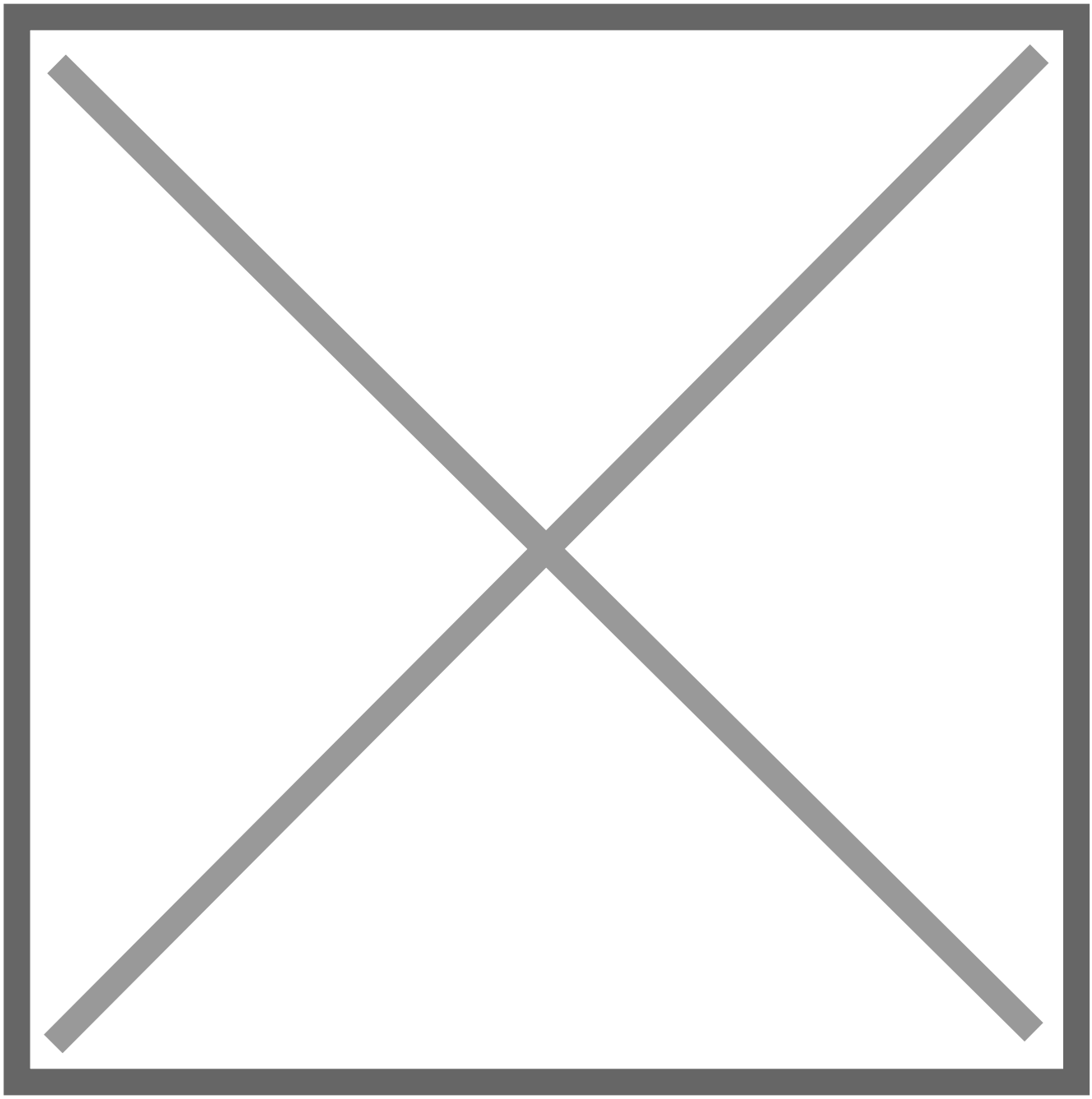
News
Analysis



Rabbi Levi Wolff lights a menorah as people pay respects at Bondi Pavilion Dec. 15, 2025, to victims of a shooting during a Jewish holiday celebration at the beach in Sydney. Two gunmen opened fire during a Hanukkah celebration on Bondi Beach Dec. 14, killing 15 people, including a child, officials said, in what Prime Minister Anthony Albanese called an act of antisemitic terrorism that struck at the heart of the nation. (OSV News/Reuters/Hollie Adams)

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Washington — April 2, 2026
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In the days ahead of Holy Week, several Catholic leaders issued messages denouncing antisemitism, stressing Church teaching on the issue as the faithful solemnly commemorate Christ's passion and death.

The messages come as some Catholic and Christian influencers broadly peddle antisemitic tropes — including the charge of deicide, or the alleged collective Jewish responsibility for the death of Christ — repudiated by the Church in the wake of the Council of Trent and even more explicitly at the Second Vatican Council.

Among those weighing in were Bishop Joseph Bambera of Scranton, chair of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs; Archbishop Alexander Sample of Portland, chair of the USCCB Committee on Religious Liberty; Bishop Robert Barron of Winona-Rochester, founder of the Word on Fire media nonprofit; and scholar Robert George.

