

# The Old Catholic Communion

## Pastoral Letter Regarding the Crisis of State-Sanctioned Violence

January 2026

*“O Lord, how long shall I cry for help, and You will not listen? Or cry to You ‘Violence!’ and You will not save?” - Habakkuk 1:2*

*“The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit.” - Psalm 34:18*

Dear siblings in Christ and all people of faith and good will,

We are deeply saddened to write this Pastoral Letter after another tragic and senseless killing. As many of you know, Renee Nicole Good, a 37-year-old mother, U.S. citizen, and unarmed observer, was recently shot and killed by an ICE agent in Minneapolis. Her tragic death happened just blocks from where George Floyd was murdered, bringing back pain that has never fully gone away. The grief, anger, and fear you feel are real, justified, and shared by us as your bishops.

In the days since her death, federal officials have declared that because the shooter was a federal agent, he is immune from prosecution. This assertion has shaken the conscience of our communities. It suggests violence committed under the authority of the state is beyond accountability and tells the grieving that their cries do not matter, the nation that justice is optional, and the Church that silence is expected.

We cannot and will not be silent.

Renee’s death is part of a broader pattern of escalating violence tied to immigration enforcement. According to recent reporting, at least four people have been killed by ICE or other federal immigration-enforcement officers from September 2025 through January 7, 2026, alone. This violence, whether directed at immigrants, asylum seekers, citizens, or any group or class of people, reveals a system increasingly unmoored from justice and human dignity.

We join in echoing the plea of all civil and religious leaders for peace and the call to lower the temperature of rhetoric, to curtail, as best we can, fear-filled speculation, and to commit to seeing all people as created in the image and likeness of God.

Catholic Social Teaching and our own Pastoral Letters On the Treatment of Immigrant Persons and On Immigration and a Call to Action, support the fact that the complete and total reform of our current Immigration System is absolutely necessary, and that the long history of our common teaching is that peace, nonviolence, and love are the only paths forward.

We encourage all people of faith to participate in peaceful and respectful nonviolent protest, as you are able in your current situation. Gathering in prayer, contacting community and political leaders, building healthy and compassionate communities, and joining in protest against unjust and unethical behaviors are all potential actions that can bring to life the faith to which we all profess.

In moments like this, we find ourselves standing with the prophet Habakkuk, who, looking upon the violence in his own nation, cried out to God in anguish. Habakkuk saw the law twisted, the courts corrupted, and the powerful acting with impunity. He dared to ask God why injustice was allowed to

flourish and why those entrusted with authority used it to harm rather than protect. His lament is our lament today.

But Habakkuk's story does not end in despair. After he brings his complaint, the prophet waits for God's answer. God responds, not by ignoring the pain or excusing the injustice, but by promising that violence will not win in the end. God tells Habakkuk that the vision of justice "awaits its time," and even if it seems slow, it will come. God calls people to stay strong, saying that "the righteous shall live by their faithfulness."

This kind of faithfulness is active. It does not stay silent or give up. It belongs to people who will not accept violence as normal, who will not let fear divide them, and who hold on to hope even in dark times. It is the faithfulness of those who pray honestly, speak bravely, and act with kindness.

As the House of Bishops, we urge everyone to hold fast to this faithfulness. We know you often feel weary. We know you often feel helpless, overwhelmed, and heartbroken at what our nation has become. We know the frustration of watching leaders cower before tyranny, refusing to speak truth or restrain injustice. We share your grief. We share your anger. And we urge you to hold on firmly to hope.

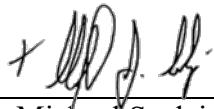
Hope is not just wishful thinking. Hope is the strong belief that God is still working, even when we cannot see it yet. Hope means trusting that justice delayed is not justice denied. Hope is the light that shines in the darkness, the light that darkness cannot put out.

Jesus said, "*Blessed are those who mourn... Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness... Blessed are the peacemakers...Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness...*" (Matthew 5:1-10) We ask everyone who mourns to be people of both prayer and action. Pray for Renee Good's family, her community, and all who live in fear. Pray for those whose hearts have grown hard. Pray for courage, wisdom, and peace in our land. Take action. Be a peacemaker by speaking out against injustice, standing together, supporting fair policies, and refusing to let despair silence you. Stand united in faith, so God's light can shine even in the darkest times.

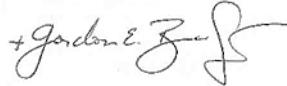
We, the Bishops and Administrators of the Old Catholic Communion, stand with you. We will keep speaking out against injustice, defending the vulnerable, and sharing the Gospel of peace with steady conviction. Stay strong, dear friends. Do not lose heart. God is with us, even in our sorrow and despair.

In these days and in this time, may the God of life, love, and liberty surround us with hope, healing, a path forward, and the commitment to nonviolent communication and nonviolent action.

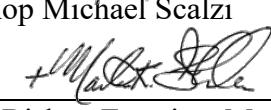
In Christ's peace and solidarity



Bishop Michael Scalzi



Bishop Gordon Barcalow



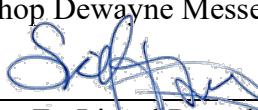
Bishop Emeritus Martin Shanahan



Rev. Karen Van Fossan  
Diocesan Administrator



Bishop Dewayne Messenger



Fr. Lionel Repasky  
Diocesan Administrator