

Reading

Tobit 7:6–14

The Lord of heaven favour you, my child, and grant you his grace and peace.

A reading from the book of Tobit.

⁶ Raguel kissed Tobias and wept.

⁷ Then finding words, he said, ‘Blessings on you, child!
You are the son of a noble father.

How sad it is that someone so virtuous
and full of good deeds should have gone blind!’

He fell on the neck of his kinsman Tobias and wept.

⁸ And his wife Edna wept for him, and so did his daughter Sarah.

⁹ Raguel killed a sheep from the flock,
and they gave Tobias and Raphael a warm-hearted welcome.

They washed and bathed and sat down to table.

Then Tobias said to Raphael,

‘Brother Azarias, will you ask Raguel to give me my sister Sarah?’

¹⁰ Raguel overheard the words, and said to the young man,

‘Eat and drink, and make the most of your evening;
no one else has the right to take my daughter Sarah

— no one but you, my brother.

In any case I, for my own part, am not at liberty to give her to anyone
else, since you are her next of kin.

However, my boy, I must be frank with you:

¹¹ I have tried to find a husband for her seven times among our kinsmen,
and all of them have died the first evening, on going to her room.

But for the present, my boy, eat and drink;
the Lord will grant you his grace and peace.’

Tobias spoke out,

‘I will not hear of eating and drinking
till you have come to a decision about me.’

Raguel answered,
‘Very well. Since, as prescribed by the Book of Moses,
she is given to you, heaven itself decrees she shall be yours.
I shall therefore entrust your sister to you.
From now you are her brother and she is your sister.
She is given to you from today for ever.
The Lord of heaven favour you tonight, my child,
and grant you his grace and peace.’

¹² Raguel called for his daughter Sarah,
took her by the hand and gave her to Tobias with these words,
‘I entrust her to you;
the law and the ruling recorded in the Book of Moses
assign her to you as your wife.
Take her; take her home to your father’s house with a good conscience.
The God of heaven grant you a good journey in peace.’

¹³ Then he turned to her mother
and asked her to fetch him writing paper.
He drew up the marriage contract,
how he gave his daughter as bride to Tobias
according to the ordinance in the Law of Moses.

¹⁴ After this they began to eat and drink.

The word of the Lord.

Looking at the Text

M O-4 Tobit 7:6-14

The Lord of heaven favours you, my child, and grants you his grace and peace.

The Book of Tobit:

This is a story about being faithful to God and family, and persistently trying to live a good life. Tobit came from the tribe of Naphtali, who thought they were good, but were not particularly so! Tobit was the one in the tribe who kept his faith when all around were losing theirs. He did what the law required, and gave a portion of his income for good causes — however, his downfall was pride in his own goodness. He looked after his wider family, and was guided and protected by an angel sent by God (called ‘Azariah’ in the story, but his real name was ‘Raphael’!) Tobit’s wife was Anna, a strong woman. Their son was Tobias, who eventually married his bride-to-be, Sarah, who had been very long-suffering in trying to find the right husband. Her father, Raguel, and mother, Edna, cared very much for Sarah’s wellbeing and future, and were trying to help her marry someone who would live long enough to consummate the marriage!

Specific background for this passage

Tobias, son of Tobit, is of the same tribe and a kinsman of Raguel, father of Sarah, whom Tobias is destined to marry. He finally meets Sarah’s parents. Raguel, her father, is blind. He is so delighted to meet Tobias, Son of Tobit, a ‘suitable’ spouse for his daughter Sarah, that he jumps up and kisses him, and the engagement is formally announced.

This story comes from a very different age and culture from our own. It feels rather strange to us. However, after a short time of reflection, you may find some aspects of it striking.

Reflecting on Scripture together

Use the ‘Reflecting on Scripture together — a simple way’ in the introduction ‘Choosing your Wedding readings’.

Further Reflection

Following the ‘slow reading’ process, here are some questions for further reflection:

- What strikes you about Tobias’s searching for a wife? And Sarah’s hopes? How did you ‘search’ for each other? What were your hopes and concerns about finding the right person? What role have your own parents played in your understanding of marriage, what it is, and what it is not? What other voices have influenced you? What role do your parents have now in supporting your engagement and future life together? Who else will support you?
- What do you particularly like about this reading? Why might it be suitable for your wedding?

Note about the Reading

M = this indicates that this is a reading which speaks explicitly about Marriage. One of the chosen readings must be taken from those which are about Marriage.

These notes have been prepared by Caroline Dollard, Marriage & Family Life Project, CBCEW www.catholicfamily.org.uk This is one of a series of Liturgy Office resources to support the *Order of Celebrating Matrimony*. www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/Resources/Marriage © 2016 Catholic Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales