Feminists Choosing Life of New York
“Female equality and suffrage mean more love, more tenderness, an occasion of respect & thoughtfulness for our companions & better sense in molding the character of our children.”

- ELEANOR KIRK
AMERICAN FEMINIST

Feminists Choosing Life of New York (FCLNY) is a state wide human rights coalition that embraces and promotes the values of pro-life feminism.

The pro-life feminist movement is rooted in the philosophy of non-violence as defined by the principles of the Consistent Life Ethic (CLE) and the traditions of the early feminists.

The CLE recognizes rights as inherent to every member of the human family, with the right to live free from violent destruction as the most basic human right. The early feminists embraced non-violence as well as the core values of equality, justice and non-discrimination.

Today, FCLNY continues the work of the early feminists. We seek to bring about social, economic and political opportunities for women and their families with solutions that do not violate the principles of the CLE.

As part of our commitment to non-violence and equality, FCLNY advocates for peaceful solutions to systemic violence. We oppose publicly sanctioned lethal violence like war, abortion, assisted suicide, and capital punishment. We also oppose dehumanizing cultural practices such as human trafficking, poverty, racism, sexism, intimate partner violence, pornography, commercial surrogacy and any commodification of the human person.

FCLNY educates and encourages public discussion and debate through community encounters and projects, college and university events, film involvement, news media outreach, social media and grassroots campaigns, as well as legislative advocacy. As a New York State (NYS) based coalition, we give particular focus to the needs of vulnerable populations in NYS.

FCLNY’s public advocacy draws connections between the root causes of violence and inequality and between the attitudes and social forces which lead to dehumanization. In this way, we expose the inconsistencies expressed by the pro-choice feminist movement.

While we offer critical analysis of cultural trends, we are also seeking common ground and areas for collaboration.
What is the Consistent Life Ethic (also known as the ‘Whole-Life Ethic’)?

“The consistent life ethic is the premise or theory that all human life is inherently valuable & therefore that all humans deserve to live without violence. Individuals representing all religious & non religious backgrounds support & identify with the consistent life ethic.” - CONSISTENT LIFE NETWORK

All human beings are equal because of our shared humanity. Each human life is of irreducible value and there is no hierarchy of human worth.

Human rights are intrinsic to existence, not derived from any individual or state authority. They apply to all persons, in all times and all places. Because no one gives us our rights, no one has the right to take them from us. The most basic human right is the right to live free from violent destruction.

The CLE includes all humans as members of the human family. Excluding particular groups or individuals from the definition of personhood has served as the basis for every human rights violation in history. When personhood is defined by subjective criteria such as race, age, location, religion, mental/physical ability, dependency on others, gender, etc all manner of atrocities against human dignity are possible.

When we acknowledge that rights are inherent to human existence, we must derive and employ objective criteria to understand when these rights apply. We must define what is necessary for life to be considered human life, with fundamental and inviolable rights.

“Nobody’s free until everyone is free.”

- FANNIE LOU HAMER
CIVIL RIGHTS ACTIVIST
PRO-LIFE FEMINIST
What are the Objective Criteria for Determining Humanness?

The overwhelming predominance of scientific evidence supports that the life of every individual human being begins at conception. At conception, the number and configuration of chromosomes joined is specific to no other organism than a human being. At conception, an individual meets the biological criteria to be considered alive and a member of the human family (species).

Human beings are "living organisms [who] maintain identity through change ... thus if you are an intrinsically valuable person now, then you were an intrinsically valuable human person at every moment in your past including when you were in your mother's womb. For you are identical to yourself throughout the changes you undergo from the moment you come into existence."

- Francis Beckwith

Fun Fact!
At its first moment of existence, the entire observable universe was roughly a million, billion, trillion times smaller than a single atom. A single-celled human being is roughly a million times bigger than a single atom.

"The difference between the individual in its adult stage & zygotic stage is one of form, not nature."

- American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists

We are always ourselves. As such, the rights of individuals should be recognized for their entire life, from conception until natural death.
What Violates the Consistent Life Ethic?

Any time human life is deprived of life or subject to violent destruction, the CLE is violated. This includes slavery, genocide, abortion, capital punishment, euthanasia, war and torture. Any reduction of the human individual for the purpose of commodification or convenience violates the inherent dignity of humans, including racism, sexism, human trafficking, domestic violence and poverty.

