

## **Pax Christi Pennsylvania**

Pax Christi PA is working with Pax Christi USA on a mass mailing to contacts throughout PA  
– page 15

### **CPFNL's Fina Fest**

The Catholic Peace Fellowship Newsletter volunteers, in addition to this issue's headliner on the war on Iran, have compiled 5 other published commentaries by Scott Fina recently received or missed by our team this past October 2025. Since there is no time like the present, we included all of them in this issue. Despite our troubled times, we hope Scott and all of you will get a small chuckle out of the alliteration used for the title of this compilation. - pages 3, 5, 8, 10 and 12

### **St. Malachy Antiracism Committee Pentecost Hospitality**

Pentecost Sunday of 2026 will be May 24. St. Malachy Antiracism Committee will co-sponsor with other parish groups and **CPF** the 2<sup>nd</sup> Pentecost hospitality after the Sunday Mass. - page 14

## **The U.S. Ethos of Military First Strikes**

by Scott Fina

*Scott's commentary was published by the Santa Maria Times and also carried by the Lompoc Record, Hanford Sentinel, and Santa Ynez Valley News. See the link to the published article here:*

[https://santamariatimes.com/opinion/commentary/the-us-ethos-of-military-first-strikes-scott-fina/article\\_223b737e-f40c-4cbc-8de6-0217c5914615.html](https://santamariatimes.com/opinion/commentary/the-us-ethos-of-military-first-strikes-scott-fina/article_223b737e-f40c-4cbc-8de6-0217c5914615.html)

On February 28, 2026, the United States and Israel unleashed a barrage of missiles and drones on Iran. The U.S. motivations for this attack were, and remain, confusing.

President Trump believed it was necessary to [remove \(kill\) Iran's theocratic leadership](#), in effect, bringing about a regime change in that nation.

Two days into the war, however, U.S. Secretary of War Hegseth stated: "This is [not a so-called regime-change war, but the regime sure did change, and the world is better off for it.](#)"

President Trump also claimed that [Iran would soon develop threatening, long range missiles](#). But according to U.S. Secretary of State Rubio, it is Iran's [short-range missiles that pose the threats](#) to American interests.

Above all concerns, Trump believed that [Iran would develop nuclear weapons](#). Yet, as recently as June of 2025, the [U.S. had bombed Iran's nuclear sites](#) and supposedly prevented the development of such weapons – if that development was even intended.

Apparently, these competing motivations were formulated while negotiations between the U.S. and Iran continued, right up to the point of the U.S. attack.

Indeed, according to [Reuters](#), on February 26, the U.S. and Iran planned **“to resume negotiations soon after consultations in their countries' capitals, with technical-level discussions scheduled to take place next week in Vienna, Omani Foreign Minister Sayyid Badr Albusaidi said in a post on X after the day's meetings in Switzerland.”**

Meanwhile, a U.S. armada of warships had entered the Persian Gulf, Gulf of Oman, and Arabian Sea, poised to attack Iran. (<https://www.maritime.dot.gov/msci/2026-001a-strait-hormuz-persian-gulf-gulf-oman-and-arabian-sea-military-operations-and>)

Such inconsistent aims for the U.S. attacking Iran bring new meaning to the concept of the “fog of war”.

Perhaps the following thinking of Secretary Rubio on the necessity to war on Iran is most convincing, if not creative.

[According to Rubio](#), in referring to Iran, **“if we stood and waited for that attack to come first before we hit them, we would suffer much higher casualties.... We knew that there was going to be an Israeli action, we knew that that would precipitate an attack against American forces, and we knew that if we didn’t preemptively go after them before they launched those attacks, we would suffer higher casualties and perhaps even higher [numbers of] those killed, and then we would all be here answering questions about why we knew that and didn’t act.”**

To paraphrase Rubio, it’s better to punch your opponent before they punch you!

Actually, Rubio’s emphasis on preemptive military violence is consistent with U.S. nuclear policy. I refer here to the latest [U.S. Nuclear Posture Review](#) (NPR) released by the Biden Administration in 2022.

Consider these findings in the NPR:

**“We conducted a thorough review of a broad range of options for nuclear declaratory policy – including both No First Use and Sole Purpose policies – and concluded that those approaches would result in an unacceptable level of risk in light of the range of non-nuclear capabilities being developed and fielded by competitors that could inflict strategic-level damage to the United States and its Allies and partners.”** (2022 NPR, Page 9)

Simply put, the U.S. maintains a first strike nuclear option to be deployed against even a non-nuclear opponent.

How radically hypocritical that the U.S., the greatest military power in the world holding such a nuclear posture, has initiated a war with Iran on the basis that Iran might one day develop nuclear weapons, even though there is no evidence that it intends to do so.

Given its potential for launching a first nuclear strike, didn’t the U.S. set an example for Israel attacking Iran with at least conventional weaponry, which Secretary Rubio believed to be inevitable?

