Opinion
Guest Voices



Federal immigration officers deploy tear gas after the fatal shooting of a U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement observer on Jan. 24, 2026, in Minneapolis. (AP/Abbie Parr)



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Hours before federal agents in Minneapolis killed a second U.S. citizen, President Donald Trump addressed the 2026 March for Life via video on Friday (Jan. 23), congratulating those who came to Washington "to defend the infinite worth and God-given dignity of every human life."

Citing the Declaration of Independence, which asserted citizens' individual freedoms, he thanked the marchers for defending the unborn and claimed responsibility for "unprecedented strides to protect innocent life and support the institution of the family."

As they do each year, thousands of pro-life groups and individuals marched past the U.S. Capitol, where just five years earlier masked protesters attacked federal officers and threatened lawmakers. Now, Minneapolis is in chaos, ridden by 3,000 armed, masked Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents, some of whom reportedly received minimal training before being issued weapons. Are pardoned Jan. 6 rioters among those new ICE agents? Watching video footage of one group recalls the other.

The cognitive dissonance between what the current administration says and what it does roils the airwaves and frightens the citizenry. At its root is a public affairs effort in which White House defenses of its actions recall Orwellian Newspeak, with its "collateral outcomes" for civilian deaths and "plusgood" positivity, masking what is, for all intents and purposes, a federal invasion of a U.S. city.

It must stop, but can it? Recently, three U.S. Catholic cardinals — Blase Cupich (Chicago), Robert McElroy (Washington, D.C.) and Joseph Tobin (Newark, New Jersey) — issued a statement criticizing the administration's use of force outside the United States' borders. Quoting Pope Leo XIV's recent address to diplomats accredited to the Vatican, they noted "War is back in vogue, and a zeal for war is spreading."

It is more than zeal. It is an infection of violence that appears to have overtaken the federal conscience, at every level. And it is anything but pro-life. While previous administrations managed to effect significant deportations of individuals in the U.S. illegally without widespread use of flash-bang grenades, tear gas, pepper spray, rubber bullets and automatic weapons, the current crop of federal agents seems incapable of peaceful action.

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What to do? The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops has long called its stance against abortion its "preeminent priority." But this seems to have limited its members from speaking jointly and forcefully about the current administration's travesties. Here and there, one or another bishop may say something, and the three cardinals have come to the fore, but except for its November 2025 "Special Message" on immigration, the full cadre of Catholic bishops is silent.

They might do better to cast abortion as an "underlying" issue and priority. Then all actions affecting all life would be on their radars.

The point for religious authorities and individuals is not to focus on political discussion but rather on moral conversation if the priority is the protection of all life, whether of immigrants, the unborn, the elderly or shipwrecked survivors of military actions. It would require speaking out against the unspeakable, whether convenient or inconvenient, whether in season or out of season, whether in Washington or Minneapolis, from the pulpit or in the public square.

There is a deep responsibility to unveil the cloud of falsehoods falling over government actions that disrespect life. The United States is in crisis.

To quote President Trump's March for Life video message, "There's never been anything like it."

This story appears in the **Immigration and the Church** feature series. View the full series.