Opinion
Guest Voices



Left: Charlie Kirk speaks at the 2025 Student Action Summit in Tampa, Florida (Wikimedia Commons/Gage Skidmore). Right: Bishop Robert Barron speaks at the USA National Jubilee Pilgrim Gathering at the Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls in Rome July 30, 2025. (CNS/Lola Gomez)



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Charlie Kirk was assassinated, and that's not good.

I think anyone who is Catholic or even just Christian should agree with that statement. Charlie Kirk was a human being whose life was cut short, leaving children without a father, and a wife without her husband. After I heard the news, I said a prayer for his soul and for his family. What should be the response of those who guide spiritual flocks?

Well, first we need to face reality. Acts of political violence are becoming too common in our country, whether it be the Jan. 6th riot, the assassination of Melissa and Mark Hortman, the attempted assassination(s) of President Donald Trump, or the killing of Kirk. Our country is becoming more and more destabilized, so calling out the reality of political violence is commendable.

However, what isn't so praiseworthy is whitewashing Kirk, as did Bishop Robert Barron of Winona-Rochester, Minnesota, last week. To call Kirk "a kind of apostle of civil discourse" and paint him as Christlike is ridiculous and not based in reality. Kirk had a long record of making comments I would hope Barron agrees are un-Christian and unrepresentative of the Catholic Church's teachings. Moreover, Kirk's views cause remarkable division in our country.

For example, Kirk made many anti-immigrant statements, including propagating the "Great Replacement" theory, saying just weeks ago on his show: "America was at its peak when we halted immigration for 40 years and we dropped our foreign-born percentage to its lowest level ever. We should be unafraid to do that." Kirk also supported the Alligator Alcatraz immigrant detention facility in Florida — which Barron's fellow prelate, Archbishop Thomas Wenski, condemned — and emphasized American freedom only for people who looked like him.

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Kirk also made various racist statements degrading Black people, such as the following early last year: "If I'm dealing with somebody in customer service who's a moronic Black woman, I wonder: Is she there because of her excellence, or is she there because of Affirmative Action?" The same month, commenting on DEI, he said: "If I see a Black pilot, I'm going to be like, 'Boy, I hope he's qualified.' "

Does Barron care about racism and anti-immigrant sentiment? I truly hope so, especially since he's a bishop in a church that proclaims that immigrants and people of color are image-bearers of God. But if he truly cares, and wants to lead those under him toward Christ, in moments of political turmoil he has to be an advocate of peace. To do that, though, means to face reality and not sugarcoat reprehensible ideologies.

Kirk didn't deserve to be shot, but we shouldn't make him into a martyr or an example of Christian compassion and discourse. Otherwise, those who look up to spiritual leaders like Barron will assume Kirk's comments and stances are indeed like those of Jesus. A basic look at Scripture and Catholic social teaching shows otherwise.

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