It’s also no surprise that our nation turns its head and looks away when it comes to Israel’s denial of having approximately [90 plutonium-based nuclear warheads](#), and its refusal to sign onto the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. ([One-hundred and ninety-one other nations have joined this treaty](#))

One wonders if the U.S. will also look away if Israel eventually decides to fire a tactical nuclear weapon at Iran.

Readers might find this concern to be exaggerated. If so, consider the words Secretary Hegseth expressed during a March 4 press conference. In referring to “Operation Epic Fury”, Hegseth declared that “America is [winning decisively, devastatingly, and without mercy.](#)”

While the extent of decisiveness and devastation of Operation Epic Fury remains to be seen, there is indeed compelling evidence that the U.S. military has put mercy aside in warring on Iran, beginning on the very first day of its attack.

It’s likely that the [U.S. is responsible](#) for bombing a girls’ school in the city of Minab, in southern Iran that day, [killing 165 girls](#) (mostly between the ages of 7 and 12) and wounding many others. That awful tragedy has provided no pause whatsoever in the attack on Iran.

What happened to the girls in Minab has a kind of Gaza feel to it, such as the collaboration of the U.S. which provided much of the munitions Israel used against the Palestinians.

On October 8, 2025, Catherine Russell, the Executive Director of UNICEF, [reported the following finding](#): “**In the last two years, a staggering 64,000 children have reportedly been killed or maimed across the Gaza Strip, including at least 1,000 babies. We don’t know how many more have died due to preventable illnesses or are buried under the rubble.**”

Until Americans look into the mirror and open their eyes to see our nation’s extent of destructive aggression, pervasive violence, insatiable selfishness, exploitive hegemony, prevalent injustice, and perverse righteousness, the U.S. and the world cannot be safe. Wielding weapons and procuring power will ultimately not protect us, but perpetuating peace and honoring humanity may.

## **The Colonel, Me, and a Brave Little Girl**

by Scott Fina

*Scott’s commentary was published by the Santa Maria Times and also carried by the Lompoc Record, Hanford Sentinel, and Santa Ynez Valley News. See the link to the published article here: [https://santamariatimes.com/opinion/commentary/the-colonel-me-and-a-brave-little-girl-scott-fina/article\\_b84dff87-e2c8-46cf-8918-b47f5c4e581b.html](https://santamariatimes.com/opinion/commentary/the-colonel-me-and-a-brave-little-girl-scott-fina/article_b84dff87-e2c8-46cf-8918-b47f5c4e581b.html)*

“The Cuban Missile Crisis of October 1962 was a direct and dangerous confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union during the Cold War and was the moment when the two superpowers came closest to nuclear conflict.”

This statement, quoted from an archived document of the Office of the Historian under the U.S. Department of State, was part of a program titled “Milestones in the History of U.S. Foreign Relations”. The program has been abandoned.

The Office of the Historian needs to resurrect and update the story of the nuclear missile crisis, because I believe that’s exactly where we are today given the nuclear tension between the U.S. and Russia.

For a number of years, I have protested against the nuclear program at what is now called the Vandenberg Space Force Base (VSFB), located on the Central Coast of California near the City of Lompoc. At this time, the VSFB is the most visible venue for the American nuclear weaponry.

Several times a year, the U.S. Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) delivery system is tested at VSFB. An ICBM, minus its nuclear warheads, is transported from North Dakota, Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, or Nebraska, and reassembled at VSFB and then fired at an atoll in the Marshall Islands, over 4,000 miles away.

Very recently, the context in which the ICBMs are to be tested at VSFB has radically changed--for the worse.

The key bilateral nuclear agreement between the U.S. and Russia--the New START Treaty-- expired this month. Russian President, Vladimir Putin, offered to extend the treaty but U.S. President Trump ignored the offer. What's tragically lost by the expiration of this treaty, is a commitment to certain limits of the number of nuclear missiles and warheads by both nations, and an agreement to "exchange data on the numbers, locations, and technical characteristics of weapons systems and facilities that are subject to the treaty and provide each other with regular notifications and updates."

As I see it, under these circumstances, the current nuclear environment is now as threatening as the Cuban Missile Crisis. The U.S. and Russia—and all the other nations of the world who have nuclear arms and those who don't--stand at the precipice of the annihilation of human existence.

On Friday, February 20, at a senior center in Lompoc, the Commander of VSFB, Colonel James T. Horne III, introduced and personally presented a new public program, a "community speaker series," titled "Mission Update." The program provides "insights into Vandenberg's operations and its critical role in national defense ...." Most of the presentation on Friday concerned the rocket satellite launches which are now allowed to reach 100 annually. A very brief part of the presentation concerned the ICBM testing operations.

