Opinion
Guest Voices



U.S. President Donald Trump delivers a speech during a ceremony at the Pentagon in Arlington, Va., Sept. 11, 2025. (OSV News/Reuters/Evelyn Hockstein)



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President Donald Trump has blamed his political opponents for the assassination of conservative activist Charlie Kirk, saying, "Radical left political violence has hurt too many innocent people and taken too many lives." He also said, "It's long past time for all Americans and the media to confront the fact that violence and murder are the tragic consequence of demonizing those with whom you disagree day after day, year after year, in the most hateful and despicable way possible."

Trump's words are a good reminder that we hate in others what we hate most in ourselves.

The violent death of the 31-year-old Kirk, an evangelical Christian, is an unmistakable tragedy. That it creates yet another opportunity for the U.S. president angrily to blame members of the Democratic Party, and others whom he labels the "radical left," fits well into the agenda of the harshest of Catholic commentators.

Take, for example, CatholicVote.org, the nominally Catholic political organization founded by Brian Burch, now the United States ambassador to the Vatican, and Joshua Mercer, who remains based in Wisconsin as the organization's podcast host and editor of its daily email newsletter, "The Loop."

CatholicVote's writers make their voices heard on several known Catholic issues — abortion, pornography and embryonic stem cell research — but it does not appear to embrace other Catholic teachings.

For example, recent "LOOPcast" video speakers sardonically blame Black Lives Matter, DEI and cashless bail for the recent stabbing of a Ukrainian immigrant in North Carolina, while calling mainstream media evil and supporting the activities of Elon Musk and Trump.

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The Catholic right grants few, if any, nods to Catholic social teaching. The preferential option for the poor (including immigrants) and the care of creation are not agenda items. While some Catholic bishops and other clerics accompany immigrants to immigration hearings and others remind their flocks about pontifical environmental teachings, many righteous Catholics dismiss these issues as "radical left politics."

It is difficult to understand how an intense interest in life issues does not extend to the untenable situations created by environmental destruction. Disregard for the life of the planet inarguably creates situations the political right complains about: immigration and lawlessness created by poverty.

Catholic social teaching argues for the dignity of the human person, and in this regard squares most obviously with the life issues the Catholic right presents. But Catholic social teaching also supports the common good and the notion of solidarity — that is, it teaches that we are all in this together.

It is difficult to watch ostensibly religious, self-proclaimed Catholic individuals support issues tendered by perhaps the angriest, least qualified president in U.S. history, who regularly attacks tenets of Catholic teaching despite once having held a Bible, upside down, as he presented his policies.

The current administration condemns itself as it speaks of the hundreds of thousands of individuals whom it now seeks to handcuff and deport. Many people traveled hundreds, even thousands, of miles because they were hungry and poor, some fearing violence wherever they lived. Like immigrants before them, they hoped for a future in freedom. Legalities aside, they are human beings.

If it is a "radical left" policy to ask they be treated with dignity and respect, so be it. But harsh words, biting comments and an overall sardonic attitude toward others sow seeds for the violence that is spreading and becoming an everyday reality.

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