

03 | SANCTITY OF LIFE

EARLY CHURCH FATHERS— STATEMENTS

Barnabas, (AD 74) *Letter 19*

“Thou shalt not slay the child by procuring abortion; nor, again, shalt thou destroy it after it is born.”

Tertullian (ca. AD 155–240), *De Anima 26.5*

“Thus, you read the word of God, spoken to Jeremiah: ‘*Before I formed thee in the womb, I knew thee.*’ If God forms us in the womb, He also breathes on us as He did in the beginning: ‘*And God formed man and breathed into him the breath of life.*’ Nor could God have known man in the womb unless he were a whole man. ‘*And before thou camest forth from the womb, I sanctified thee.*’ Was it, then, a dead body at that stage? Surely it was not, for ‘*God is the God of the living and not the dead.*’ [[Mark 12:27](#); [Luke 20:38](#)].”

Tertullian (AD 155–240), *Apologia, cap 25, line 42*

“It is not permissible for us to destroy the seed by means of illicit manslaughter once it has been conceived in the womb, so long as blood remains in the person.”

John Chrysostom (AD 347–407), *Homily 24 on Romans*

“Why sow where the ground makes it its care to destroy the fruit? Where there are many efforts at abortion? Where there is murder before the birth? ... Why then do thou abuse the gift of God, and fight with His laws, and follow after what is a curse as if a blessing, and make the place of procreation a chamber for murder, and arm the woman that was given for childbearing unto slaughter?”

Augustine (AD 354–430), *De Nube et Concupiscentia 1.17 (15)*

“This lustful cruelty, or; if you please, cruel lust, resorts to such extravagant methods as to use poisonous drugs to secure barrenness; or else, if unsuccessful in this, to destroy the conceived seed by some means previous to birth, preferring that its offspring should rather perish than receive vitality; or if it was advancing to life within the womb, should be slain before it was born.”

Augustine (AD 354–430), *Sermon 126, line 12*

“Therefore brothers, you see how perverse they are and hastening wickedness, who are immature, they seek abortion of the conception before the birth; they are those who tell us, ‘I do not see that which you say must be believed.’”