The group of folks with whom I regularly protest at the front gate of VSFB against U.S. nuclear weaponry, is small and peaceful. I and other protestors have long hoped to speak personally and directly to a base commander at VSFB about the ICBM test launches. Friday, February 20, was my opportunity to do so, when Colonel Horne invited members of the audience to ask questions.

Colonel Horne is quite intelligent, very articulate, and unquestionably professional. He is a dedicated soldier. I respect him, even though I see the world differently when it comes to nuclear weapons.

I stood before the Colonel and brought the collapse of the New START Treaty to his attention, which of course, he was well aware of. I argued that this situation rendered the test launches of the ICBMs at Vandenberg as a heightened nuclear threat that is now shared by Russia and the U.S. I then pleaded for the Colonel to stop the ICBM test launches. I verbally acknowledged that this action would do his military career no good, but that it was necessary "for the sake of his children, and the sake of my children, and the sake of our children's children."

The response by the Colonel, in sum, was that he stood too far down the chain of command to have the authority to stop the ICBM launches. I expected this claim by the Base Commander and don't question its validity. And from what I could tell, most of the audience supported the American nuclear weapons arsenal.

Still, I hoped that some of the attendees who were on the fence about nuclear weapons might turn against nuclear weaponry. Similarly, I hoped that Colonel Horne felt a twinge in his heart thinking about his and other's children.

There are thousands of Americans who protest against nuclear weapons, but their voices are infrequently heard.

Interestingly, celebrities have protested and been arrested at Vandenberg: actor Martin Sheen and deceased author/activist Daniel Ellsberg. Many protestors against nuclear weapons have gone to prison for their nonviolent civil disobedience challenging nuclear weaponry, including local activist Dennis Apel who was arrested at Vandenberg and whose case ended up before the U.S. Supreme Court.

I was especially inspired by Bud Boothe, with whom I was arrested protesting at Vandenberg. Bud served on a B-17 bomber squadron during World War II, participating in 15 missions over Germany. He was wounded and lucky to survive the war.

Bud died in 2017. He was one of the oldest protestors at Vandenberg--old enough to be my father. Our youngest protestor, a little girl, has brought her own self-made peace poster to the base. She is about the same age I was during the Cuban Missile Crisis. I'm old enough to be the father of this little girl's mother who brings her along.

Peace-seeking is ever difficult and often tenuous, but thankfully, intergenerational. And we so owe nuclear disarmament to our children. But sadly, it may be our children, or perhaps, their children, who must save humanity from nuclear annihilation.

## **Does anybody know what time it is?**

by Scott Fina

*Scott's commentary was published by the Santa Maria Times and also carried by the Lompoc Record, Hanford Sentinel, and Santa Ynez Valley News. See the link to the published article here:*

[https://santamariatimes.com/opinion/commentary/does-anybody-know-what-time-it-is-guest-commentary/article\\_e79f33fa-678c-404d-8a9b-dd5720a8762d.html](https://santamariatimes.com/opinion/commentary/does-anybody-know-what-time-it-is-guest-commentary/article_e79f33fa-678c-404d-8a9b-dd5720a8762d.html)

As I was walking down the street one day  
A man came up to me and asked me  
What the time was that was on my watch  
Yeah, and I said....

... Does anybody really know what time it is?  
... Does anybody really care?  
... You know, I can't imagine why  
... We've all got time enough to cry

("Does Anybody Really Know What Time It Is?" by Chicago, 1969)

Time can be a funny thing. It's certainly complex.

According to Albert Einstein's theorizing, the speed of time is variable, depending on someone's relative motion. ( <https://www.space.com/36273-theory-special-relativity.html>)

The time of day or night can be different for two people in different places around the world. If it's noon in California, it's midnight in the United Arab Emirates.

Depending on peoples' feelings or circumstances, time can seem to move too slow, or too fast.

For some, time can feel like a friend; for others, it can feel like an enemy.

The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists would strongly suggest we see time as such an enemy, at least when it comes to the Doomsday Clock. (<https://thebulletin.org/doomsday-clock/>)

The Doomsday Clock is an idea created in 1947 by Einstein, J. Robert Oppenheimer, and other scientists connected to the creation of the atomic bomb. The concept uses "the imagery of apocalypse (midnight) and the contemporary idiom of nuclear explosion (countdown to zero) to convey threats to humanity and the planet". (<https://thebulletin.org/doomsday-clock/2026-statement/>)

On January 27, 2026 the Science and Security Board of the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists set the Doomsday Clock at 85 seconds to midnight, the closest it's ever been as a warning of worldwide nuclear Armageddon. Scientists made this calculation on the basis of ongoing modernization of nuclear weapons by the nuclear powers—especially the U.S and Russia—and the coinciding military conflicts and tensions around the world.

Astoundingly, relatively few people on our planet seem alarmed by, or even conscious of, the potential nuclear annihilation. And despite the hit song by Chicago, we really all won't have time enough to cry if and when the nuclear bombs start flying.

