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Paul Ramsey: In Memoriam

Paul Ramsey died on Feb. 29, 1988. Paul, who for many, many years had been professor of Christian Ethics at Princeton University, was a Methodist layman who was a true champion of the dignity of human life made to the image of God and called to share in the life of the triune God.

During the 1960s and '70s, while many of his Protestant colleagues and, sad to say, Catholic ones as well, were lauding a situationist or proportionalist approach to moral questions, Paul was a stout champion of moral absolutes. He was convinced, both by his Christian faith and by the intelligent use of his keen mind, that there definitely are some things human beings ought never do. Among the things we ought never do is to kill the innocent, especially the weakest and most helpless among them — the unborn and the seriously “defective” newborn. In essay after essay, Paul took apart the specious arguments of those who advocated feticide and infanticide upon request. With a passion surely born of love and purified by intelligence, he sought to call his colleagues and fellow citizens back to their senses so as to realize how barbaric are the practices now being done in the name of reason.

For many years, Paul was on the advisory board of *The Linacre Quarterly*. For many years, too, he labored in the trenches, a lonely voice among his academic peers and colleagues in “Christian Ethics”. His defense of moral absolutes, of the intrinsic wickedness of killing innocents, of the dignity of marriage and fidelity therein went “against the stream”. He was a true friend of life. His writings were an inspiration for many. He will be missed greatly. May he rest in peace and may the Lord he loved and served so well, give to him eternal life.

— William E. May