Opinion
NCR Voices



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Paul Kim, a Catholic speaker, comedian and social media influencer lost his son Micah on New Year's Eve due to complications from the flu.

Micah's tragic story has been extensively covered nationally, as the United States continues to endure a severe and potentially historic flu season, replete with increasing illness, hospitalization and deaths.

Kim, who frequents Instagram and Threads, documented the nearly 11-day ordeal on social media, posting daily updates imploring others for prayers as the situation deteriorated. On each video, as the situation grew more and more dire, there were thousands of comments of shared support, solidarity and prayer.



(NCR graphic/Angie Von Slaughter)

While many have continued to share support and prayers, the national attention on the incident has drawn out numerous social media users with far less charitable takes.

Users were quick to armchair quarterback the situation and condemn Kim for perceived inactions — assuming due to his posting history that he had neglected to vaccinate his children, that he did not get Micah antivirals, and accusing him of not

getting his son to the hospital in time.

"As a catholic if he didn't get his kid vaccinated it's on him. The catholic faith supports vaccines. RIP!" wrote one user.

"Where was his god? Guarantee he didn't get that kid a flu shot," said another.

As of the publication of this column, it is not clear if Micah was vaccinated or not.

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"Dude talks about the evils of abortion on social media, but that's not what killed his kid. Being an anti-science idiot did. Imagine that," wrote Savannah Sparks, a lactation consultant and doctor of pharmacy who identifies as rx0rcist on Threads. Sparks has over 46,000 followers.

"He was an accomplice to his child's death if he did not have them vaccinated," wrote another user.

"Wonder if Kim will ever look in the mirror and scream 'baby killer'?" responded another.

"As a Catholic I will pray for his child because that's the Christian thing to do," wrote a user on Threads. "I hope Mr Kim reconsiders his views and the vile people he follows; Trump, Vance, RFK Jr, Turning Point, Abbot, De Santis and all the other MAGA that will be responsible for the dea!h of many children who will lose healthcare."

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To be clear, I am militantly pro-vaccine and a ferocious advocate for masking, social distancing when sick, and other public health precautions — but we don't know the

full circumstances of Micah's death.

Perhaps he was not vaccinated — but that does not mean that anyone, let alone a child, deserves to die. Are we so hell-bent on being right that we'll cheer when a child dies because it proves our point?



Micah Kim, 5, son of Catholic influencer Paul Kim, died on New Year's Eve 2025, following hospitalization after he contracted a severe case of the flu, which triggered sepsis and seizures. (OSV News screenshot/Paul Kim's Facebook page)

Moreover, some people can't receive the flu shot — I had a childhood case of Guillain-Barré syndrome (not vaccine-related) and my doctors won't allow me to get it. Medical circumstances are complicated, and between a doctor and their patient.

Regardless of the situation, a child is dead. A family is grieving an unconscionable and unimaginable loss. Using a child's death to score culture war points, or even to criticize the state of public health, is entirely inappropriate. Have we lost our souls entirely to tribalistic anger? Are we that corrupted by rage? Have we no shame?

Some might say that Kim's influencer status and repeated posting throughout the ordeal has opened the family to comment.

"I'm deeeeeeply rooted in my Christianity. And I would still NEVER show my child who's already declared brain dead, hooked up to tubes. ... As a parent, you protect your child from the dangers of the world and its exposure. You do not exploit them at their weakest for prayers," wrote a user on Threads.

This point, I understand. While the primary response to this tragedy should be compassion and prayer, I do think this episode calls into question the entire concept and cultural necessity of "influencers." And as a father, every part of me balks at the idea of documenting an episode like this on social media. Though community prayer is important, social media can never replace the "real world" fraternity and prayers of a parish, a neighborhood or community. Some things just shouldn't be posted on social media.

But in the case of poor Micah and his grieving family, there is only one appropriate response to the tragic and untimely passing of a child: compassionate, prayerful condolences.

For those of us fortunate enough to not have endured such a profound loss our response should be thanksgiving for good health, for the medical professionals who help in our times of need, and for the scientific miracles of vaccines, antivirals and therapeutics.

This story appears in the **Digital Dunces** feature series. View the full series.