“IT IS ALWAYS WRONG TO RADICALLY REDUCE SOMEONE’S INHERENT DIGNITY FOR SOME OTHER END, ESPECIALLY BY AIMING AT THEIR DEATHS... USING VIOLENCE OUGHT TO BE RESISTED AT EVERY TURN, NOT ONLY BECAUSE OF ITS EFFECT ON THE VICTIM BUT ALSO BECAUSE OF ITS EFFECT ON THE AGENT OF VIOLENCE. IT IS PERMISSIBLE TO USE DEADLY FORCE TO PROTECT ONE’S VULNERABLE NEIGHBOR, BUT MERCY REQUIRES THAT SUCH VIOLENCE BE STRICTLY REGULATED & ABSOLUTELY THE LAST OPTION USED... IN EVERY CIRCUMSTANCE GIVE PRIORITY TO PROTECTING AND SUPPORTING THE LIVES OF THE MOST VULNERABLE, ESPECIALLY THOSE WHO CANNOT SPEAK IN THEIR OWN DEFENSE.” — CHARLES CAMOSY

Societies that do not value human life, that do not keep the preservation of life as the core standard of laws and values, ultimately will not flourish.

“All through history the ways of love and truth have always won. There have been tyrants and murderers and for a time they can seem invincible, but in the end they always fall.” — GANDHI
How Do We Apply the Consistent Life Ethic to Our Understanding of Feminism?

Pro-life feminism recognizes that all solutions to inequality must not violate the CLE or the entire foundation of human rights will crumble.

The CLE also informs us that human worth is not based on utilitarian values. Rather, worth is intrinsic to every human being regardless of usefulness or ability.

We must acknowledge and embrace the differences of each member of the human family and revere the entire spectrum of abilities and traits.

The early feminists (suffragists, first wave) recognized that the female voice is essential for peace and non-violence in society. For this reason, they sought the enfranchisement of women.

The early feminists understood the CLE before the philosophy was named. They were abolitionists. They took action to aid oppressed populations and individuals. They opposed war and they recognized the dignity of all humanity, including the pre-born.

Today, the pro-life feminist movement, like the early feminists, recognizes the vital role women play in the promotion of peace and in enacting the values of the CLE. The women of the first wave of feminism sought peaceful solutions to many of the problems still facing women and society today.

“
When we ally ourselves with the excluded in society, not only are we enabled to see people as people and to join them in their struggle for justice to work for community & places of belonging, but we also develop the critical tools for seeing what is wrong with society.”
—Jean Vanier
Which principles of the suffragists continue to inform us?

-Men must respect the innate female capacity to carry life; sex must be a consensual act, offspring that are created are the joint responsibility of men and women.

-Women have the right to be educated in all matters relevant to worldly life, including the natural workings of the human body in order that motherhood can be entered into voluntarily.

-Women are vital agents in society whether or not they become mothers and independent of their of relationship with men.

-Pregnancy indicates that motherhood has already commenced because a woman has a biological child. The first feminists knew the science of conception (1839) and embraced the inclusion of the pre-born as members of the human family.

-Both the mother and the child within her should be nourished, respected and protected. Motherhood is an invaluable human office.

-Abortion and infanticide are acts of violence against children, with harmful consequences for women and a sign of women’s oppression. Abortion indicates that society does not value women and their unique capability to carry life.

-Abortion minded and post abortive women must be met with great sympathy and non-judgement. Abortion is the result of tremendous social pressure, neglect and oppression.

-The representation of women in government and as active members of a community will lead to peace and social flourishing. Through their enfranchisement, women will speak for the weak and bring peace for all through the influence of feminine and life nurturing values.

-The early feminist vision of equality was rooted in a deep respect for the dignity of all people. They recognized the profound interconnectedness of all humanity, the sisterhood of women, and the responsibility to aid others who need our assistance.

"When a man steals to satisfy hunger, we may safely conclude that there is something wrong in society so when a woman destroys the life of her unborn child, it is an evidence that either by education or circumstances she has been greatly wronged.” - Mattie Brinkerhoff
"I became thoroughly acquainted with sexual physiology & comprehended the wonderful economy of nature in the generation & development of the human germ. The act of abortion which I had hitherto regarded as a trivial thing, at once became in my eyes... the most aggravated crime..." - Eliza Duffy

American Feminist Author

"Look at the first faint gleam of life
The life of the embryo
The commencement of human existence."

- Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell
1st American Female Physician

"The Spartans destroyed children physically infirm.
Are we to go back to the days of Sparta?
[Disabled] children are one of the cares
of a community. It is our duty
to care for them." - Jane Addams, 1st American Woman to Win the Nobel Peace Prize

"Abortion is the ultimate exploitation of women."

"Foeticides and infanticides should be regarded with horror by the whole human race." - Susan B. Anthony
Leader of the American Suffrage Movement
“WHETHER OR NOT A WOMAN BECOMES A MOTHER IN THE PHYSICAL SENSE OR IN THE SPIRITUAL, HER INFINITE CAPACITY FOR THE OTHER IS A FEATURE OF WHO SHE IS.” – DEBORAH SAVAGE

So what happened to this pro-life vision of feminism?

Abortion as a ‘right’ was somewhat recently inserted into the feminist platform by the National Organization for Women in 1969. Around this time, the sexual revolution collapsed into the women’s movement distorting the original values and goals of the early feminists.

Since this distortion, the term “feminism” has become intertwined with “abortion rights” in public perception and in feminist theory.

Pro-life feminists severed ties with the pro-choice feminist movement around this time. Pro-life feminism has continued to grow since this division. Our position on abortion has become a defining feature of our movement, clearly distinguishing us from pro-choice feminism.

FCLNY seeks to unite women pro-choice feminism has ignored, bullied and rejected. These women can offer wisdom to all women. They can help forge paths to success and equality for women, without reliance on abortion.

FCLNY also looks to build bridges, to serve as a safe place for women who have been hurt by abortion and to support those within the pro-choice movement who have questions and reservations about abortion.

“I AM NOT WILLING TO STAND ASIDE & ALLOW THE CONCEPT OF EXPENDABLE HUMAN LIVES TO TURN THIS GREAT LAND OF OURS INTO JUST ANOTHER EXCLUSIVE RESERVATON WHERE ONLY THE PERFECT, THE PRIVILEGED & THE PLANNED HAVE THE RIGHT TO LIVE.” – DR. MILDRED JEFFERSON AMERICAN PHYSICIAN

FIRST BLACK WOMAN TO GRADUATE FROM HARVARD MEDICAL SCHOOL
What are the similarities and differences between pro-life and pro-choice feminism?

Pro-life feminism shares a common heritage with pro-choice feminism. We share many of the same values enumerated by the first feminists. Values including the belief in the equality of the sexes.

Generally, pro-choice feminists are also inclined to oppose violence on issues like war, capital punishment, poverty, immigration, intimate partner violence, sexual assault, sexism and racism. We may also align with some pro-choice feminists in opposition to issues like surrogacy, pornography and sex trafficking.

The fundamental difference between pro-choice and pro-life feminists primarily relates to abortion. Pro-choice feminism promotes abortion as a human right, while pro-life feminism maintains that abortion violates human rights.

Our differing beliefs on abortion lead us to very different conclusions about what rights are and who gets them, what defines liberation and oppression, and what solutions to inequality look like.

FCLNY gives a significant amount of attention to the topic of abortion for several reasons. Procured, elective abortion is the leading cause of death of humans in the world. Abortion is the most hotly contested social issue of our time. Misconceptions and untruths have largely shaped the abortion debate. Abortion is central to all discussions on feminism. As understood through the CLE, abortion is a root cause of many of our social ills.

“Abortion reflects the key problem at the core of all attacks on life: claiming a situation is hopeless & can only be solved with violence and as a result, treating life as disposable.” - Kristen Day

It is an ongoing project to enumerate the differences between pro-life and pro-choice feminism and the inconsistencies of pro-choice logic. Below are some key distinctions:

Abortion as a human right or a human rights violation?

-As the CLE demonstrates, elective abortion is lethal violence toward a human being who is not an aggressor. It is therefore a human rights violation. Elective abortion when understood as a ‘right’ undermines the very foundation of equality. Abortion ‘rights’ have codified into law the dangerous idea that rights are not inherent to existence, but granted to those who are deemed worthy of them.
-Killing human beings is unjust because it is theft of life. Whether born or pre-born, an individual unjustly killed is deprived of the same goods— their own future.

-Legal abortion has lead to an unprecedented number of victims: over 60 million children* in the United States were alive, but are now dead. Mothers, fathers and all who participate are all victims of abortion violence.

