

*to be prevailed upon and to pity, if a man were seized by some beast, and were to implore the aid of an armed man, whether they think that he ought to be succoured or not? . . . Yes, truly, they will say that it is the part of a human being, and of a brave man too, to preserve one who was on the point of perishing. . . [Lactantius, "The Divine Institutes" 6.10-11, trans. W. Fletcher, in THE ANTE-NICENE FATHERS, vol. 7]*

For some people the principle of defense of the innocent will not bear the justification of actual war. They will remain confirmed pacifists to the bloody end. But a good number of people today who support the idea of just war (and might even throw in with one if caught in the right jingoist mood), fail to affirm, as regards the abortion issue at hand, the prior principle upon which the well-established just war theory hangs.

At the least it is a logical inconsistency. To discover the root is to speculate concerning the depravity of the human soul. How does one 1) hold a principle of self-defense and the defense of others, 2) affirm the extreme of war as an extension of that principle, 3) affirm that the preborn are innocent people deserving protection, and then 4) deny that these people ought to be afforded even basic forceful defense?

There is gross inconsistency in the proclamations of nonpacifists who affirm the humanity of the preborn child but deny him the defense otherwise afforded any other person. We do not have examples in history of wars waged to stop abortion. Neither do we have examples in history of abortion "clinics" operating publicly out of the yellow pages and with the blessing of government. And this enemy has deeply infiltrated the land, even to the soul of the society. How shall he be stopped? We offer no immediate solution to the larger cultural sickness. But we cannot withdraw from the truth. Force is justifiable in defense of the innocent preborn child threatened imminently with death.