

Provoking Life, Part 2

‘See! The winter is passed; the rains are over and gone. Flowers appear on the earth, the season of singing has come.’ (S of S 2: 11, 12)



Amid the battle for souls—the gravitational pull of sin and sadness--let us discover the upward rising of Easter. The Spirit of Resurrection speaks to us constantly; in truth, ‘the heavens pour forth speech.’(PS 19:2) More evident than the life-signs of spring, we can detect the Spirit of Resurrection everywhere. All we must do is listen and look.

Jesus stormed the gates of hell to get us out of there. Let us encounter the blessed power of this new life in our fellows. Let us declare the triumph of Easter.

Last week I had the privilege of eating lunch at the home of Melissa and Garry Ingraham in upstate New York. Both come out of histories of same-sex attraction; together, united in Christ, they declare His image—humble and whole as man and woman submit to each other out of reverence for Him. (Eph. 5: 21)

Their household is full of life. The couple assumed the care of Garry’s aging parents. Father is dead now but Mother carries on peacefully through their love. Though stooped in body, she stands upright in Christ. Doubtless she is assisted by the joyful presence of the Ingraham’s two toddlers. These boys are forces of life, grounded in love. Both bear witness of an attentive mother whose challenges are offset by the care of a faithful husband.

After a meal with Garry and Melissa, I felt renewed. Instead of being overwhelmed by all the

variables of their life, the sheer goodness of that life lifted me up. The Ingrahams testify of Resurrection without sermonizing.

The next day I visited my favorite couple in New York City, Joe and Anne Nolte. Joe is a great friend from Vineyard days, and Anne is a new friend, a doctor and fellow Catholic who received a prophetic call from God. She said 'yes' to providing the only genuinely Catholic women's health clinic in Manhattan. That means no contraception or abortion, with wise and natural help for couples seeking to overcome obstacles to pregnancy. All this in the most expensive and (arguably) secular zone in the USA!

Jesus is committed to life; He has blazed a trail for this faithful woman. She now helps engender life in couple after couple who have found her 'life-space'—a small suite of offices in midtown Manhattan. And what life! Anne proudly showed me pictures of 180 babies who have been born as a result of her team's inspired care. Each one is a miracle, an Easter gift delivered by servants who said 'yes' to His life.

New York City can be intimidating: rich, inaccessible, proud. Life rises from its depths, more powerful than the down-drag of sin and selfishness.

Jesus has risen from the dead, and we rise with Him. Like the Noltes and the Ingrahams, we have the privilege of including others in that upward surge. He delights in giving us His Kingdom, (Lk 12:32) and our joy hinges on extending that life to others.

'Without the Life, there is no living.' (Thomas A Kempis)

'Let us consider how we may provoke one another to love and good deeds.' - (Heb. 10: 24)