

Art and Ali

How kindness can change a conversation



GRACE FONTENOT'S MONTHLY UPDATE



AUGUST 2018

Dear Friends and Family,

Ali was standing alone, grimacing at the *Art of Life* Exhibit on the second day of Justice For All's outreach event at the University of Kansas. I immediately walked over to him and asked him what he thought of the exhibit.

Ali: I stopped because I was walking to class this morning and saw *Las Meninas*. I love *Las Meninas*, and I just don't understand why you're using it with this caption, "The art of life is better than abortion."

I noticed that as I engaged Ali, he appeared to be very nervous; so as I responded, I very intentionally used a friendly tone to try and put him at ease:

Grace: That's a great question! We're displaying these great works of art to draw comparisons between the subjects in the paintings and the feelings and circumstances women may experience during unplanned pregnancy.

[For instance, because *Las Meninas* features a girl who is the "center of attention," we are showing it to help people consider what many women experience when facing unplanned pregnancy - a great deal of unwanted attention brought on themselves, their bodies, and their actions.]

One statement we're making is, 'Even though these circumstances can be very difficult, they are part of the art of life...and the art of life is better than abortion.' We're trying to start conversations and see what other people think about this. What's your response?

Ali: I'm pro-choice. I'm not going to change my mind on that, but I would like to know your reasoning for being pro-life.

We then walked through the Equal Rights Argument, a powerful response to the pro-choice position. [For more information about the Equal Rights Argument, see www.jfaweb.org/equal-rights as well as Part 3 of my recent newsletter series, "A Living Room Conversation," found at www.jfaweb.org/living-room-conversation.] Ali then had to leave for class, but before he left, he said:

Ali: I'm not going to say I'm 100% pro-life now, but you've definitely given me something to think about that I have never considered before. I had a wonderful conversation. Thank you so much for talking with me today.

Ali started out our conversation with his arms crossed, his posture rigid, and his demeanor cold and defensive. Thirty minutes later, we were so enjoying our dialogue that we were both smiling and laughing, and he told me that he was sad to have to cut our conversation short because his class was starting soon. I believe we parted as friends that day because Ali realized that I *genuinely respected him* and desired to thoroughly understand his views. Because of this, he was then open to hearing my views on abortion and open to processing through them with me.

Here is my challenge for you: start a conversation that matters, in a *manner* that says to the other person, "you matter." Be kind, ask questions, and really listen.

For the sake of His sorrowful passion,



Las Meninas by Diego Velázquez (Spain, 1656). For more information about the painting, see www.jfaweb.org/art-of-life.



JUSTICE FOR ALL - TRAINING THOUSANDS TO MAKE ABORTION UNTHINKABLE FOR MILLIONS, ONE PERSON AT A TIME

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