

The Ends & The Means

What would you do to end the evil scourge of abortion in our country? Would you do something that is, itself, 'evil' in order to stop the taking of innocent, unborn lives?

This is a very tough scenario for the committed pro-lifer! There have been those who have placed the whole matter of abortion within the rubrics of warfare and the application of 'just war theory.' They have proposed that abortion doctors be considered 'unjust aggressors' in a 'war' against the unborn. Therefore, as in any 'just' war, it is permissible to take up arms and, if necessary, to repel the doctor's violence against the fetus with violence, even to the extent of killing him/her.

There is no, bona fide, Catholic Theologian who would subscribe to this application of "Just War Theory" to abortion. But there have been some advocates of this position within the Pro-life movement and, as we know, some doctors have been murdered during the history of this conflict.

I suspect that a Catholic Theologian would regard the abortion doctor as operating from a kind of 'invincible ignorance' in not recognizing the fetus as a human being. For all of his or her technical training, they have been indoctrinated into a purely materialistic conception of reality (or some-such) and their actions are based on a terrible error in the perception of the reality. In this, I am surmising what might be a moral evaluation of the situation preventing an appeal to violence in order to stop an abortion doctor from his/her practice.

A basic principle of the same type of theology is that one must never do something intrinsically evil in order to arrive at a good end. The rare occasion when the commandment "Thou shall not kill" is superseded is within the context of self-defense against an unjust aggressor. The Catholic Encyclopedia defines 'unjust aggressor' as follows: *According to the accepted teaching of theologians, it is lawful, in the defense of life or limb, of property of some importance, and of chastity, to repel violence with violence, even to the extent of killing an unjust assailant. This is admitted to be true with the reservation included in the phrase "servato moderamine inculpatae rutelae." That is, only that*

degree of violence may be employed which is necessary adequately to protect one from the attack.

In this battle to over turn Roe v. Wade, most activists have turned to the political realm and to moral persuasion to change the law and the culture to protect the right to life. We look to politicians who pledge to enact pro-life policies and put judges in office who will rule in favor of the unborn and so forth.



Recognizing that we don't get everything we want from any given politician that we vote into office; we must wonder what compromises are we willing to make to achieve the goal to end abortion, and which ones are we allowed to accept? How many questionable wars will I accept from my pro-life President or Lawmaker? What degree of social inequity is acceptable? What aspects of environmental ecology can be compromised? What other human-rights policies could be traded on the promise to end abortion? Would lawmakers who came through in their promise to end legalized abortion but left behind an otherwise "scorched earth" be the sort we could envision supporting?

The current political environment is so thick with a cynicism tending toward nihilism that this guy finds it terribly troubling. Can't we have an end to abortion **and** have good, moral people holding office? Do we have to make a Faustian bargain with all sorts of wickedness in order to get what we so desire for the innocents in the womb? What sort of system have we created in this country that cynical pandering, utilitarianism and unalloyed pragmatism have come to replace a broad appeal to truth and justice. You don't have to tell me how fundamental is the right to life for the unborn: I already believe it. I just want a good world for them too.