



Joseph Cardinal Bernardin. *Consistent.*

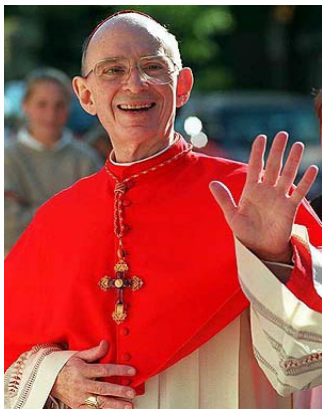
Joseph Cardinal Bernardin (1928–1996) has been widely credited with advancing the Consistent Life Ethic, originally called the Seamless Garment. Bernardin drew from New Testament principles in rejecting all forms of violence as inconsistent with Catholic teaching.

Bernardin was an outspoken critic of nuclear war and abortion, but he soon expanded his vision to include all kinds of violence. “The spectrum of life cuts across the issues of genetics, abortion, capital punishment, modern warfare and the care of the terminally ill,” wrote Bernardin in a famous speech at Fordham University. He began to define a new moral theology for Catholics that respected all life, from conception to natural death.

Cardinal Bernardin told an audience in Portland, Oregon: “When human life is considered ‘cheap’ or easily expendable in one area, eventually nothing is held as sacred and all lives are in jeopardy.”

Bernardin had a deep desire to unify conservative Catholics (who opposed abortion) and liberal Catholics (who opposed capital punishment) in the United States.

In 1996 Cardinal Bernardin made a final trip to Rome to visit Pope John Paul II. In the final weeks of his life, he was also awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom by President Bill Clinton. He gave a major “Seamless Garment of Life” address at Georgetown University, where he received an award from Georgetown’s president, noting his work promoting the sanctity of life.



Cardinal Bernardin succumbed to pancreatic cancer in November 1996. Over the course of this disease, he allowed his illness to inform his ministry to others. In addition to personally helping hundreds of suffering cancer patients, Bernardin wrote a best-selling book about his approaching death called *The Gift Of Peace*—which compassionately addressed end of life issues from his faith perspective.

Joseph Cardinal Bernardin lived as a dedicated advocate of the Consistent Life Ethic. Will you help carry on his work?

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



Consistent Life

www.consistentlifenet.org