

# The just cause of war

[Religion](#), [Christianity](#)



In the Catechism of the Catholic Church, we are all called to be peacemakers. The Church believes that violence is not defeated by more violence; however, in dire situations, war can be waged on a just basis. Just war was developed in the 5th century to balance the beliefs of Christianity with the need to go to war. There are many principles that make up the just cause of war. These principles include just intentions, probable cause, self defense, proportionate means, and last resort. A clear example of a just cause is the right of self defense. For example, if a country is attacked it has the right to defend itself. As Christians, we believe that war should be avoided and is not condoned. Although violence is not the best way to settle a disagreement or problem, I agree that if it could not be avoided and is the last resort, war might be necessary for the protection of innocent lives. From my opinion, Rodrigo Mendoza's attempt to defend the natives was necessary because doing nothing was giving into the enemy. Brutality is a very prevalent theme in Beowulf because it delivered a kingdom, made a hero, and created a legacy.

In Beowulf, brutality is considered as a fact of life, and a tool to determine mortality. Throughout the book, violence is used for recognition, revenge, jealousy, Power and power. Violence resulted in death, which was more appreciated in a society where one person had their dignity taken away and another person gained glory. But could violence be used to protect the lives of the innocent? Before his dramatic conversion, Rodrigo Mendoza, a former mercenary and slave trader, used violence to protect his image and gain profit. After Mendoza's image is diminished, and he begins to follow the mission, he gives into the temptation to use violence and decides to fight the

invaders to defend the natives. This time he uses violence for the greater good of others. Mendoza would not be human if he did not make mistakes or give into what was once easier for him, but he learned from his past mistakes and stands for what he believes in. It is easy to recognize that Mendoza and Fr. Gabriel represents two contrasting Christian beliefs and approaches to the dispute of violence. I believe that it is better to fight for what you believe in rather than not doing anything at all.

Although he and the natives did not have the proportionate means to win the battle, they stood up for what they believed in and fought for their human rights. Pacifism is the belief that any belligerent action or violence, including war, is unjustifiable under any circumstances, and that all disputes should be settled by peaceful means. Fr. Gabriel is an example of Christian non-violence and pacifism. Christian non-violence is the active expression of God's love as a witness of faith. The Church states, " In times of conflict between person, ethnicities, religions, nations, or economic and political powers, only love, persuasion, and reconciliation are the true keys to overcome evil. " This is a teaching that Fr. Gabriel followed during his decision to not fight against the invaders. But can the power of love alone overcome the evils of the world and change the hearts of oppressors?

Fr. Gabriel exhibits the Church's morals and teachings by insisting that the fidelity to their vocation requires non-resistance. When Mendoza comes to Fr. Gabriel to renounce his vows as a priest, Fr. Gabriel counters with a theological philosophy for not fighting and says, " If you die with blood on your hands, you betray everything we've done. You promised your life to

God. And God is love!” Fr. Gabriel can be characterized as a pacifist when chooses passive resistance and refuses to hate or strike back at the European invaders. The culture of violence is used to satisfy moral motives and social relation, but when it is used to defend the lives of the innocent it can be justified as understandable.

Mendoza fought for the justice and empathy of the natives. He represents just war in the terms of how force can be used to defend the innocent when their rights are being attacked. Ultimately, I believe that there can be other ways to settle disagreements, but benefits can come from self defense and fighting to protect the oppressed and their rights. Mendoza’s decision to fight was not based on hate, but rather the great amount of love he had for the natives, their well-being, and their freedom. This choice to fight for the liberation of the natives was symbolic to how seriously he took his priestly vows. Although, both Mendoza and Fr. Gabriel faced overwhelming odds, they made the decision to risk their lives because of their love for the mission.