-Abortion choice logic allows for the dissemination of harmful, dehumanizing ideas. It insists that human life has no inherent value, that only some lives matter while others are disposable. It declares that certain traits or limitations can disqualify an individual from the right to live and that human beings are categorically either ‘wanted’ or ‘unwanted.’ Pro-choice sentiment further claims that biological children can be ‘parasites,’ and that a “human being” can be defined by personal preference rather than biological reality.

-When abortion is justified because the unborn are poor, disabled or have Down Syndrome, very real prejudices against born people with these characteristics are revealed.

-In fact, abortion has been eliminating populations and has lead to eugenic conclusions and practices. The population of people living with Down syndrome is bordering on extinction. In places like NYC, more African American children are aborted than born. Gendercide due to abortion is occurring on an unthinkable scale.

"MORE BABY GIRLS ARE ABORTED IN CHINA & INDIA EVERY YEAR THAN THE TOTAL NUMBER OF GIRLS BORN IN THE UNITED STATES." —FIORELLA NASH

-Middle and upper class pro-choice feminists prefer abortion for the poor more than the poor do for themselves. Abortion as ‘reproductive justice’ for the poor has failed as levels of poverty for women have remained stagnant since Roe vs. Wade (1973).

-Radical autonomy is fundamentally anti-community. Radical autonomy declares that no natural obligation exists between a mother and the child in her womb, even when as is true for 99% of cases, the dependent child exists because of the free will and action of the parents through consensual sex.

If pro-choice feminists can argue we have no natural obligation to aid or protect our own children, how can they logically insist that there is an obligation to help anyone ever?
How does abortion distort true feminism?

- By embracing abortion as a solution to inequality, pro-choice feminists have adopted masculine standards of equality.

“The assumption behind [abortion choice] rhetoric—that equality can only be achieved through special surgery (abortion) implies that women are naturally inferior to men...

How can women ever lose second class status as long as they are seen as requiring surgery to avoid it? ...[This] is the premise of male domination throughout the millennia... that it was nature that made men superior & women inferior.” - Francis Beckwith

-Pro-choice feminism argues that the defining physical ability of women, the power to gestate human life, has no objective value. It is considered a burden, an interference that can be discarded for any reason. True feminism reveres that which is uniquely feminine.

-Pro-choice feminism insists that women should attempt to change their biological reality to fit an inhospitable society. A truly pro-woman position proclaims that society should adapt to fit the needs of women.

-Freedom that depends on abortion access still chains women to reliance on others. With every election, pro-choice feminists display palpable fear, having entrusted their autonomy, empowerment and liberation to laws, politicians, lobbyists, pharmaceutical companies, sidewalk escorts, nurses, clinicians, abortion providers, medical equipment manufacturers and billion dollar industries.

-Pro-choice feminism has allowed all responsibility for pregnancy to be placed squarely on the shoulders of women. Rather than work to improve the equal partnership of women and men, expecting both to assume full responsibility before, during and after pregnancy, pro-choice feminism allows men to deny all responsibility for pregnancy and continues the expectation that women will predominantly care for children after birth.

“Overnight, unplanned pregnancy became her private problem to bear alone. Abortion rights rhetoric compounds this effect emphasizing her isolation: my body, my rights, my life, my choice. The flip side of all that first person assertiveness is abandonment.” - Frederica Mathewes-Green
" Advocacy by women for legalized abortion on a national scale is so anti-woman’s liberation that it flies in the face of what some of us are trying to accomplish through the women’s movement, namely equality... equality means an equal sharing of responsibilities by & as men & women."

- Graciela Olivaraz

- Pro-choice feminists ascribe to patriarchal values by supporting violence to solve problems. Rather than eliminating oppression, abortion transfers oppression to the young and the vulnerable. The early feminists sought to protect the young and the vulnerable through their own enfranchisement. Abortion undermines the very foundation of feminism.

- Abortion as ‘empowerment’ sets an incredibly low standard for achieving strength and confidence. Taking a pill or consenting to a procedure are passive actions. The procedure itself requires women to lay down and submit to violence.

- All human beings have a right to bodily autonomy. Rights are always limited when they come into conflict with the rights of others. Both mother and child are self-directed human organisms, with their own bodies, their own personal development and their own future full of potential achievement. Both are of irreducible value. Unless a serious condition exists where the rights of both mother and child come into direct conflict (i.e. the mother’s life is in danger), the child’s life must be respected as having a right to exist and thrive.