OSV News obtained a copy of a March 13 memo sent by Bambera to the nation's bishops, in which he highlighted four points of "essential teaching" to be made in Catholic preaching on Jews and Judaism during Holy Week and Easter.

Those points draw heavily on the Vatican II document *Nostra Aetate*, which affirmed the spiritual patrimony between Christians and Jews, while condemning antisemitism

in all forms.

"'The Jews' didn't kill Jesus," and "God's covenant with the Jewish people has not been revoked, but continues," wrote Bambera, citing both Nostra Aetate and the 2015 reflection on that document by the Vatican's Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews.

In addition, Bambera pointed to the commission's guidelines on the correct presentation of Jews and Judaism in Catholic preaching and catechesis, emphasizing that "Catholics can appreciate the religious attachment that the Jewish people have to the land of Israel, but interpret the re-emergence in 1948 of a Jewish state in a historical rather than theological context."

Furthermore, "the Church condemns hatred, persecution, and displays of antisemitism directed against the Jewish people 'at any time and by anyone,'" wrote Bambera, quoting Nostra Aetate.

He urged clergy to "re-emphasize these basic points of Catholic teaching in relation to the people and the land of Israel."

"The misleading statements made by media personalities about the Church's teaching on these matters have been troubling not only to us, but to our brothers and sisters in the Jewish community," said Bambera.

In his memo, he pointed to the contentious appearance of influencer and recent Catholic convert Carrie Prejean Boller at the first hearing of the White House Religious Liberty Commission.

Boller's confrontational comments to Jewish commission members — in which she actually countered Catholic teaching on Judaism while endorsing antisemitic figures and questioning the commission members on Israel's actions in Gaza — led to her dismissal from the commission.

In a March 20 X post, Bishop Barron, a member of the commission, described Boller's claims she was dismissed because of her Catholic beliefs, rather than her "browbeating" behavior, "absurd."

"The Catholic position on matters of 'Zionism,' to which I fully subscribe, is as follows: all forms of antisemitism are to be unequivocally condemned; the state of Israel has a right to exist; but the modern nation of Israel does not represent the

fulfillment of Biblical prophecies and hence does not stand beyond criticism," wrote Barron.

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A few days earlier, Sample had posted a March 18 social media video on "Holy Week, Good Friday and Rejecting Antisemitism."

In the video, Sample lamented that "sadly, the celebration of Easter has at times been the occasion for outbursts of hatred and even violence against Jews."

He noted that the Catechism of the Council of Trent teaches that the Jews do not bear collective guilt for the death of Jesus, with that teaching made explicit in Nostra Aetate.

"The catechism of Trent is particularly poignant when it notes that the guilt for the suffering of Jesus is especially great in us, because we who profess to know Christ deny him with our sins," said Sample.

"Indeed, Good Friday ought to be an occasion for us to return to the Lord, not to scapegoat others," he reflected. "Holding the Jews collectively responsible for the crucifixion of Jesus represents a profound misunderstanding of what took place on Good Friday."

That confusion "is also one of the causes of a great deal of the hatred for the Jewish people that we have seen in history and continue to see today," he said.

Noting the "strong connection between religious freedom and working to counter antisemitism," Sample said, "As Catholics, we are called to walk in the truth and so to reject the conspiracies and lies that lead to harassment and even violence against our Jewish brothers and sisters."

"The Jewish community is attacked at a far higher rate than any other religious group in the United States," said Sample. "If we Catholics, in truly living out the Gospel, are to defend religious freedom with integrity, we must clearly speak out against anti-Semitism."

George, a Catholic scholar and intellectual, tackled the issue of antisemitism among some Catholics in a March 25 webinar hosted by the Center for Catholic-Jewish

Studies at St. Leo University in Florida.

In his online presentation, George — who resigned from the board of the Heritage Foundation in protest over its president's defense of a Tucker Carlson interview with influencer and self-professed antisemite Nick Fuentes — admitted he had until recently thought that antisemitism among Catholics "was dead and buried with a stake through that vampire's heart."

George commended the U.S. bishops as "very good" in their efforts to "articulate and rearticulate" the Church's actual teaching on the issue.

He stressed that antisemitism is "not the mainstream position" among Catholics, but warned that the problem was "no longer merely fringe," with once obscure antisemitic social media figures gaining followings.

While several such influencers "purport to speak as authentic articulators of the faith," said George, antisemitism among Catholics indicates a lack of catechesis.

He noted a "general problem with Catholic faithful not being knowledgeable," saying that "too many Catholics think the theological stuff is for the bishops and clergy."

Paraphrasing Catholic poet Alexander Pope, George warned that "a partially educated person can prove a little knowledge is a dangerous thing."

In particular, he said, catechesis must focus on "the developed teaching of the Church," which has sifted through the human error — including antisemitism — found at times even in the Fathers of the Church.

"Some of the attitudes expressed by the Church Fathers toward the Jews are bad," George observed. "And they have been overcome in Catholic teaching."

He also underscored the need to read the texts of Vatican II, such as *Nostra Aetate*, and to distinguish between the actual documents and their misuse to advance particular agendas in Church life.

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