

Exuberant Joe

My good friend and colleague Dr. Joseph Nicolosi passed away yesterday from an unexpected, swift illness. I am in shock. He is the man who gave men like me courage to name the wounds related to our early gender identity, get on a healing track, and proceed onto all we were created for. As a devout Catholic, he held fast to our fruitfulness and eschewed the false solutions offered by the LGBT community; as an astute clinician, he persevered to ensure that the healing arts and sciences still applied to persons with same-sex attraction who knew that they were stuck and needed to get on with life.

He did it all with panache. He was a force of nature—youthful at 70-years-old, mouthy, colorful, an unflagging provocateur of truth. He never lost focus. The last time I saw him was a year ago at his home in Thousand Oaks home with wife Linda; he exuberantly rehearsed a new paper he was presenting at NARTH, which he co-founded and designed as the only enduring network offering clinical care for persons with unwanted SSA.

The sheer volume of his output in papers, books, and presentations around the globe is staggering and can be summed up in these words: humanity is created to realize its heterosexual potential and homosexual behavior is a symptomatic attempt to repair early wounds that left the boy alienated from that potential--the innate masculinity that he has failed to claim. Sounds psychotherapy is thus one means through which we can welcome the confirmation that eluded us in our wounds and recover our dignity as men from the illusion of seeking 'completion' in homoeroticism. I would urge you all to secure any of his books or articles. My personal favorite: Shame and Attachment Loss, IVP.

Joe got it right. He never apologized for the light he shone. In 1980, he founded the Thomas Aquinas Counseling Center in Los Angeles the same year Desert Stream began in LA. He provided for me and my colleagues studying psychology a reasonable, clear direction amid irrational forces. Ever exuberant, he seemed to enjoy the challenges he faced. He was born to burn calories caused by his contention that humanity has a direction born of God, a track no activist can alter.

God made Joe fit for the fight and he did so brightly and boldly in the face of adversity. Some did not know what to do with him. We did know. We loved him. His gift freed us to embrace life. Exuberantly.