But wait! There's more—or possibly less--depending on what happens in a very short time.

Here I refer to the last standing nuclear treaty between the U.S. and Russia, known as "New START". The treaty is scheduled to expire on February 5 of this week. The expiration of this treaty will be bad news

for both the U.S. and Russia, and humanity itself, not to mention most of the rest of life as we know it on Earth.

Indeed, there is much at stake for the New START Treaty. According to the U.S. Department of State, under New START, by 2018, the U.S. and Russia each met (and have since maintained) a limit on deployed nuclear weapons and delivery systems. These include a maximum of “700 deployed intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), deployed submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs), and deployed heavy bombers equipped for nuclear armaments”. (<https://www.state.gov/new-start-treaty>) The number of actual nuclear warheads deployed on these delivery systems are limited to 1,550.

New START also established several measures of “verification and transparency” to assure both countries comply with the agreed-to limits of the nuclear missiles and warheads. They are mandated to “exchange data on the numbers, locations, and technical characteristics of weapons systems and facilities that are subject to the treaty and provide each other with regular notifications and updates.”

In simpler terms, both the U.S. and Russia have been letting each other know where their nukes are and how many are deployed. Moreover, New START allows onsite inspections by both nations.

Surprisingly, on September 22, 2025, Russian President Vladimir Putin publicly offered to extend New START for another year beyond its expiration if the U.S. would also do so.

(<https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2025-10/news/russia-proposes-one-year-new-start-extension>) So far, the Trump Administration has not agreed to Putin’s offer.

Perhaps the Trump Administration has been too busy to respond to Russia, being occupied with taking over Venezuela and preparing to conquer other sovereign nations, not to mention the federal military invasion of U.S. cities.

But admittedly, even if New START is extended, the threat of nuclear annihilation will go on. The U.S. and Russia can each wipe out humanity numerous times over with the limited number of nuclear warheads deployed under New START. Still, having some bilateral treaty with Russia would be helpful.

Also, there is the United Nations Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons that went into force in 2021, outlawing their use and possession by all nations. According to the Arms Control Association, 99 countries have signed this treaty, 74 of which have ratified it. Unfortunately, no nuclear power has agreed to join the treaty, including the U.S. which is the nation that brought nuclear weapons into the world, and the only nation that has used them. (<https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/treaty-prohibition-nuclear-weapons-glance>)

It will take only thirty minutes or less for the U.S. and Russia to launch and strike each other with nuclear-armed missiles. And again, there will never be enough time to cry if this is how the world ends.

# Wakeup alarms, compliments of deranged nuclear super powers

by Scott Fina

*Scott's commentary was published by the Santa Maria Times and also carried by the Lompoc Record, Hanford Sentinel, and Santa Ynez Valley News. See the link to the published article here:*

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Several times a year, [test launches of intercontinental ballistic missiles](#) (ICBMs) at Vandenberg Space Force Base--usually late at night--disturb the sleep of many folks living in northern Santa Barbara County on the Central Coast of California. The base sends these missiles approximately 4,200 miles to the Kwajalein Atoll in the Marshall Islands. I perceive these launches as wakeup warnings that our human existence hangs in a nuclear balance. What follows is a recent example of why.

On September 30<sup>th</sup>, President Trump addressed nearly 800 generals and admirals at an auditorium in Marine Base Quantico in Virginia. Trump's speech was long and comedic in places. It was also distressing. Here I refer to the president's discussion on America's nuclear forces.

Consider these [comments](#) Trump made in his address:

**"We were a little bit threatened by Russia recently, and I sent a submarine, nuclear submarine, the most lethal weapon ever made. Number one, you can't detect it. There's no way. We're 25 years ahead of Russia and China in submarines. ... I moved a submarine or two, I won't say about the two, over to the coast of Russia. ..."**

This is our American president bragging, before the world, about his deployment of two Trident submarines along the Russian coast carrying up to 20 nuclear-armed ballistic missiles. Each sub has the firepower to make it the "sixth most powerful nuclear power in the world" according to the U.S. [Department of War](#).

Trump was not the only president recently flexing his nation's nuclear muscles.

On Wednesday of this week (October 22<sup>nd</sup>), Vladimir Putin put on his own [nuclear presentation](#), overseeing a test launch of his own unarmed ICBM.

Knowing the precarious international circumstances of the Russian-Ukraine conflict, one asks, are not the U.S. and Russia acting like insane nuclear super powers, threatening humanity and life as we know it?

In fact, the nuclear policies and programs—and mentality--of the U.S. and Russia are very similar.

First, there are the nuclear arsenals and delivery systems.

Like the [U.S.](#), Russia has a triad of nuclear weapon systems: [land-based ICBMs, and nuclear-armed bombers and submarines](#). Both nations have the nuclear force to annihilate humanity numerous times over.

