

Session 7 · A Marriage Made in Heaven

Tobit 7:1-8:9a

What We Found

At Raguel's door we watched covenant honesty: asked for his daughter, a father with every motive to soften the record told the suitor the whole truth, seven husbands, seven deaths, and only then entrusted her under the decree of the book of Moses. Full truth before full gift: honest disclosure honors consent and sets it free, letting the yes be given with open eyes. And Edna showed us accompaniment: she went into the feared room with her daughter, named the sorrow out loud, and set the biggest available name of God against it: the Lord of heaven and earth grant you joy in place of this sorrow of yours.

Then the door closed on the most feared night in the book, and the couple's sequence taught the theology: obedience first (the remedy burned, the demon fled and the angel bound him), then prayer, Sister, get up, and let us pray, and only then sleep. The prayer's architecture: blessing before petition; the marriage grounded in creation, quoting Genesis 2 directly; grasping renounced, not because of lust, but with sincerity; and one petition: mercy, and growing old together. Sarah's whole recorded wedding speech: Amen.

With a Catechism in hand we discovered that the Church quotes this entire prayer in her teaching on the meaning of sexuality (CCC 2361), and names Tobit among Scripture's moving witnesses to the fidelity and tenderness of spouses (CCC 1611). A book missing from most Bibles is load-bearing under the Church's theology of married love.

And we met the Reformation objection that Rome built sacramental marriage on a mistranslation. We conceded freely: the word sacramentum proves nothing, marriage is indeed a creation ordinance valid among all peoples, and the sevenfold enumeration developed over centuries. Then we pressed the reality the word was reaching for: Ephesians 5 reveals marriage as designed from the beginning to signify Christ and the Church; Mark 10 names God himself as the joiner; and spouses commanded to love with Christ's own self-giving love cannot do it without his grace. Sign, signified, divine agency, grace: the sacrament was being lived long before it was enumerated, as the Church possessed the Trinity before Nicaea found the words.

Voices of the Church

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

Tertullian · *To His Wife 2.8 (c. AD 202)*

How beautiful the marriage of two Christians: one in hope, one in desire, one in the way of life they follow; they pray together, worship together, fast together, instructing and encouraging one another. Nothing divides them, in flesh or in spirit. The first act of Tobias and Sarah's union is this description in embryo: a prayer said in unison, sealed with her Amen.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. John Chrysostom · *Homily 20 on Ephesians (c. AD 397)*

Chrysostom tells husbands to say to their wives: I love you more than my own life, and to make

every household a little church where spouses pray, read Scripture, and sanctify one another. Married love, so ordered, becomes a living image of Christ's love for the Church.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. John Paul II · *Familiaris Consortio 11 (1981)*

God is love, and in creating humanity male and female he inscribed in them the vocation, and the capacity and responsibility, of love and communion. Love is the fundamental and innate vocation of every human being, and marriage is its covenant form. Destined for you from eternity is this teaching in the old tongue.

Live It This Week

1. If you are married: pray aloud with your spouse once this week, and consider using Tobias and Sarah's prayer itself (Tobit 8:5-8), ending with a shared Amen. If that is new territory, start with one Our Father, hands held.
2. If you are single: write your own version of the petition, what you are actually asking God for in love and vocation, and pray it daily this week. Let Tobias school your wants: mercy, sincerity, and the long haul.
3. Read Tobit 8:9b-21 and chapter 9 before next session, and BRING YOUR TAKE-HOME SHEET FROM SESSION 1, fold intact. The envelopes open next week.

Scripture Memory · Tobit 8:7 (RSV2CE)

"And now, O Lord, I am not taking this sister of mine because of lust, but with sincerity. Grant that I may find mercy and may grow old together with her."

Before Next Session. Read Tobit 8:9b-21 and chapter 9. Bring your Session 1 take-home sheet, fold intact.

Catechism CCC 1601 · CCC 1603-1605 · CCC 1611 · CCC 2361