirit of unity – this is one of those New York City moments that’s worth taking stock of. We look like a New York City subway car right here – we have every kind of New Yorker, every kind of faith – and yet the beauty of it is that not only are people peacefully coexisting, but are striving a way – for a way forward together. And I really want to thank all the leaders present for being a part of that, and I want to thank Pastor Walrond, who we’ll hear from in a moment, for his leadership.

Look, the idea of this group is to bring the understanding that faith leaders have to the work of city government; to show us the perspective of communities and neighborhoods all over the city – what’s needed, what must be done better, what must be done sensitively; to help us focus and to be voices of conscience in the work we do; equally, to bring forward the initiatives that we’ve undertaken to help people and make sure they reach people, whether it’s pre-k or IDNYC or so many other initiatives that are only as good as their ability to reach each and every family in need. So, nobody does that better than our faith leaders, and that’s why this gathering is important.

This will be a regular gathering. We are going to be in regular dialogue under the leadership of Pastor Walrond. And we’re listening for how we can do this work best.

Our focus will be in four areas – education, public safety, housing, and health – all areas of foundational concern to New Yorkers. And this work, of course, will be ongoing and will fit the fundamental value of this administration – to fight inequality – inequality in all its forms – and the particular focus we have established of fighting income inequality.

Everyone in this room feels deeply, and with great sorrow, and yet with great resolve, the aftermath of the tragedy in Charleston – it is a topic on all of our minds. And we’re all trying to take a moment of pain and a moment that is fundamentally unacceptable on so many levels, and turn it into the context for action – and I think there’s a tremendous sense of unity and resolve on that front in this room.

So I just want to say this is the start of something I think will help this city move forward. It’ll help us in times of opportunity and possibility. It’ll also help us in times of challenge to have this extraordinary group of faith leaders working together with all of us at City Hall.

A few words in Spanish –

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

As we contemplate, again, that horrible act of terror and that horrible racist act in Charleston, I'll now turn to Pastor Walrond, who will address us and lead us in a moment of silence.

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