

USA

The legacy of Charlie Kirk: speaking the truth without fear

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During my recent days in Italy, I was outraged—but not surprised—by the way legacy media in Italy, and in Europe more broadly, reported on the murder of Charlie Kirk. He was reduced to an “extreme right activist,” a “climate change denier,” and an “antivaxer.”

Nothing was said about his deserved rise as the most popular polemicist in America, or about the fact that he was a genuinely devout Christian, husband, and father. The subtext of this coverage—both in and outside the United States—was clear: that Kirk, at only 31, somehow deserved to die, or was at least partially “culpable” of his own murder.

The real Charlie Kirk

The real Charlie Kirk’s story was remarkable. He left college at 18 to begin political activism, fed up with the absolute dominance of the ideological left in academia. He founded what would become Turning Point USA, an organization that transformed campus activism.

His method was simple: setting up a modest table on campus with a sign that often read something like, “*I say that* [insert topic]. *Prove me wrong.*” This format drew both admirers and leftist challengers—rarely successful at defeating him in debate. Over time, the audiences grew, and so did the need for security, as he was physically attacked on multiple occasions.

On the day he was killed at the Utah Valley University, he was addressing a massive crowd, surrounded by six bodyguards. They were prepared for hecklers throwing things or rushing the stage, not for a sniper with a long-distance rifle firing from 300 feet away.

Kirk’s reach expanded quickly. Television stations, including those on the political left, sought him out as the youngest voice of conservatism. His online presence grew to nearly 5 million followers on his Charlie Kirk channel and 1.5 billion views. In 2021, he married Erika Frantzve, a former Miss Arizona, devout Christian and conservative voice on her own, and together they welcomed two children.

His topics and convictions

Kirk was indeed skeptical about climate change and questioned the benefits of COVID-19 vaccines—a stance that in the United States cut across the political spectrum. But those were never his main topics of interest.



What defined him were four core convictions, which he defended with relentless eloquence:

Gender ideology—especially transgenderism—was, in his view, not only absurd and intellectually indefensible as a concept, but utterly destructive for society and for specific individuals.

Feminism, he argued, damaged rather than helped women, by promoting abortion and what he called “sexual anarchy.” He also pointed out that married conservative women reported being happier than any other group, citing a wealth of surveys he knew by heart.

The free market was far superior to socialism in creating equality and prosperity.

Faith. He was convinced and explained with a vibrant apologetical style, that Christ is God, that He has truly risen, and that His teachings are the quintessential foundation of Western culture.

His style

Kirk was quick-minded, rhetorically sharp, and deliberately humorous or ironic. He was performative in the best sense, crafting short, impactful narratives ideal for social media posts and the coveted attention of Gen Z audience. Even President Trump acknowledged him as the single most important force in the massive turn of Gen Z toward the Republican Party in the 2024 elections.

Yet he was also respectful. He exposed contradictions without ad hominem attacks. When defending his faith, he often spoke gently, even emotionally. Toward the vulnerable, he was especially kind.

Prisha Mosley, a young woman who lived believing he was a male and later detransitioned, recalled on an X post:

“Charlie Kirk was kind to me. He was kind when we spoke. He was kind to detransitioners like me. He cared about vulnerable people like the girl I was, who rejected her sex and turned to butchers to save her. He stood up for me, and for those like me.”

On another X post, Rob Smith, an African American and openly gay man mentored by Kirk, shared:

“That evening ... Charlie and I were hounded by people in the audience who hurled

hatred at me for being gay and Charlie for giving me a platform. The crowd got unruly and rowdy, and afterwards we sat in a holding room waiting for our escort and car out. I was shaken. I hadn't experienced anything like it before. Charlie looked me directly in the eyes and said this: 'God loves you, you are a part of this movement, and we've got your back.'