Then there are similar nuclear command policies.

According to Congress, Trump has [sole authority](#) to authorize the use of nuclear weapons. So does Putin, according to a binding nuclear document titled, "[FUNDAMENTALS of State Policy of the Russian Federation on Nuclear Deterrence](#)."

Both presidents have 24-hour access to briefcases, the "[nuclear football](#)" and "[Cheget](#)," respectively, by which they enter codes to launch a nuclear attack.

In sum, American and Russian presidents can start a nuclear war, unimpeded by checks and balances on their decisions to do so.

Despite this looming existential nuclear threat, the leaderships and militaries of the U.S. and Russia justify possessing such weaponry on the basis of "deterrence", a national defense, as they see it. Both the [U.S.](#) and [Russia](#) are modernizing their nuclear weapon systems supposedly as means of deterrence. This is ludicrous!

Both the [U.S.](#) and [Russian](#) nuclear policies include a ***preemptive, first strike option*** against even a ***nonnuclear*** attack as justifiable. However, once a nuclear adversary launches a nuclear attack on another, deterrence, by its very definition, disappears for the targeted recipient.

Deterrence can also hold a related moral dilemma. Here I refer readers to a book by Ron Rosenbaum, "How the End Begins: The Road to a Nuclear World War III." (Simon and Schuster, New York, 2011)

Rosenbaum notes that the military officers who will fire off the armed ICBMs—([all who are trained at Vandenberg](#))--might find themselves in a dilemma if they know nuclear missiles are already coming at the U.S. A missileer may no longer see launching nuclear missiles as a defensive act, but a retaliation killing millions of people. Would it not be moral and humane for these officers to refuse to launch the missiles to save the lives of millions of innocent people, regardless of who they are?

The United Nations best grasps sanity when it comes to nuclear weaponry. Despite decades of treaty-making starting in the 1960s and leading into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, the world remains awash with nuclear weapons, ever at the edge of nuclear Armageddon.

In 2017, the UN took an aggressive different approach and adopted the "Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons" ([TPNW](#)). The TPNW, which came into force in January of 2021, [calls for all nations](#) to never "develop, test, produce, manufacture, otherwise acquire, possess or stockpile nuclear weapons" or "use or threaten to use nuclear weapons"

As of September 26, 2025, [99 nations](#) have joined the TPNW. Unfortunately, no nuclear power has yet to do so.

The TPNW is radical, comprehensive, and urgent. It rejects the notion of nuclear deterrence that in actuality, makes all nations and peoples unsafe. The treaty recognizes the pervasive insanity that infects nuclear powers.

The U.S. brought nuclear weapons into the world, and is the only nation to have used them. In the TPNW's vein of thinking, Americans should call for the U.S. to unilaterally disarm itself of nuclear weaponry and programs. Our nation should join and comply with the terms of the TPNW, and lead other nuclear powers in doing so.

# Homeland Insecurity

by Scott Fina

*Scott's commentary was published by the Santa Maria Times and also carried by the Lompoc Record, Hanford Sentinel, and Santa Ynez Valley News. See the link to the published article here:*

[https://santamariatimes.com/opinion/commentary/homeland-insecurity-guest-commentary/article\\_c8a63403-2e2e-4b4e-a365-2c6f5a6d08d3.html](https://santamariatimes.com/opinion/commentary/homeland-insecurity-guest-commentary/article_c8a63403-2e2e-4b4e-a365-2c6f5a6d08d3.html)

The January 7 lethal shooting of Renee Nicole Macklin Good by an agent of the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), and lethal shooting of Alex Pretti by an officer (or officers) of the U.S. Customs and Boarder Protection 17 days later, are remarkably similar.

The killings by the federal agents occurred in Minneapolis. The shots were taken at point-blank range. Both Good and Pretti were U.S. citizens, 37-years-old, and were nonviolently challenging the mass deportation of immigrants being attempted by thousands of federal immigration agents who had descended upon their city.

Good, who was accompanied by her spouse, intentionally stopped her vehicle in the middle of a street, drawing the attention of federal immigration agents. According to various videos, she attempted to drive away from the ICE agents when they approached her, giving her conflicting orders. An ICE agent shot her three times as she started to move her vehicle, even though he was not in danger.

Pretti participated in a protest in the city while carrying a concealed, loaded, semiautomatic handgun. He was licensed to do so, albeit some may see that as having questionable judgement on his part given the circumstances. Nonetheless, as videos have clearly shown, Pretti did no wrong and never confronted any Border Patrol officers, but drew their attention when he attempted to assist a woman who had been thrown to the ground by one of them, and peppered sprayed.

Several Border Patrol officers wrestled Pretti to the ground, and restrained him with his arms held down on the street. One of the officers found Pretti's concealed handgun and took it away from him. Videos reveal that a second or so later, someone shouted "gun". One or more of the Border Patrol officers then shot Pretti numerous times while standing over him.

