News



Members of the National Association of Black Catholic Administrators in Denver during their annual meeting in September 2025. (NABCA)

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A new statement from the National Association of Black Catholic Administrators is calling for introspection and truth-telling amid the national fallout after the shooting death of Republican activist Charlie Kirk.

NABCA's recently reelected president, Fr. Reginald Norman of the Diocese of Bridgeport, called the assassination a "tragedy" but also noted uneven responses and a climate of threatened freedom of speech — including threats of violence against Black Catholic prelates.

"In the wake of [Kirk's] death, we are witnessing alarming levels of anger, threats, and division across our country," Norman wrote on Sept. 26.

"We have learned of Black bishops and other leaders receiving death threats simply for expressing their views. This is unacceptable."

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NABCA Kirk statement.pdf

Norman's statement comes after the annual meeting of NABCA, which comprises Black Catholic ministry directors and professionals from around the country. Norman was elected to a second three-year term alongside vice president Ashley Morris of Atlanta, secretary Dale Brown of the Diocese of St. Petersburg, and treasurer Rahsaan Garlin of the Archdiocese of Newark.

The organization's new statement highlights tensions in the American political and religious spheres brought to the fore by the killing of Kirk, who was attacked while speaking at an event at Utah Valley University on Sept. 10. His death was first announced officially by President Donald Trump, who like many conservatives praised him for a reported commitment to civil dialogue — a claim that has not gone unchallenged in the weeks since.

Kirk's widely publicized history of racist, misogynistic, and generally far-right viewpoints has come under intense scrutiny following his death, with many Republicans excusing the comments while others say he should not be honored.

"The Black community in particular is on high alert," wrote Norman in the NABCA statement.

"Political and lay leaders speak negatively about Black people without consequence, yet when Black Americans defend their contributions or share a different opinion, their voices are too often ignored, disparaged, or threatened. Where is the justice in this?"

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Though Norman did not specify which Black Catholic bishops have recently received death threats, Auxiliary Bishop Roy Campbell Jr. of Washington made headlines this month when his essay, "DEI Means God," drew widespread backlash from conservative Catholics and was later removed from the website of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. (The latter move from the USCCB came just two days after Kirk's killing.)

A number of Catholic bishops have also weighed in directly on Kirk's death, with several notable conservative prelates likening him to a Christian apostle or even a saint. Others, like Pope Leo XIV, have cautioned against using Kirk's death for "rhetoric and instrumentalization that lead to polarization."

For its part, the White House has used the shooting to amplify its claims of a leftist conspiracy to commit violence and other acts of subversion within the United States. A newly released memo from President Trump threatens legal retaliation against those espousing — among other things — "anti-Americanism, anti-capitalism, and anti-Christianity."

This month's NABCA statement from Norman emphasizes that a double-standard on free speech cannot sustain peace or unity.

"We call on all Americans—regardless of political affiliation—to remember our shared values of human dignity, mutual respect, and freedom of expression. We must reject intimidation, labeling, and threats," wrote Norman.

"We must build a society where differing opinions can coexist without fear. Let this moment be an opportunity to recommit ourselves to dialogue over division, understanding over animosity, and respect over retaliation."

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