

A reading from the Book of Tobit

On their wedding night Tobiah arose from bed and said to his wife,

“Sister, get up. Let us pray and beg our Lord
to have mercy on us and to grant us deliverance.”

Sarah got up, and they started to pray and beg that deliverance might be theirs.

They began with these words:

“Blessed are you, O God of our fathers;
praised be your name forever and ever.

Let the heavens and all your creation
praise you forever.

You made Adam and you gave him his wife Eve
to be his help and support;
and from these two the human race descended.

You said, ‘It is not good for the man to be alone;
let us make him a partner like himself.’

Now, Lord, you know that I take this wife of mine
not because of lust,
but for a noble purpose.

Call down your mercy on me and on her,
and allow us to live together to a happy old age.”

They said together, “Amen, amen.”

The Word of the Lord. *R. Thanks be to God*

Commentary

From their marriage bed, Tobiah rises and tells his bride to get up to join him in prayer to God. Given her history – seven previous husbands dying after making love to Sarah – Tobiah’s request is more than understandable. It’s nearly a necessity! What follows is a tender prayer that any married couple would hope to speak. He blesses the God of his ancestors and praises the God of creation who fashioned Adam and Eve. Just as Eve was a perfect complement to Adam, Tobiah sees Sarah as an equally fitting partner. He tells God that he has taken his wife not for sexual pleasure but for true virtue. He begs God for mercy upon them both and that they may reach old age together. Sarah adds her voice to the prayer as they conclude, “Amen.”

This text reveals that marriage is not just to temper sexual desires, but that real spiritual strength is found in the sacrament. It has a noble purpose – which is to help, support, and mutually uphold one another into old age.

This reading encourages couples to foster a shared prayer life, and reveals the blessings that flow from it.