concern the field today, ranging from genetic testing, to cloning, to clinical experimentation. Cardinal Sgreccia has spent a lifetime in service to the Church, and this work is nothing short of a landmark achievement that will be valued by ethicists, medical personnel, and clergy and laity alike, for many years to come.

What both Meilaender and Sgreccia share is a deep commitment to making the human person the starting point for the practice of bioethics. Such an approach offers the possibility to reflect on both our extraordinary capacities and our limitations—all at once. *Bioethics: A Primer for Christians* should be mandatory reading in our churches, schools, and families in order to provide foundational tools to approach circumstances or decisions that we will all face at some point in our lives. For those who have chosen to make this realm their profession, *Personalist Bioethics* offers some of the finest philosophical reflections available in Catholic bioethics. In a discipline that is often overly focused on progress and technological advancement, both Meilaender and Sgreccia have given us works that are rooted in timeless principles and truth. We owe them our gratitude—and our attention.

Christopher White

*The Center for Bioethics and Culture*


Reviewers have said that *Abandoned* by Monica Migliorino Miller is “the best book ever written on abortion.” However, since the book is a mere three hundred pages long, one might ask how so few pages could capture so much? Others have compared this book to *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*. Both books, *Abandoned* and *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, are short but portray in poignant narrative the cruelty of systematic human rights abuses conducted under color of law, American law. I found this book as disturbing as *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* because it personalized what can only be called a travesty of justice. Both legalized slavery and legalized abortion have been described as “our peculiar institution.” Both institutions make mockery of the rights language in the Declaration of Independence. “Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness” were denied both to the slave and to the child in his or her mother’s womb, and Harriet Beecher Stowe and Monica Migliorino Miller, like Dante’s Beatrice, take their reader through heaven, hell, and purgatory.
Abandoned presents the indifference of many, including leaders of the Church, who withheld their moral and institutional support from those fighting in defense of the unborn. Part of the purgation Miller describes is the reality of a Church slowly awakening to the post-Roe reality of a life and death confrontation of the Church with the anti-Christ spirit of the age. In her progression through the inferno, she shows the faces of the doomed and the damned that once encountered will never be forgotten: the dismembered dumpster baby she named “baby face”; the prison guard who explained that it is “not his business to care” about his prisoners; the post-modern Franciscan nun who worked at an abortion clinic and “was better acquainted with Jean-Paul Sartre than Saint Francis of Assisi”; and the judge who cared more deeply about free debate than truth and who believed that the American experiment in self-government concerned the democratic process, not self-evident truths.

The author tells us her book takes place in a slice of time from 1976 through 1994, from the beginning of the pro-life movement following Roe v. Wade in 1973 to the promulgation of the Federal Access to Clinics Entrance Act (FACE) in 1994. In particular, she tells her story and describes the mindset, motivation, tactics, and strategy of the pro-life civil disobedience movement known to many as the “rescue movement.” This is a story she knows well, having helped to pioneer the peaceful abortion clinic sit-ins/blockades that inspired more activists to go to jail than did the anti-slavery movement, the women’s suffrage movement, and the civil rights movement.

So what is Monica Migliorino Miller’s story? Why does she compare her societal alienation to that of veterans returning to civilian life from Viet Nam suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder? What did she and her friends do, why did they do it, and what happened to them? They performed acts of heroism under enemy fire, but of a different kind from those veterans. She and her friends performed corporal and spiritual works of mercy. They risked their freedom, honor, and their very lives in order to bury the dead, counsel the doubtful, rebuke the sinner, visit the imprisoned, and rescue those condemned unjustly to death.

The author and her friends scared off rats and waded through garbage dumpsters at night in order to retrieve un-mourned, aborted children and bury them. The author says her nose and eyes were red and sore from the formalide fumes emitted from the plastic packages containing thousands of torn fetal body parts. She makes an apologia for defacing advertisements for abortion in subways. She exposes the cremation of aborted babies with animal carcasses at a pet cemetery. She expresses gratitude to God for how the pro-life sit-ins grew in size from less than a score of pro-lifers at their first sit-in to over four thousand strong at one single rescue before the end.
The respect police and prosecutors showed pro-life clinic blockaders at first also changed. Before the end the author shows how those who defied the law to save babies and women from abortion faced police brutality and prosecutorial persecution. The author shares the humiliation she suffered while in jail for these so-called crimes; how she was strip-searched and made to give urine samples before prison guards. She describes how her honeymoon was cut short when both she and her husband were sentenced to jail for past sit-ins. She also describes the struggle within the sit-in movement between those who upheld the standard of completely non-violent civil disobedience and some who emerged later who sought to justify the killing of abortionists as the defense of a third party.

In short, the pro-life rescuers and the children and women they sought to save are shown to receive the same treatment—both are cut-off from society, treated unjustly by the law, misrepresented or ignored by the media, and given little more than lip service by their Church leaders. Both rescuers and babies are in every sense abandoned by a culture that justifies this cruelty through post-modern selfishness, legal positivism, hedonism, and consumerist profiteering.

The final vision of paradise Miller unfolds in Abandoned is similar to that of St. Paul, victorious in his chains having fought the good fight, run the race and kept the faith (2 Timothy 4:6–7). Paul awaits a crown even though his enemies have defeated him in court and he finds himself abandoned to await his execution (2 Timothy 4:8). Although the pro-life rescue movement in the late twentieth century seemed to have gone down in flames, their spirit and the grace they won may yet achieve greater things in times to come. As Joan of Arc, surrounded by scornful enemies and consumed in flames, uttered her dying word, “Jesus,” an English soldier saw a white dove ascend to heaven from the region of France. Within twenty years of her death, her sacrifice inspired her nation to completely throw off the foreign oppressor. This reader would like to think that even though the abortion clinic blockades were crushed with the passage of FACE, the sacrifices of all those who gave witness in union with Christ, as prisoners for the Gospel, to the sanctity of the unborn child will bear fruit as this generation overcomes even greater threats to human dignity, marriage, family, and religious freedom. Their story echoes the challenge given to us by St. Paul: “I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus who is to judge the living and the dead . . . : preach the word, be urgent in season and out of season, convince, rebuke, and exhort, be unfailing in patience and in teaching” (2 Timothy 4:1–2).

Brian Scarnecchia

*Ave Maria School of Law*