Charlie and TPUSA always did, though I was too deeply immature and new to the realities of being a public figure that I didn't realize how much they actually did support and protect me in a myriad of different ways. That is who Charlie Kirk was. I will not allow his humanity to be reduced to soundbites spread by people who never met him and want to use his Biblical beliefs as an excuse to paint him as a hateful, extremist caricature."

In 2024, when asked in an interview how he would like to be remembered if he died, Kirk responded:

"If I die?... I want to be remembered for courage for my faith. That would be the most important thing. The most important thing is my faith in my life."

For more than a year before his death, Charlie has seriously considering converting to Catholicism. He was increasingly impressed with the Catholic doctrinal corpus; mentioned how he was close to Father Don Kline, pastor of St. Bernadette Catholic Church in Scottsdale, Arizona, and how his wife was baptized Catholic. Erika attended Notre Dame Preparatory High School in Scottsdale.

Fr. John Burns, a priest from the Archdiocese of Milwaukee and popular speaker, recently noted: "Charlie Kirk drew close to Mary at the end of his too-short life; he called her a solution to 'toxic feminism in America'."

Why he was hated

The rhetoric following his murder was vile and dehumanizing. Democrats in Congress refused to hold a moment of silence in his honor. The same happened in the European Parliament. Polish conservative parliamentarian Dominik Tarczynski observed: "The left, calling themselves democrats, naturally refused. They are the same everywhere... Even in the face of death, they are incapable of showing human compassion."

On MSNBC, a progressive American network, political analyst Matthew Dowd claimed Kirk had been “pushing hate speech,” saying: “He’s been one of the most divisive younger figures in this, who is constantly sort of pushing this sort of hate speech aimed at certain groups. And I always go back to, hateful thoughts lead to hateful words, which then lead to hateful actions.”

In other words, for Dowd, Kirk was the cause of his own murder. Though later fired by the network, Dowd's reasoning was echoed across the progressive media. More importantly, according to his own family, Tyler Robinson, the alleged killer, had recently become “more political” and thought Kirk was “spreading hate.”

And on social media, left wing influencers even circulated “lists” of which conservative leaders “should be next.”

By contrast, Kelsey Reinhardt, President of CatholicVote, in a newsletter to members of her organization, described the cause for his killing in this way: “Charlie Kirk was targeted for one reason: he spoke the truth without fear. He defended faith, family, and freedom with a clarity and courage rare in our age. His death is a stark reminder that hatred, when left unchecked, festers into violence. This was not merely an assault on one man: it was an assault on the principles of free dialogue, civic order, and human dignity.”

As Catholics,” Reinhardt continued, “we affirm with unwavering conviction that every human life is sacred. To meet words with bullets is the way of tyranny, not of liberty. Truth must be engaged with reason, persuasion, and debate; not silenced with bloodshed.”

A watershed moment

Kirk’s murder has revealed how visceral and irrational the left’s hatred for his ideas had become, and how common-sense arguments have been rebranded as “hate speech.” Yet it has also triggered a wave of unity and resolve in the American conservative movement. Leaders and grassroots supporters alike have rallied to Kirk’s style of fearless engagement, while some left-leaning moderates have distanced themselves from the extremists in their own camp.

On a Friday morning report about the follow-up of Kirk’s murder, a usually unsympathetic set of reporters from Reuters news agency admitted that “graphic videos that swept across social media of Charlie Kirk’s shooting made the activist’s death an indelible moment, forcing young Americans to confront the public killing of a prominent

political leader not much older than themselves."

Reinhardt again captured the moment: "I call upon every leader, regardless of party or persuasion, to condemn this murder unequivocally. To remain silent in the face of such evil is to be complicit in its advance. Let this tragedy awaken America to the urgent need to recover respect for life, civility in discourse, and courage in the pursuit of truth."

"We pray" concluded Reinhardt, "for the repose of Charlie's soul, for the strength of his wife and daughters, and for the healing of a nation now scarred by his loss. May God receive him into eternal light, and may the sacrifice of his life inspire us all to stand more firmly for what is right, without fear."