The CIRCLE of LIFE JOURNEY

Our journey begins with a vision of THE SEAMLESS GARMENT OF LIFE . . .

A garment woven together by HUMAN LIVES of many colors, shapes, patterns, and textures . . .

A SEAMLESS garment . . . not to be torn apart.

In ancient Israel, rending your clothing was what you did as a sign of mourning . . .

. . . as a sign of grief mixed with deep regret.

Rending your garments was a ritual sign of heartbreak.

When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and divided them . . .

They also took his tunic, but the tunic was SEAMLESS, woven in one piece from the top down. . .

John 19:23

"Celebration" by John August Swanson
So they said to one another, "Let's not tear it, but cast lots for it to see whose it will be."

John 19:24

Today we reflect on the many ways in which the Seamless Garment of Life has been torn apart.

... and how a CONSISTENT ETHIC OF LIFE calls us to keep the garment woven together.

What is the CONSISTENT ETHIC OF LIFE?

It is a comprehensive ethical system that links together many different issues by focusing attention on the basic value of life.

Catholic Update: "A Consistent Ethic of Life" by Ken Overberg, S.J.

The spectrum of life cuts across the issues of:
- genetics
- abortion
- capital punishment
- modern warfare
- the care of the terminally ill

“When human life is considered ‘cheap’ or easily expendable in one area, eventually nothing is held as sacred and all lives are in jeopardy.”

Cardinal Joseph Bernardin

“If one contends, as we do, that the right of every fetus to be born should be protected by civil law and supported by civil consensus, then our moral, political and economic responsibilities do not stop at the moment of birth.”

Cardinal Joseph Bernardin
Cardinal Joseph Bernardin:

“Those who defend the right to life of the weakest among us -- must be equally visible in support of the quality of life of the powerless among us:

- the old and the young
- the hungry & the homeless
- the undocumented immigrant
- the unemployed worker.”

Our CIRCLE OF LIFE JOURNEY will take us through this full spectrum of LIFE ISSUES from “womb to tomb”...

No individual or group can pursue all issues.

Still while concentrating on one issue, the individual or group must not be seen “as insensitive to or even opposed to other moral claims on the overall spectrum of life.”

Respect for UNBORN LIFE

Respect for the POOR & the “LEAST AMONG US”
Often our convictions seem to cluster around ‘conservative’ or ‘liberal’ viewpoints.

But the consistent ethic of life cuts across such divisions, calling us to respect:
- the life in the womb,
- the life of a criminal,
- the life on welfare,
- the life of the dying.

Respect for all, including the MARGINALIZED

Respect for ALL RACES, CULTURES, & FAITHS

It is not sufficient to be pro-life on some issues; we must be pro-life on all issues—no matter what our political party, business, union, talk shows, advertising or family may say. These powerful forces significantly shape our values and convictions, sometimes away from the consistent ethic.

Respect for all, including THE MIGRANT

Respecting CREATION for FUTURE GENERATIONS
Yet FAITH ought to be the deepest source of our values.

This invitation is really a profound challenge:

to look deeply into ourselves and to test against the Gospel some of our own deeply held beliefs and practices.

Respect for PEACE, and LOVE FOR OUR ENEMIES

Respect for all, both VICTIM & DETAINED

Respect for LIFE until NATURAL DEATH

Mature moral decision-making demands careful reflection, honesty and courage.

Searching for the truth in a particular situation, listening to the wisdom of authority and praying for insight mean hard work . . .

DISCERNMENT . . . a willingness to DISCERN and decide.

COMPLETING the CIRCLE & Being SENT FORTH
Created in God’s image, 
redeemed by Jesus, 
called to everlasting life, 
every Human Being 
is sacred and social . . . 

. . . every Human Being is a sign of God’s love.

“What is urgently called for is a . . . united ethical effort to activate a great campaign in support of life.”

“All together, we must build a new CULTURE OF LIFE.”

—Pope John Paul II, *The Gospel of Life*

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**A Prayer for Life**

Father and maker of all, 
you adorn all creation with splendor and beauty, 
and fashion human lives in your image and likeness.

Awaken in our hearts reverence for the work of your hands, 
and renew in us a readiness to protect, nurture, and sustain your precious gift of life.

**AMEN**

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Text based largely on: Catholic Update
“A Consistent Ethic of Life”
by Ken Overberg, S.J.

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