

The Consistent Life Ethic and the Catholic Tradition

The Consistent Life ethic reminds us that to truly respect God's great creation, human life, we must oppose *anything* that threatens life. The consistent life ethic is internally "consistent" and though we are a non-denominational organization, the ethic is also consistent with Catholic theology.

Perhaps the first widely publicized use of the term "consistent life" was in Joseph Cardinal Bernardin's lecture at Fordham University, New York's Jesuit university, in 1983. Delivered during the height of the nuclear scare, this address linked the issues of war and abortion, stating that both issues "must be seen in light of an attitude of respect for life". Indeed, Cardinal Bernardin covered the whole broad range of pro-life issues, saying "the spectrum of life cuts across the issues of genetics, abortion, capital punishment, modern warfare and the care of the terminally ill." The full address can be viewed at <http://www.priestsforlife.org/magisterium/bernardingannon.html>

Similarly, a presentation by staff from The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) states:
"...the culture of life is much more than signing the partial birth abortion ban, it is about health care for pregnant mothers, it is about hunger at home and abroad, about war and peace. These involve prudential judgments, but they are not marginal or optional matters for Catholics....THE CONSISTENT LIFE ETHIC is not a tactic, an excuse or scorecard. It is an expression of what (Catholics) believe and who we are. It has been clearly taught by John Paul II and the US Bishops."

The Catechism of the Catholic Church directly forbids abortion, euthanasia, and adds that "the fifth commandment forbids doing anything with the intention of indirectly bringing about a person's death. The moral law prohibits exposing someone to mortal danger without grave reason, as well as refusing assistance to a person in danger. The acceptance by human society of murderous famines, without efforts to remedy them, is a scandalous injustice and a grave offense. Those whose usurious and avaricious dealings lead to the hunger and death of their brethren in the human family indirectly commit homicide." (no. 2269) Further, "If...non-lethal means are sufficient to defend and protect people's safety from the aggressor, authority will limit itself to such means, as these are more in keeping with the concrete conditions of the common good and more in conformity with the dignity of the human person" (no. 2267). USCCB adds: "Capital punishment cuts short the guilty person's opportunity for spiritual conversion and repentance." (from USCCB's "Pastoral Plan for Pro-Life Activities, A Campaign in Support of Life" at <http://www.usccb.org/about/pro-life-activities/pastoral-plan-prolife-activities.cfm>)

Consistent Life: the logical choice for Catholics

About Us

MISSION: We are committed to the protection of life, which is threatened in today's world by war, abortion, poverty, racism, capital punishment and euthanasia. We believe that these issues are linked under a 'consistent ethic of life'. We challenge those working on, or interested in, all or some of these issues to maintain a cooperative spirit of peace,

reconciliation, and respect in protecting the unprotected.

We are an international network of 200 groups and hundreds of individuals. Our member groups and endorsers include:

- Catholic Peace Fellowship
- National Council of Catholic Women
- Pax Christi USA
- Maryknoll Office of Global Concern
- Franciscan Center for Social Concern
- Center for Action and Contemplation
- Daniel Berrigan, SJ, Author and Activist
- Wendell Berry, Environmentalist and Poet
- Kathleen and Jim McGinnis, Authors, Parenting for Peace and Justice
- Murder Victims Families for Reconciliation
- Helen Prejean, CSJ, Author, Dead Man Walking
- Martin Sheen, Actor
- Mairead Corrigan Maguire, Ireland (Nobel Laureate)

Consistent Life is a non-profit organization based in Silver Spring, MD and founded in 1987 (as Seamless Garment Network). Our work involves distributing our message, and information relevant to life issues, via advertising in publications and via our own electronic and print publications. We conduct research on increasing respect for life in society and in law across America and the whole world. We provide information and support to our member groups such as those conducting lobbying, and we sponsor briefs advising the Supreme Court of the unity of pro-lifers.

☐ Sign me/us up as members of Consistent Life

- ____ Individual Membership (\$25.00)
____ Household Membership (\$40.00)
____ Supporter (\$75.00)
____ Patron (\$100.00)

☐ Send information on how our organization can become a member of Consistent Life

Organization

Contact Person

- ☐ Send information about:
____ Resource Materials (books, videos, pamphlets)
____ Speakers

☐ Enclosed is a donation to Consistent Life, Inc.

\$_____ (donation is tax deductible)

Name

Street Address

City/State/ZIP

Phone Number

E-mail Address

Return this coupon to:

Consistent Life

P.O. Box 9295

Silver Spring, MD 20916-9295

<http://www.consistent-life.org/>

We invite you . . .

Life is the most sacred gift we are given, whether we are Christian, Buddhist, Jew, Muslim, or atheist. The sanctity of life extends across national boundaries and party lines.

However, due to the Church's longstanding deep-seated respect for human life and Her history of putting these beliefs into action, at this time we especially call upon Catholics of all walks of life and political beliefs to take it upon themselves to become more aware of what it means to be truly pro-life and help others to become more aware as well. USCCB states:

Catholic progressives should be measured by how they stand up for human life...Catholic conservatives should be measured by how they stand up for human dignity...

<http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/CSMG.ppt>

Those whose lives are ended or forever affected by violence, from abortion to war to euthanasia, are often the least of His people. May Catholics and all people everywhere speak for them when no one else will.



P.O. Box 9295

Silver Spring, MD 20916-9295

<http://www.consistent-life.org/>

info@consistent-life.org

Voice mail: 866-444-7245

Online store:

<http://www.cafepress.com/lifecounts>

The Consistent Life Ethic and the Catholic Tradition



In today's fragmented world of Left / Right and of Conservative / Liberal, Consistent Life emerges as a voice of unity. We witness to the human rights of all . . . the unborn, those on death row, sick or infirmed, global neighbors and victims of war, of poverty, and of racism.