High ranking federal officials, including Kristi Noem, Secretary of Homeland Security, quickly accused both Good and Pretti of committing acts of domestic terrorism.

(<https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/analysis-opinion/labeling-renee-good-domestic-terrorist-distorts-law> and

<https://thehill.com/homenews/senate/5707081-john-curtis-noem-minneapolis-shooting/> )

I formerly served as a New Jersey State Trooper, and was assigned to the elite TEAMS Unit of the New Jersey State Police for several years. The unit was multi-missioned, and included SWAT, arresting organized crime suspects, and certification as a firearms instructor. Indisputably, had I shot Good or Pretti as a trooper under the same circumstances in which they were killed, I would have been suspended from duty, placed under investigation, indicted, tried, and found guilty of murder—minimally manslaughter—and rightly so. I believe that would likely be the case for every state and local law enforcement officer in Minnesota. There's substantial doubt, however, that outcome will result from a federal prosecution process of the shooters who killed Renee Nicole Macklin Good and Alex Pretti.

There has been a significant shift in American federalism with the coming of the second Trump Administration; state authority and power have been compromised. The First, Fourth, and Tenth Amendments of the U.S. Constitution are being undermined by federal agencies, especially the Departments of Justice and Homeland Security. Currently, protest and public assembly can become dangerous undertakings in our nation, even on the Central Coast of California and in the Santa Maria Valley.

The Santa Maria Police Department should be commended for the manner in which it has respected the growing protests over the maltreatment of immigrants, and seemingly follows state law in refusing to cooperate with ICE. The role of Santa Maria's City Council in this matter seems less clear.

On March 27, 2014, four parties attempted to stop the permitting of the now existing ICE Enforcement and Removal Operations facility in Santa Maria, by filing and arguing formal appeals before City Council at a special meeting. I was one of the appellants.

I recall standing at the podium in the Santa Maria Fairpark Convention Center, making a case against the ICE facility. I was surrounded by approximately 1,500 members of mostly immigrant families who feared the facility would be placed in Santa Maria.

City Council approved the permitting of the ICE facility that day. The welfare of the immigrant families who live in Santa Maria and its surrounding valley, carried little weight.

Today, immigrant families residing in Santa Maria and its surrounding valley live in well-justified fear of maltreatment by federal immigration officers.

At its recent January 20 meeting, the Santa Maria City Council agreed to agendize the adoption of a resolution or proclamation addressing the local ICE operations and their potential impact on immigrant families, at its next meeting on February 3. For many folks in support of immigrant families and standing against ICE, this was a disappointment. A resolution or proclamation are typically symbolic statements.

Months ago in September of 2025, Santa Maria Councilwoman Gloria Soto called for the creation of an “Immigration ad hoc Committee” in the city that could pursue concrete ways to assist immigrant families and promote their security and well-being. A number of people attending the January 20 Council meeting called for the creation of this committee during their public comment.

Santa Maria City Council, this is the action that the immigrant families residing in the city and surrounding valley need!

## **Guns and the killing of Charlie Kirk**

by Scott Fina

*Scott’s commentary was published by the Santa Maria Times and also carried by the Lompoc Record, Hanford Sentinel, and Santa Ynez Valley News. See the link to the published article here:*

[https://santamariatimes.com/opinion/commentary/guns-and-the-killing-of-charlie-kirk-guest-commentary/article\\_124b5e08-00fc-48e1-a9ed-4ebcf396bbac.html](https://santamariatimes.com/opinion/commentary/guns-and-the-killing-of-charlie-kirk-guest-commentary/article_124b5e08-00fc-48e1-a9ed-4ebcf396bbac.html)

There’s something critically amiss in the focus on “*political violence*” consuming the media, government and much of our populace in the United States these days. The tragic assassination of Charlie Kirk, the cofounder of Turning Point USA, has brought this phenomenon to a boiling point, with ideologically opposing cohorts – the “left” and the “right” -- blaming each other for his death.

I, however, believe the concept of “*political violence*” is a misnomer in the case of the murder of Charlie Kirk. My problem here is the notion and application of the adjective, “*political*”.

I find the heated disagreement currently circulating in the polarized thinking and values in the U.S. comprise an escalated “*political conflict*.” Such political conflict goes back to the beginning of our nation; it’s in our American political DNA.

Consider our second and third presidents: John Adams and Thomas Jefferson. While these figures collaborated closely in getting our nation launched, they eventually became partisan and ideological opponents. Adams as a Federalist, promoted a strong, central government; Jefferson as an early Republican, abhorred that position and sought to promote populist power.

I refer readers to a compelling biography of John Adams, meticulously researched and written by David McCullough. ([John Adams](#), Simon and Schuster, New York, NY, 2001) The book includes details about the spitefulness and false claims that opposing political sides hurled at each other through the press in the

day of Adams and Jefferson. Adams and Jefferson later reconciled and became close friends, both dying on July 4, 1826, the fiftieth anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration of Independence.

