Opinion
Guest Voices



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September 15, 2025

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Until yesterday, I knew little about Charlie Kirk beyond his name and the fact that he was a political pundit of some sort. In the 30-something hours since his murder, I've learned that he held many views I found reprehensible. Also yesterday, someone texted me a video and I clicked "play" before realizing what it was — a four-second close-up clip of the moment he was shot. I cannot unsee what I saw. Although the image is still fresh in my mind, I don't know if I will ever unsee it.

Scrolling social media for news updates, I've seen many people (including personal friends) on the political left using the opportunity of Charlie Kirk's death to remind us of his unsavory, callous, and immoral views. I've seen many people (including personal friends) on the left and right pointing fingers and blaming their political opponents for the culture of hate, violence, and antipathy that has claimed Charlie Kirk as one of its latest victims. I've seen people of all stripes pointing to other acts of murder and genocide and asking why those expressing outrage over Kirk's murder are not outraged about other violent atrocities taking place every day around the world.

They have a point. But that's not the point.

None of that changes the reality that Charlie Kirk, like every human being who has ever lived, possessed intrinsic, inviolable, and infinite dignity. For this reason his killing was a profound evil, a violent tragedy in a world where our fellow humans are regularly slaughtered by people who think their lives are disposable.

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Everything is connected. When someone's life — anyone's life — is cut short by a deliberate act of violence, a wound is inflicted on our shared humanity. It is a rupture in the order of creation, a reminder of our fallen state. Every such act is a denial of the sacred gift of life bestowed by God.

This truth makes it all the more horrifying to see some respond to Kirk's death with glee, as though his murder was deserved. This is not justice; it is the twisted logic that fuels neverending cycles of violence.

Charlie Kirk's assassination is evil, no matter what he has said or done (and his regrettable last words only compound the tragedy). Human dignity is not earned,

nor can it be lost. As Pope St. John Paul II wrote in *Evangelium Vitae*, "Not even a murderer loses his personal dignity, and God himself pledges to guarantee this. And it is precisely here that the paradoxical mystery of the merciful justice of God is shown forth."

Kirk's life journey was cut short by someone who had no right to end it. As the young father of a young family, decades of life experiences and lessons and heartache were stolen from him. Where there is life, there is hope — hope for conversion, repentance, inspiration, accomplishments, love, learning, and maturation. All of that potential was taken from him by a lone gunman.

Dignitas Infinita, the recent declaration from the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith, makes this clear:

> "One can understand how sin can wound and obscure human dignity, as it is an act contrary to that dignity; yet, sin can never cancel the fact that the human being is created in the image and likeness of God."

Dignitas Infinita also reminds us, "Every individual possesses an inalienable and intrinsic dignity from the beginning of his or her existence as an irrevocable gift."

Charlie Kirk's murder was not a political moment. It was a human moment: an attack on the sanctity of life. Evil and wrath triumphed in that moment, and the dignity of the human person was betrayed.

His is just one of thousands, millions, of precious human lives that have senselessly been snuffed out by violence. We will never know the names of most of them, including the children killed by war, school shootings, gang violence, hunger, genocide, and so many other violent attacks on the human person. We will never know all the names of everyone who suffers at the hands of others: the poor, the unhoused, migrants, refugees, prisoners, abuse victims, those inhumanely rounded up for deportation.

And I cannot unsee the image I saw yesterday.

We cannot continue down this road.

Lord help us.

This story appears in the **Charlie Kirk murder news and commentary** feature series. View the full series.