
Catholic leaders speak out after the insurrection in Washington. Unanimous condemnation of the violence

(from New York) Outrage, anger, apprehension, bewilderment. Those images of the US Capitol being stormed, vandalized, "desecrated" came as a shock to the United States. Watching Confederate flags being raised inside the sanctuary of democracy while increasingly fierce protestors pushed a line of police officers unable to stop them upset first and foremost the American people. *Mobs breaching the Capitol building, with civil servants taken hostage, posing a threat to the safety of the highest State officials, is unprecedented in US history.* "It's the inevitable outcome of four years of lies by President Donald Trump. Four years in which the president has demonized his opponents. Four years of inexplicable abuse of power. Four years of blistering rhetoric and subtle threats of violence. Four years spent fuelling racial resentment, anxiety and fear of white people." For Jesuit Fr Bryan Massingale, the insurrection that left four people dead in Washington DC, among them a woman shot by security officers at gunpoint defending the House, is ascribable to one person: Donald Trump. He is accountable for fomenting and inciting white anger that yesterday stormed the Capitol, *albeit with many accomplices, Fr Massingale points out, who turned a blind eye out of "cynical appeasement and cowardly silence" when faced with "a president unqualified for office,* thereby amplifying the false claims of a stolen victory for the sake of short-term gains, and incapable of addressing an unprecedented devastation of democracy standards for fear of the President's tweet." *Faith-based America is also being held accountable for the instrumental use of religious symbols in the rhetoric of the President and his supporters, in Congress and beyond, with the purpose of denying popular sovereignty and impeding the election of a president. "To see violent people invading that civilly sacred space was what was so, so disturbing and so unnerving,"* said Bishop **Robert Barron**, an auxiliary bishop in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, in a video. "This has to stop," he continued. "And I say that as an American but, again, also as a Catholic bishop." For **Johnny Zokovitch**, Executive Director of Pax Christi USA, "the events unfolding today at the U.S. Capitol are the result of the demagoguery of one man, President Trump, *and the failure of all those—politicians, media, family, and more—who excused, overlooked, dismissed or otherwise encouraged the hateful and divisive rhetoric* that has defined this president's term in office." "The peaceful transition of power is one of the hallmarks of this great nation", said Archbishop **José H. Gomez** of Los Angeles, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in a [statement](#), condemning the violence and calling for a renewed commitment "to the values and principles of our democracy" and to come together as one nation. *Archbishop Gomez invoked "the wisdom and the grace of a true patriotism and love of country."* As new aspects of the insurrection gradually surface, the President appears increasingly isolated, reluctant to deploy the National Guard (a decision taken by Mike Pence), incapable of condemning the violence and the perpetrators whom he even referred to as patriots. Censored by social media giants that froze his account, on grounds of risk of incitement to violence, congressmen and senators, businessmen, national newspapers are invoking the 25th amendment, i.e. his removal for being "unfit to fulfill his duties." Even if Trump were removed - which could potentially risk turning him into a hero - the deep tear broadcast across global networks, and which occurred in the Capitol building yesterday, is not going to be repaired.

The tears in the social fabric must be knit back together, and the example must be set by those governing the Country, not as party leaders but for everyone's benefit.

Yesterday, as Congress reconvened to finish certifying Biden's Electoral college votes, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi recited St. Francis' Canticle of the Creatures in the plural form: "Lord, make us instruments of your peace," the first step to restart after an insurrection, after a dark moment in history.

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