



Guest Opinion: A Pastoral Statement on Violence and Political Discourse

By The Rev. Dr. Kristopher D. Schondelmeyer

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Today's news of the assassination of Charlie Kirk grieves me deeply. While I have not agreed with Mr. Kirk's politics or the movement he helped to shape, I lament this tragic loss of life. Violence against another human being wounds our shared humanity and is never the way to resolve differences.

We do not yet know the motives of the one who carried out this act, but I fear it will deepen the cycle of violence and retaliation in our already fragile political climate. This is not the way forward. The way of Christ calls us to something more courageous, more difficult and more life-giving.

The prophet Isaiah paints this vision: "They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." This vision is not only about ending war but about transforming our instincts from destruction to creation, from hatred to healing, from violence to peace.

Followers of Jesus are called to embody this transformation. Our witness must be rooted in compassionate civil discourse, in truth spoken with love, and in a refusal to dehumanize those with whom we disagree. To take up violence is to betray the gospel.

I call on all people of faith and goodwill to resist vengeance, reject political hatred, and recommit to building a society shaped not by weapons, but by justice, compassion and love.

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