

# 'Seamless Garment' Ripped

## Anti-Abortionists Won't Accept Links To Nuclear War, Capital Punishment

Washington (NC) — The "seamless garment" of a pro-life position linking opposition to abortion, nuclear war, the death penalty and other "threats" to life may be ripped apart if some pro-life activists get their way.

As outlined by Cardinal Joseph L. Bernardin of Chicago, chairman since November of the U.S. bishops' Committee for Pro-Life Activities, the "seamless garment" takes account of "multiple threats to the sacredness of life" that include but are not limited to abortion.

The cardinal discussed the multifaceted emphasis of church concern for life in a speech at Fordham University in December, in comments to his fellow bishops in November, and elsewhere, including a column in the archdiocesan newspaper, The Chicago Catholic.

But some hard-core pro-life activists complain that abortion is so important it must be opposed on its own and not combined with other causes.

"To tie all those together and say that they're a seamless garment I think is balderdash," said Joe Scheidler, the director of the Chicago-based Pro-Life Action League, in a Jan. 31 telephone interview.

Cardinal Bernardin, more than a month after his Fordham University speech calling for a "consistent ethic of life" spanning numerous issues, wrote in the Chicago Catholic Jan. 20 that "legalized abortion on demand is not only an evil in its own right, it is also...a causal factor, which, along with others, contributes to undermining the concept of the equality of life."

"We find this happening," he added, "in situations like these: In the assertion...that handicapped infants can be allowed to die without treatment...in violent crimes, in incidents of terrorism, in a variety of acts and policies which violate human rights and degrade human dignity...in a furious arms race..."

At Fordham, he said that the bishops oppose the death penalty "because we do not think its use cultivates an attitude of respect for life in society."

Moreover, "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 and the homeless, the undocumented immigrant and the unemployed worker," he said at Fordham.

But Scheidler said the bishops "are trying to give a new definition to pro-life to bring some people into their camp who are not really pro-life," such as various liberal Democrats.

Furthermore, Scheidler added, "it puts him (Cardinal Bernardin) at odds with one of the most ardent pro-lifers in the country, President Reagan."

The Ad Hoc Committee in Defense of Life, another critic of the cardinal, said its survey of abortion opponents found that 99 percent "oppose the cardinal's conglomerate."

"Indeed, Cardinal Bernardin's 'challenge' may prove the decisive one," the organization's January newsletter said. "If anti-aborts can't keep their issue the premier 'single' one in the political spectrum, then it may well sink into the gooey swamps where yesterday's causes fester..."

"There seems little doubt," the newsletter added, "that the great majority of anti-aborts reject 'linkage' of abortion with anything else."

Msgr. John P. Foley, editor of The Catholic Standard and Times, Philadelphia archdiocesan newspaper, also worries about the linkage. In an editorial, he wrote that he fears linking abortion with other issues will mean that anti-abortion measures will suffer in political compromises.

"The destruction of approximately 15 million children through legalized abortion in this nation during the past decade is such an unspeakable horror, however, that no moral or legal issue today can compare with it," he wrote.

Recalling the 1973 Supreme Court abortion ruling, he added that "it seems to me that the Catholic Church in the United States needs not a blurring of the focus on what is the greatest moral evil and physical disaster now burdening this nation but a clearer focus and a greater singleness of purpose."

Msgr. Foley, in a telephone interview, said he thinks the linkage makes sense for educational purposes but not for political actions because in the latter case it "endangers the survival of efforts against abortion."

Cardinal Bernardin said traditional pro-life concerns would not be diminished by his appointment as chairman of the bishops' pro-life committee or by a linkage with other "life" issues.

"I deny that my appointment is going to mean any undermining of the anti-abortion effort," he said in an interview in January with The Monitor, San Francisco archdiocesan newspaper.

"In fact, I want to make clear that it should strengthen such efforts. I am very sensitive to pro-life groups who are concerned about this but I think it is needless worry."

"I think that for us to be effective in accomplishing things in favor of life issues in general that we need as broad a coalition as possible," he added. "We have to present the linkage of life issues in a basic conceptual way, in context of the all-encompassing teaching of the church protecting all human life."

## Cardinal Responds To Pro-Life Criticism

Washington (NC) — While pro-life groups may focus energies on limited problems, the Catholic Church must be involved with numerous life-related issues, said Cardinal Joseph L. Bernardin of Chicago in a recent letter.

The cardinal's letter, in response to one from an anonymous pro-life correspondent, was released to NC News by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops in Washington to clarify the cardinal's position after some pro-lifers publicly questioned the cardinal's linkage of abortion with nuclear war and capital punishment.

Cardinal Bernardin chairs the NCCB's Committee for Pro-Life Activities.

In his letter, the cardinal noted that since its inception in 1972, the bishops' "Respect Life" program "has addressed a broad range of 'life' issues precisely because there is a linkage among them" and that "the holy father has also addressed the various issues I presented."

He also repeated a statement he had made in a controversial talk at Fordham University, in which he said that "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 and the homeless, the undocumented immigrant

and the unemployed worker."

The cardinal, in the letter dated Jan. 26, added that "some pro-life groups and individuals apparently interpreted this as a criticism of their own 'single issue' emphasis."

