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Obama Leads Congregation In 'Amazing Grace' Following Powerful Eulogy For Rev. Pinckney



"The alleged killer could have never anticipated the way the families of the fallen would respond when they saw him in court in the midst of unspeakable grief," Obama said during his eulogy.

TAYLOR LEWIS AND MIYA JONES Jun, 26, 2015



Earlier today, thousands of mourners packed into an arena at the College of Charleston to hear President Obama deliver a powerful eulogy honoring the life of Rev. Clementa Pinckney, who was killed during last week's Emanuel AME shooting. The president praised the outpouring of love and support that the nation has sent in recent days and, once again, called for gun reform. Before leaving the podium, he led the congregation in a touching rendition of "Amazing Grace." Jumping to their feet, the crowd joined in.

"Blinded by hatred, the alleged killer would not see the grace surrounding Rev. Pinckney and that Bible study group, the light of love that shown as they opened the church doors and invited a stranger to join in their prayer circle," Obama said of 21-year-old Dylann Roof, the alleged shooter who has admitted to the crimes. "The alleged killer could have never anticipated the way the families of the fallen would respond when they saw him in court in the midst of unspeakable grief, with words of forgiveness. He couldn't imagine that."

Obama, who first crossed paths with Pinckney nearly 10 years ago, called the slain pastor a "good man," mentioning his long history within the church—"preacher by 13, pastor by 18, public servant by 23"—before honoring the eight other victims who were killed.

As Obama continued, he expressed approval at the eventual crumbling of the Confederate flag and issued a call for action when it comes to race relations. He said that God "doesn't want us to stop" at the removal of the Confederate flag.

“It would be a betrayal of everything Rev. Pinckney stood for if we allow ourselves to slip into a comfortable silence again,” Obama said. “It would be a refutation of the forgiveness expressed by those families [of the Charleston victims] if we slipped into old habits.”

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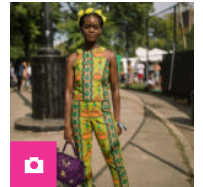
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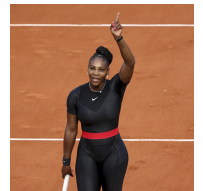
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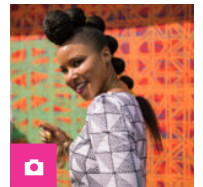
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