



Political Violence as a Result of Fear

Mario J. Paredes

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Recently, hurtful and disconcerting events have shaken public life. News of violent deaths in political and university settings has left our society feeling empty and vulnerable. The funerals, the words of grief, the tense reactions remind us that democracy is not a safe ground per se, but an ongoing effort that is built and nurtured every day.

This delicate moment invites a very personal reflection on **political violence as a result of fear**. We are not talking about superficial fear, but deep-seated fear that pervades institutions and our very consciences. It is the fear of difference, the fear that another person will think differently, the fear that one's own truth will be questioned by truths held by others. That fear transforms plurality into a threat and opens the road to radicalization. What should be a debate of ideas becomes a closed confrontation. When trust in words fades, violence emerges in its stead.

Political violence does not begin with a gunshot; it begins with dehumanization. First, listening stops; then an adversary is ridiculed until he becomes a mere caricature. Finally, the adversary's elimination is justified as if it were necessary to save a community. This is fear. Fear cannot endure difference and prefers imposition to coexistence. That is why political violence does not indicate firm convictions, but moral fragility.

In America and other parts of the world, we have seen how fear has translated into tragic events. The assassination of Charlie Kirk in the United States, on a university campus, reflects the inability to accept that someone thinks differently. It's not about

agreeing or disagreeing with their ideas but rather understanding that life can never become a bargaining chip in public debate. We find another example of this same radicalization in Colombia, where violence against political leaders has been a constant. Extreme passions have surrounded the figure of Álvaro Uribe, and his name is pronounced with the same intensity in registers of admiration and rejection. This tension follows a familiar pattern; when an adversary ceases to be an interlocutor and is conceived as an absolute enemy, words lose their power and violence emerges.

The Bible is clear on this. “Turn away from evil and do good, seek peace and pursue it,” (Psalms 34:15). The mandate is not passive; it is a demand. It is not enough to do no harm; we must actively work for peace, pursue it, sustain it. And Jesus reminds us of this in the Sermon on the Mount: “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.” (Matthew 5:9). Peace is not the absence of conflict; it is the decision to face conflict with words, respect, and mercy. Violence is the easiest path, but also the most sterile. Peace requires more courage because it means living with plurality, accepting that my truth does not cancel out another’s, and that together we must seek a common good, broader than our personal certainties.

Accepting plurality does not mean renouncing the truth. It means recognizing that truth is sought together and strengthened in dialogue. Even when agreement cannot be reached, the dignity of the person who thinks differently must be respected. Political violence denies that dignity, and that is why it is always a moral defeat. No political victory can be justified if it is obtained at the price of the life of another person.

The role of a Leadership Academy is, in this context, essential. Our mission is to guard spaces of formation where fear is replaced by trust. It is not only a matter of transmitting technical knowledge, but of teaching to dissent without hating, to discuss without destroying. We must form leaders capable of holding their convictions firmly and at the same time with mercy. Men and women who know that the adversary is not an enemy to be eliminated, but a companion on the road with whom we must dialogue, even if we never reach the same point.

We need forums where words regain their power and where violence has no place. We need training programs in active listening, ethical rhetoric, and conflict mediation. A society that knows how to argue is a society less susceptible to killing. Radicalization is

not fought with censorship, but rather through more open dialogue. Hatred is not fought with silence, but with words that open paths.

Political violence does not respect ideologies or borders. It can emerge in any party, country, or square. We must do what we can and not feed it. Every time we dehumanize an adversary, we sow the seed of fear. Every time we deny the possibility of dialogue, we bring ourselves closer to violence. That is why the call is universal: to politicians, journalists, citizens, and institutions. No one is exempt.

We must not give in to fear by disagreeing with one position or another. We cannot allow bullets to replace words. Our commitment is to life, dialogue, and mercy. We know it is not easy, that the road is long, and that the wounds are deep. But we also know that fear does not have the last word. The last word must rest with hope, reconciliation, and peace.

Our Academy will always be a place where political violence is unmasked for what it is: the bitter fruit of fear. And may each leader who is trained here leave convinced that thinking differently should never be a death sentence. That no idea deserves a bullet as an answer. That human life is above all political differences.

We trust in Christ's promise: "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give it to you." (John 14:27). That peace is not naïve or superficial. It is a peace that demands courage, is built with patience, and defended through words and gestures of mercy. If we allow ourselves to be guided by that peace, we can overcome evil with good, even in the political world.

Mario J. Paredes is the President of the Board of Directors of the International Academy of Catholic Leaders.