

NATIONAL CATHOLIC REPORTER

THE INDEPENDENT NEWS SOURCE

Published on *National Catholic Reporter* (<https://www.ncronline.org>)

January 3, 2014 at 10:03am

Preview our Jan. 3 Pro-Life Special Section

NATIONAL CATHOLIC REPORTER
Pro-Life
JANUARY 3, 2014 NCRCOnline.org

EXECUTIONS
Deported Drugs
See how Catholic pro-life activists have been caught by federal agents.

Our Lady of the Mission for Dorothy Dickson, right, observes as military student Martha Brinkley, center, examines her Army at a funeral camp in West, South Sudan.

Death penalty opponents hold a candlelight vigil for inmate inmate Joseph Fontana at St. Francis Xavier (College) Church in St. Louis Nov. 19.

A deeper look at the consistent ethic of life
By Dawn H. Hoffmeyer

In late October 2013, the Catholic media was abuzz with the seminal "consensus" of the late Cardinal Joseph Bernardini's purportedly "dead" consistent ethic of life. Also known as the widely known general approach to Catholic ethics. While I readily join in the excitement, I also believe we must look deeper, beyond the surface attributions made concerning the consistent ethic of life and Catholic ethics. Sadly, this media storm has also been the occasion for us to be treated to corporate disinformation and warping of the very heart of Catholic teaching. This is not at all surprising, but it actually confirms the need for the American Catholic and the members of the Pro-Life Movement to be vigilant in their efforts to defend the consistent ethic of life.

In a 2008 study, Ted G. Olson noted that there are several reasons why adherence to the "Chicago Consensus" consistent ethic of life was quite low. In "American Catholics and the Consistent Ethic of Life Initiative," published in the *Journal of the Pro-Life Movement*, Olson cited data from 1998 and 1999 studies that accounted for its continued rejection in several ways:

- U.S. Catholics are both utilitarian and believers that U.S. individuals often change faith based on many Catholics consider church positions largely "advisory" and not essential for Catholic identity.
- The consistent ethic of life requires dealing with abstract, unrelatable demanding reasoning in order to bring together seemingly disparate issues, basic values tend to follow "user" positions that are packaged in ideological terms by public and pro-life activists.
- And as Bernardini himself noted, the individual and basic are each in themselves complex, rarely are simply understood from focusing on "the sanctity of life" or the common linkage among the issues.
- The U.S. bishops have focused on the "100 to 100" in varying degrees and at different times, usually in reaction to the political agenda already in place, and the bishops themselves offer no centering the issues placed on each issue (despite the fact that the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops officially endorsed the consistent ethic of life in 1983). Olson concludes his 2008 study thus:

Neither persons nor faith appear to originate their attitudes toward a pro-life position, nor do their most religious, demographic, or attitudinal variables that distinguish pro-life Catholics from other members of the faith. Among both clergy and laity, Catholics appear to be equally divided on the issue.

Continued on Page 2

Keep Families Together
Sharon Flores should be a role model for other mothers in Los Angeles April 12.

Content from NCR special sections is not available

online. These sections only appear in our print and Kindle editions, and they explore topics important to today's Catholics, including Environment, Catholic Education, Family Life and Theology.

Subscribe now to the [print edition](#) [1] or to our [Kindle edition](#) [2].

We are in the process of developing an electronic edition. If you are interested in subscribing to the electronic edition, [let us know](#)[3] and we will contact you when it is available.

SUBSCRIBE NOW ➔

[4]

Order a SAMPLE ISSUE ➔

[5]



A deeper look at the consistent ethic of life

By Dawn M. Nothwehr

In late October 2013, the Catholic media was abuzz with the seeming "resurrection" of the late Cardinal Joseph Bernardin's purportedly "dead" consistent ethic of life, also known as the seamless garment approach to Catholic ethics. While I readily join in the excitement, I also believe we must look deeper, beyond the surface attributions many commentators provide for why not all Catholics share this enthusiasm. Sadly, this media flurry has also been the occasion for a rise in heated comparative discussions and surfacing the ugly head of Catholic polemics. This is not at all surprising, but it actually confirms the need that Bernardin (1928-96) addressed in his consistent ethic of life, and more explicitly in the Catholic Common Ground Initiative. ... NEWSPAPER ONLY



Project Rachel marks 30 years of healing

By [Megan Fincher](#) [6]

Project Rachel, the church's postabortion ministry, is celebrating its 30th anniversary in 2014, as well as

its first full-time staff position in the U.S. Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities.

At their general assembly in November, the U.S. bishops approved the use of grant money from the Knights of Columbus to fund a full-time staff position specifically for post-abortion ministries. Almost all U.S. dioceses offer such ministries, commonly called Project Rachel, with a shared mission ? ?Women can find forgiveness and peace of heart through compassionate counseling and the Sacrament of Reconciliation,? according to the church?s website, hopeafterabortion.org [7]. ... NEWSPAPER ONLY



Gun violence myths debunked; quest for profits exposed

Reviewed by Dennis McDaniel

Though many have seen the problem of gun violence and mass killing in the United States as a matter of moral depravity, few have argued as persuasively as Tom Diaz that the root of the problem lies in the deadly sin of greed. Through a painstakingly researched and carefully documented body of facts and anecdotes, *The Last Gun* challenges the myths of liberty and security purveyed by the gun industry and the gun lobby that serves it, and exposes the quest for profit that drives these myths. ... NEWSPAPER ONLY



States face dwindling sources for lethal injection drugs

By [Brian Roewe](#) [8]

When the state of Missouri on Nov. 20 executed Joseph Paul Franklin ? a 63-year-old who targeted Jews and African-Americans in a late-1970s interstate killing spree ? it used a single drug. A compounded version of pentobarbital ended Franklin?s life in 10 minutes, with media witnesses reporting no apparent signs of pain.

In the past, Missouri, as did most death penalty states, used a threedrug process as standard protocol for its death row executions. But recent years have seen the mechanics of killing change, much of it attributed to the lack of access to the drugs needed to make the traditional pharmaceutical cocktail ... NEWSPAPER ONLY

New survey studies end-of-life attitudes

By Religion News Service

WASHINGTON: Death may be inevitable, but one in three Americans ? including most blacks and Hispanics ? want doctors to never quit fighting it, a recent survey finds.

In 1990, 15 percent of U.S. adults said doctors should do everything possible for a patient, even in the face of incurable illness and pain. Today, 31 percent hold that view, according to a report released Nov. 21 by the Pew Research Center?s Religion & Public Life Project. Sixtysix percent of U.S. adults still say there are circumstances when a patient should be allowed to die. ... NEWSPAPER ONLY

SUBSCRIBE NOW 

[4]

Source URL (retrieved on 02/18/2018 - 4:45pm): <https://www.ncronline.org/preview-our-jan-3-pro-life-special-section?bl=>

Links:

- [1] <http://ncronline.org/order-your-ncr-print-subscription-today?cu>
- [2] <http://ncronline.org/e-reader>
- [3] <http://ncronline.org/interested-electronic-edition-ncr>
- [4] <http://ncronline.org/ncr-print-subscription-form-0?saints>
- [5] <http://ncronline.org/request-sample-issue?saints>
- [6] <http://ncronline.org/authors/megan-fincher>
- [7] <http://hopeafterabortion.org/>
- [8] <http://ncronline.org/authors/brian-roewe>