- From an ecological perspective, poisons and weapons have no place in women’s wombs. While many pro-choice feminists embrace naturalism in other forms, they ignore that abortion methods deliberately bring into the very house of life.”

- Frederica Mathewes-Green

- When pro-choice feminists declare “sex is not consent to pregnancy,” they align their values with dead beat dads. Any man not wishing to pay child support would happily offer this defense for any careless sexual encounter. Radical autonomy could be used by men and women alike to abdicate responsibility for parenthood. Denial of responsibility should not be considered admirable, empowering or feminist. Society cannot function if people do not uphold their natural obligations to each other.
-Pro-choice feminism has adopted standards of achievement based on traditionally masculine traits. The measurement of women’s achievement is now understood predominantly in economic and utilitarian terms. For one’s contributions to have meaning, they must be documented by educational degrees or pay checks. Rather than adjust the way society views the contributions of women, particularly the large number of women who choose to be caregivers, pro-choice feminism expects women to change their life path in order to be recognized as valuable assets to society on masculine terms.

-Pro-choice feminists largely ignore the role abortion plays in the oppression of women the world over. Millions of women have suffered forced abortions. Sex selection abortions have lead to enormous gender disparities (in China there is a surplus of 30 million men). Countries with significant gender imbalances have seen an increase in the exploitation, rape, enslavement, sale and abuse of women as women become a highly sought commodity.

-Abortion allows women to become reusable sex objects and is integral to the practice of sex trafficking. Many women who are trafficked are forced to undergo abortions. If these women gave birth, they would enter a network of social services and protective oversight for both themselves and their child, potentially freeing them from captivity.

-Scholars like Mary Eberstadt and Charles Camosy argue that legal abortion has significantly changed our culture’s attitude and behavior toward sex. Since Roe, there has been an epidemic of STIs, an explosion in pornography with sadism and violence as prominent themes, a coarsening of attitudes toward sex in media and hookup culture and the rise of the MeToo movement. The objectification of women, sexism, abuse and assault are mainstays decades after pro-choice feminism made abortion their priority.

"THE WORLD DOESN'T NEED WHAT WOMEN HAVE, IT NEEDS WHAT WOMEN ARE." — EDITH STEIN

Non-Violent Solutions

We are witnessing a turning point in our country. Hostility at the interpersonal and national level makes civil conversation increasingly difficult. We are seeing a rising tide of deaths from despair, including death from suicide and drug and alcohol abuse. One need only turn on a television to see consumerism, the objectification of women, utilitarian values and the unhappiness of youth.

FCLNY sees the connections between these trends and a pro-choice world view which holds that life has no inherent value or meaning. A pro-choice world view enables human beings to be bought, sold and destroyed. A pro-choice world view allows the elderly, disabled and sick to be seen as burdensome, unborn children as disposable, like pieces of property.
Through the consistent life ethic and the values of pro-life feminism we can unite in radical interdependence. We can re-humanize our world and call all people of good will to action. Join the pro-life feminist movement!

"WE HAVE ALWAYS CLAIMED THAT OUR MOVEMENT WAS HUMAN RIGHTS - not WOMEN’S RIGHTS - therefore WE NEED NOT CONFINE OURSELVES TO THE EVILS THAT WOMAN SUFFERS ALONE - but ENLARGE OUR BORDERS, AS THE TRUTH SHALL BE REVEALED." -SUSAN B. ANTHONY
How often do we assume to know why someone else believes what they believe? Or how often have we felt misinterpreted?

Sunday Salons offer the opportunity to truly understand and to be understood on the topics of non-violence and feminism.

We gather together in small, intimate groups of 4 to 6 people. We share comfort food and drinks. We talk about our deepest held beliefs and every word is confidential.

Salons are not debates. There is no expectation to change anyone’s point of view. We believe that to achieve peace in our society, we must understand beliefs outside our own and refine our own perspectives.

To participate please contact us:
info@fclny.org

*Salons are generally 2 hours at any agreed upon place and time
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http://www.princeton.edu/~prolife/articles/embryonquotes2.html
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Deborah Savage “Reflections on the Sexual Revolution,” First Things, October 2018
Sue Ellen Browder Subverted

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http://thehill.com/opinion/healthcare/417112-the-whole-life-position-includes-the-right-to-life-for-the-pre-born

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Number of abortions https://nrlc.org/uploads/factsheets/FS01AbortionintheUS.pdf
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