

Prayer

O God, who were pleased to give us
the shining example of the Holy Family,
graciously grant that we may imitate them
in practicing the virtues of family life
and in the bonds of charity,
and so, in the joy of your house,
delight one day in eternal rewards.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.
Amen



Our Catholic faith and the teaching of the Church enable us to affirm the truth about marriage and family:

We believe in Jesus Christ, God's Son, our Saviour, who reveals what it is to be fully human, who shows God's love to us and commands that we love one another.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, whose living presence sanctifies our hearts and purifies our desires.



THE CALL, THE JOURNEY AND THE MISSION

An Invitation from the Bishops of England and Wales to Reflect on the Gift of Marriage and Family Life

The prayer of Tobias and Sarah



Scripture: Tobit 8:4-8

Please note: 'Tobit' is only found in a 'Catholic Bible' i.e. one that contains the deuterocanonical books. This story is about the wedding night of Tobias and Sarah. Sarah's seven previous bridegrooms all died on their wedding night.

When they had finished eating and drinking they wanted to retire; so they took the young man and brought him into the bedroom. Then Tobias remembered the words of Raphael, and he took the fish's liver and heart out of the bag where he had them and put them on the embers of the incense. The odour of the fish so repelled the demon that he fled to the remotest parts of Egypt. But Raphael followed him, and at once bound him there hand and foot. When the parents had gone out and shut the door of the room, Tobias got out of bed and said to Sarah, "Sister, get up, and let us pray and implore our Lord that he grant us mercy and safety." So she got up, and they began to pray and implore that they might be kept safe. Tobias began by saying, "Blessed are you, O God of our ancestors, and blessed is your name in all generations for ever. Let the heavens and the whole creation bless you for ever. You made Adam, and for him you made his wife Eve as a helper and support. From the two of them the human race has sprung. You said, It is not good that the man should be alone; let us make a helper for him like himself. I now am taking this kinswoman of mine, not because of lust, but with sincerity. Grant that she and I may find mercy and that we may grow old together." And they both said, "Amen, Amen."

Questions to ponder

- How might Sarah and Tobias have felt on their wedding night?
- How do you think Sarah's parents felt leaving their daughter in the bridal chamber? Can you describe a time when you felt something similar?
- What does it mean to walk in trust with the Lord?
- When have you and/or your family had an experience of God's mercy?
- What part does prayer play in your daily life?
- How has prayer helped you and/or your family?

Bishops' Question

What are your struggles and fears of marriage and family life today?

Record your responses.