

## NEW LIFE

*By Anne Sloan*

As I sat on the bench in front of our building on a bright blue spring day, I looked across the street at a tree whose leaves were bursting out in the warm sunshine, a shiny, beautiful green. Only weeks before the branches were gray and stark against a gloomy winter sky. The transition was renewed life. A little dormant bulb or root which sleeps through the winter, awakens each year and sends up its renewed life. To me, these examples do not really describe new life, only renewed life. I believe a baby is the epitome of new life, be it a baby bear, baby bird or baby seal. Each one a living, breathing tiny being that never existed before.

This is new life. Contemplating this topic and describing it did not come easy. I think this was because I had never put my thoughts about it into words. A human baby can bring about a certain kind of new life to the parents with its hopes and dreams and plans that weren't there before. As the mother of seven, I can attest to the fact that these new lives meant a kind of new life for me, and for their father.

Another thought comes to me about a different sort of new life. Our eldest daughter died when she was only sixteen. The end of her earthly existence brought about another new life for her--eternal life. We thought for a time our lives had ended, but they were gradually renewed by love and prayers and the support of family and friends and an unprecedented communion with God, Who had taken her into His life. When the sword of sorrow comes to hollow out a soul, it makes a space that can fill with special joy. We look forward to that time when there will be only peace and light and happiness with the Creator of all new life.

There is no universal definition of life, new or otherwise. To define life in unequivocal terms is still a challenge for scientists. We have life and renewed life and new life but it is certainly beyond my understanding to convincingly define or describe any of them. A poet and expectant mother, Meaghan Moeller, may have given us a glimmer of insight into this mystery when she wrote:

The promise of a new life  
Beams like the sun rising o'er the east.  
Bright, vibrant, illuminating and warm.  
The light it is destined to bring  
To this world has already brightened our lives.