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**Statement by The Most Reverend Bernard A. Hebda,
Coadjutor Archbishop of Newark,
on the Appointment of
The Most Reverend Edgar M. da Cunha, SDV,
as Eighth Bishop of Fall River**

With the appointment of Bishop Edgar da Cunha as the eighth Bishop of Fall River, I hasten to congratulate him, rejoicing that Pope Francis has truly provided the Church of Fall River with a shepherd after the Heart of Christ. Having worked closely with Bishop da Cunha these past eight months, I can personally attest to his pastoral zeal and to the palpable love for Christ and His Church that has consistently motivated his service in the Archdiocese of Newark.

I have come to know him as an extremely capable leader who never fails to put the needs of others before his own, and I have quickly grown to admire him for his ability to bring the joy of the Gospel into even the most challenging of circumstances. His life gives daily witness to a real solidarity with the poor and a deep empathy for those who for various reasons find themselves living in a culture that is not their own. If Pope Francis were ever to abandon the tango of his native Argentina for a Brazilian samba, I have no doubt that he would look and sound a great deal like Bishop da Cunha.

The Church of Fall River is getting a Shepherd with a proven track record of effective leadership in the areas of parish revitalization, the New Evangelization and multi-culturalism. True to his roots as a Vocationist, he has collaborated well with clergy, Religious and laity alike, demonstrating great skill in calling forth and respecting the gifts of others. He will be missed in the Archdiocese for his keen pastoral insights, his engaging homilies (in a whole host of languages) and for his unflinching fraternal support of his brother priests. I am grateful that I had the opportunity to learn from Bishop da Cunha these past eight months and I hope that the Church of Fall River will embrace him with the same warm welcome that he so graciously offered to me when I arrived in Newark.

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