(<https://blogs.loc.gov/headlinesandheroes/2022/07/deaths-of-john-adams-and-thomas-jefferson-on-july-4th/>)

In my thinking, “*political violence*” refers to broader and more impactful occurrences, such as the American Revolution in which the Colonies warred on Great Britain to obtain independence, and later U.S. states warred on each other over slavery, and more recently, the brutal lynching of numerous African Americans during the Jim Crow era, the riots in the mid to late 1960s in Newark, Detroit, and Los Angeles, (<https://www.nber.org/digest/sep04/how-1960s-riots-hurt-african-americans?page=1&perPage=50>) and the bombing of government buildings in the 1970s by the Weather Underground, a domestic terrorist group. (<https://www.fbi.gov/history/famous-cases/weather-underground-bombings>)

Charlie Kirk was a proliferator of “*political conflict*”: a talented agitator in promulgating his conservative political and moral positions. Yet Kirk respected and depended on the free speech protected by the First Amendment.

None of that, however, got Charlie Kirk killed, but something else that he had articulated recently, and included his last words before he was shot.

During his program at Utah Valley University on September 10, a member of the audience asked Kirk how many mass gun shootings had occurred in the last decade. Kirk was shot as he started to respond to the question. (<https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/news/charlie-kirk-shooting-gun-violence-video-b2824925.html>)

Previously, in April of 2023, at a Turning Point USA event, Kirk discussed his support for the Second Amendment at length, in which he backed the arming of individual citizens. Here in part, are his own words on this issue:

“You will never live in a society when you have an armed citizenry and you won't have a single gun death. That is nonsense. It's drivel. But ... I think it's worth it. I think it's worth to have a cost of, unfortunately, some gun deaths every single year so that we can have the Second Amendment to protect our other God-given rights.” (<https://www.mediamatters.org/charlie-kirk/charlie-kirk-its-worth-have-cost-unfortunately-some-gun-deaths-every-single-year-so-we>)

Charlie Kirk paid that cost. So have numerous school children and innocent adults across our nation who were killed by firearms.

Charlie Kirk's assassin, a young man, used a .30-06 rifle with a scope to kill him. A week later in York County in Pennsylvania, five law enforcement agents were shot—three fatally—by a young man using an AR-15 style assault rifle. (<https://www.pa.gov/agencies/psp/newsroom/state-police-identify-gunman-who-shot-officers-in-york-county> and <https://www.cnn.com/2025/09/17/us/york-county-pa-police-officers>)

According to a fact sheet published by the Rockefeller Institute of Government, most mass shootings are carried out at schools and workplaces. Among the shooters, 95% are males; most are young.

(<https://rockinst.org/gun-violence/mass-shooting-factsheet/>) A published report by the Institute of Public Health at Washington University in St. Louis, found that 70% of mass shooters have a mental health history. They are typically in crisis and suicidal. (<https://publichealth.wustl.edu/gun-violence-expert-speaks-on-prevention-shooter-characteristics-and-mental-health-implications/>)

I once served as a New Jersey State Trooper, and spent four years on the elite TEAMS unit of the New Jersey State Police. The multi-purposed mission of the unit included Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT). In addition to my semiautomatic hand gun, I was also trained on an AR-15 rifle (which I carried in my police car) and .30-06 rifle.

I ask, why are such deadly weapons so available to civilians? I believe the Second Amendment is the underlying culprit in assassinations and mass shootings—and makes Americans unsafe.

In a 2008 case, “District of Columbia v. Heller”, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the right to bear arms in the Second Amendment applies to individuals, and not just “well regulated militias”.

(<https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/554/570/>)

The conservative majority of the Court approached the case with “originalism” thinking, attempting to go back to the intention of the “Founding Fathers” who created the Constitution. The Court did so in error. (<https://news.stanford.edu/stories/2024/11/historian-ionathan-gienapp-challenges-originalist-interpretations-of-the-constitution> and <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/analysis-opinion/originalism-run-amok-supreme-court>)

The “Founding Fathers” included a means for changing the Constitution in Article V.

(<https://www.archives.gov/federal-register/constitution/article-v.html>) They understood that the needs, situation and values of American society would change overtime, and in ways they could not foresee. The Founders’ aim was to not use their own circumstances and limited knowledge to bind future generations. Therein was a vital protection of freedom. That freedom also implies a fluid interpretation of the Constitution, that while it may connect to its origins, it also has to make sense in a contemporary context. (<https://yalebooks.yale.edu/2024/10/21/why-is-the-supreme-court-obsessed-with-originalism/>)

The Constitution was meant to serve Americans, rather than Americans serving the Constitution.