He said that as a churchman he was speaking primarily of the church itself, which is under pressure from "both ends of the political spectrum" to address certain issues and leave others alone. However, the church must address many concerns and show how they fit into its vision of a personal relationship with God and one another, he said.

"Catholics have a responsibility to appreciate all the

facets of this total vision and to reflect on their role in promoting it, even if they feel they can best focus their own efforts on a particular injustice," he added.

"Certainly an organization can validly decide to address a small group of pressing issues in order to focus its own energies and garner support from citizens who disagree on many other issues," he said. "But I do not think the church can be this kind of group."

### Knights Host Meeting

Catholic males, 18 or older, are invited to attend an open meeting of Spencerport's Pope John XXIII Council of the Knights of Columbus, at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, Feb. 16 in the St. John the Evangelist PAC Room, 60 Martha Street.

A small meal will be served and members and guests will view a movie on the Knights of Columbus.

The Spencerport K. of C. Council is also comprised of residents of Hilton, Hamlin, Adams Basin, Brockport, Sweden and Clarkson.

### Hispanic Youths

The Hispanic Youth Employment Program of Catholic Youth Organization is accepting applications from Hispanic youths, 16-20 at 50 Chestnut St. Rochester, N.Y. 14604. The program specializes in helping youths having difficulties with studies or who have dropped out of high school. Further information is available from Blanca Castaneda, 454-2030.

## DEATHS

### Dominick Bovenzi, 79; Upholstery Teacher

Funeral rites were celebrated for Dominick Bovenzi of Gates, Wednesday, Feb. 1, at Holy Apostles Church.

Bovenzi, 79, died Jan. 29, 1984, of cancer at his home.

Born near Naples, Italy in 1905, Bovenzi came to the United States and Rochester in 1916.

He was a member of St. Anthony Parish and attended school there. He was also a member of the St. George Society.

Bovenzi opened an upholstery store in the late 1920s, but went bankrupt at the time of the Depression. He then began teaching his trade at the former Rochester Home Bureau on Fitzhugh Street,

where people trained in new skills during the Depression.

He worked for Schmitz Furniture from 1939-72. In 1939, he moved his family to Gates but remained affiliated to a city parish, Holy Apostles.

Bovenzi taught evening classes in upholstery for 40 years at the Warren Harding School in Gates, Greece Olympia High School, and in the Gates-Chili School District.

He is survived by five children: two sons, Father Angelo Bovenzi, campus chaplain at St. John Fisher College; and Patrick of Gates; and three daughters, Rose Marie Moranz of Gates; Josephine Belluscio of



BOVENZI

Latham; and Margaret Romei of Watertown, Mass.; 13 grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

He was buried at Holy Sepulchre Cemetery on Thursday, Feb. 2.

Fr. Albert Shamon



Word for Sunday

### Choices For Life

Sunday's Readings: (R3) Mt. 5/17-37 (R1) Sir. 15/15-20 (R2) 1 Cor. 2/6-10.

Three times the word "choose" appears in next Sunday's first reading. For man's destiny is determined by his choices. As William James puts it:

"Sow a thought, reap an act. Sow an act, reap a habit. Sow a habit, reap a character. Sow a character, reap a destiny."

The precondition for choice is the existence of alternatives. Where there are no alternatives, there is no choice possible. Two options were available to God's people: life and death. "Before man are life and death, whichever he chooses shall be given him."

In one of the closing scenes of the award-winning movie "Gandhi," a Hindu leader comes to the bedside of Gandhi and pleads with him to end his long fast. Gandhi promises to when the Hindus and Moslems stop fighting. The Hindu with eyes blazing hate says he'll never stop fighting Moslems. "Moslems," he said, "took my little boy and crushed his head. In turn I took a Moslem boy and killed him the same way. Ever since, I've been living in hell."

Softly, Gandhi says "I think I know a way out of hell. Go, find a boy like your murdered son, take him home as your son and raise him as a Moslem."

Sunday's liturgy is telling us to choose life over death, heaven over hell. This is life's basic choice. The one big choice everyone has. We do not choose our parents. We do not choose the historical period into which we are born. We do not

choose the country of our birth, nor our family. We do not, most of us, choose to die; nor do we choose when or how we will die. But within all this realm of choicelessness, we do choose how to live: as valiant ones or as cowards, honorably or dishonorably, with purpose or adrift. These choices are ours to make. And as we choose, so shall we become.

Jesus said, "No man can serve two masters." Some try it, like equestrian riders in a circus with a foot on two horses running side by side. Even if they manage some semblance of balance, straddling both horses, they only go in circles, like the circus riders.

The choice isn't easy. "Go find a son and raise him as a Moslem." "Unless your holiness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisee, you shall not enter the Kingdom of God." Many do not choose life, but those who do discover that the joys and rewards far outweigh the difficulties and efforts.

When Alice in a forest in Wonderland came to a divided path and didn't know which path to choose, the Cheshire Cat appeared. Alice asked the cat which path she should choose. The cat answered, "Where do you want to go?"

"I don't know," said Alice.

"Then," said the cat, "it really doesn't matter, does it?"

To those seeking a way out of hell, it does matter.

To God's people, it did matter. To us, it does matter — "Before man are life and death, whichever he chooses shall be given him."

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