

## St Mary Student Parish

### The Consistent Ethic of Life: “Promoting the Dignity of Life from Womb to Tomb”

Fr. Brian Daley, S.J., University of Notre Dame  
Tues, Sept 15, 2009 7 pm – 9 pm  
Donnelly Hall

Cardinal Joseph Bernardin introduced the concept of a “consistent ethic of life” that emphasized the inherent connection between the life issues: abortion, war, poverty, euthanasia, death penalty and many others. “Success on any one of the issues threatening life requires a concern for the broader attitude in society about respect for human life.”

**Recommended reading:** “A Consistent Ethic of Life: Continuing the Dialogue”  
Cardinal Joseph Bernardin. March 11, 1984.

*“Abortion, war, hunger, human rights, euthanasia and capital punishment—each is distinct, but an ad hoc approach to each one fails to illustrate how our choices in one area can affect our decisions in other areas. There must be a public attitude of respect for all of life if public actions are to respect it in concrete cases.”*

#### “Common Grounds Conversation”

Thursday, September 24, 2009 7:30 pm  
Starbuck’s, State and Liberty

#### Reflection/Discussion Questions:

1. Cardinal Bernardin makes the case that all of the social issues are necessarily connected. We cannot, therefore, “pick and choose.” What are the strengths of this argument?
2. What are the weaknesses of his argument?
3. Cardinal Bernardin’s desire was to bring Catholics (and others) together on life issues. What steps might we take to move in that direction?

#### Resources:

1. “A Consistent Ethic of Life: An American Catholic Dialogue” Cardinal Joseph Bernardin, December 6, 1983. This is the first of Cardinal Bernardin’s presentations on this theme. <http://www.hnp.org/publications/hnpfocus/BConsistentEthic1983.pdf>
2. “A Consistent Ethic of Life” Catholic Update, Copies in the parish office.
3. Websites:
  - National Pastoral Life Center: [www.nplc.org](http://www.nplc.org) This organization picked up Cardinal Bernardin’s efforts of promoting the Consistent Ethic of Life. Their focus is on dialogue
  - Consistent Life: Voices for Peace and Justice: [www.consistent-life.org](http://www.consistent-life.org) A network uniting many organizations and individuals who support the consistent ethic of reverence for life.