**NEXT CPF MEETINGS: April 12, June 14, and July 12**

**We hope to have 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Peace Mass on August 9; No meeting that day or in May**

**Second Sunday CPF** Phila meeting After the 10 am Mass at St. Malachy 1429 North 11th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19122 Starting about 11:45 pm  
Please email [CPFphila@gmail.com](mailto:CPFphila@gmail.com) for **New** Zoom Meeting Link.

**April 12** Agenda will be planning for **May 24<sup>th</sup>** Pentecost Sunday Hospitality

**June 14,** and **July 12** Agenda will be planning for **Peace Mass on August 9**

# Pax Christi Pennsylvania meets online every 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday at 4:30 pm

-next meetings

**March 16 and April 20**

Please email the following if you wish to join us:

[info@paxchristi-pa.org](mailto:info@paxchristi-pa.org), Pax Christi Pennsylvania [www.paxchristi-pa.org](http://www.paxchristi-pa.org)  
[pghpaxchristi@gmail.com](mailto:pghpaxchristi@gmail.com), Pittsburgh Area Pax Christi  
[paxchristihbg@gmail.com](mailto:paxchristihbg@gmail.com), Pax Christi Harrisburg  
[paxchristiphila@yahoo.com](mailto:paxchristiphila@yahoo.com), Pax Christi Philadelphia / CPF: [www.cpfphila.com](http://www.cpfphila.com)  
[cpfnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:cpfnewsletter@gmail.com), [catholicpeacefellowship.phila@gmail.com](mailto:catholicpeacefellowship.phila@gmail.com), [cpfphila@gmail.com](mailto:cpfphila@gmail.com),

Also

**West Chester PA Contact:** Jeffrey Singleton [jeffrey.singleton@comcast.net](mailto:jeffrey.singleton@comcast.net) and for:

**Blessed Are the Peacemakers Reading Group**

Meets at Saint Joseph's Parish in Downingtown, PA; Contact for local meeting times:

<https://stjosephrc.org/blessed-are-the-peacemakers-reading-group>

**Pax Christi USA:**

[info@paxchristiusa.org](mailto:info@paxchristiusa.org) and [sniamke@paxchristiusa.org](mailto:sniamke@paxchristiusa.org)



The Good Samaritan by Robert McGovern

# Catholic peace FELLOWSHIP

Philadelphia Chapter of Pax Christi USA – [www.paxchristiusa.org](http://www.paxchristiusa.org)

Dear Catholic Peace Fellowship Supporter,

In 2019 the Catholic Peace Fellowship celebrated its 50-year anniversary. CPF Phila is a member of Pax Christi USA and we have joined together to bring a gospel-based perspective to peace, justice, and environmental issues. We invite you to contribute to the program and the work of the CPF. Your donation can be a seed to allow this form of Catholic Peace Activism, be a gift to the next generation; please email [cpfphila@gmail.com](mailto:cpfphila@gmail.com) for an update to the donation process. Please visit our website [cpfphila.com](http://www.cpfphila.com) for links to past CPF newsletter articles, appeal letters and a donation link and our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/catholicpeacefellowship.phila/>.

We hope the next generation will take the legacy of CPF into the future and maybe re-start the CPF newsletter to return to a formal format. We encourage subscribers to participate by posting thoughts, resource links and even articles to the CPF Facebook page. If you would like to submit an article for inclusion on the website and postings, please send to [cpfnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:cpfnewsletter@gmail.com) and [cpfphila@gmail.com](mailto:cpfphila@gmail.com). Articles ideally should be limited to 1,000 words and please include a brief one-line bio. Photographs and graphics submissions can only be used with clear copyright compliant permission. We encourage passing on the CPF Newsletter and since that may include black and white printouts, for the online version, active links and color images please see [www.cpfphila.com](http://www.cpfphila.com) or request an emailed PDF at [cpfphila@gmail.com](mailto:cpfphila@gmail.com) and also at <https://www.facebook.com/catholicpeacefellowship.phila/>.

We thank you all again for your interest and generosity,

Catholic Peace Fellowship

Catholic Peace Fellowship Philadelphia meets most second Sundays of the month virtually as early as 11:30 am which is typically also in person after the 10 am mass at St. Malachy's; please see our Facebook for virtual / in-person events status. If you are interested in attending, please email us at [cpfphila@gmail.com](mailto:cpfphila@gmail.com). Donations are now through the parish and tax deductible; see website for more information, for copyright notice, how to donate, and hopefully soon to make an online donation to support the website and media outreach. Thank you, CPF

#### return address:

Catholic Peace Fellowship  
1429 North 11th Street,  
Philadelphia, PA 19122



Door to the Path Taken  
by Robert F. McGovern  
tribute to  
Blessed Franz Jagerstatter

deliver to:

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Franz Jagerstatter,  
wood carving by Robert F. McGovern  
at St. Malachy's RC Church