

Red & Ghislaine Djeebet

Love implies responsibility. Ghislaine and Red, you probably understand this better than most. Your love for each other first blossomed when you were very young, and it has born fruit in your growing family. Many couples approach their wedding day wearing “rose-colored glasses.” They believe that every day will be nothing but love and happiness. But you come to this wedding with considerable experience about the joys and sorrows of life. You have encountered the reliability of your love but also the unpredictabilities of life. Either of these can raise philosophical questions: “What is love? How did I fall in love with this person?” and “What is life? What does it mean to be born and to die, to suffer and to suffer loss?” These questions about the beauty and the crises of life do not find easy answers, but the questions are worth asking until you find answers that make sense.

Among the bible readings you selected for your wedding is a crisis moment in the Book of Tobit. The entire book opens with a first-person account by a happily married man, Tobit, who led an upright and devout life, performing many acts of charity. He even buried the bodies of murder victims. But then the killers came after him, so he fled. In his exile, he and his wife Anna continued works of charity. They invited the poor to their table, and when Tobit heard about another murder, he buried that victim. You’d think God would be very pleased with Tobit, and that his life would enjoy many blessings. But you’d be looking at the world with rose-colored glasses. After his last act of charity, Tobit lay down outside to sleep, unaware of the birds perched on the wall above his head. Their droppings fell into his eyes, and Tobit was blinded. He was among a long list of people who ask the philosophical question, “Why do bad things happen to those who are good?”

That’s the setup for the first reading we heard today. It concerns Tobit’s son Tobiah, who takes a journey on behalf of his family, escorted by a guide he calls Azariah, but who is actually an angel in disguise, an angel named Raphael. On the trip Tobiah falls in love with a kinswoman, Sarah. Her father Raguel agrees to the wedding but warns Tobiah that Sarah has been married seven times, and all seven grooms died on their wedding night. Bad things have happened to good people. Tobiah didn’t care. As the book draws to its conclusion, Tobiah’s love and prayers save their marriage, and Raphael secures an ointment that heals Tobit of his blindness. They all live happily after after.

Red and Ghislaine, you are not the first people to undergo the joys and the crises that dot the road of life. Still, your challenges are unique to you. We believe that God’s love is also unique to you. Just as Tobiah overcame the many crises of his young life through prayer and love, so you may enjoy a bright future together. Sometimes this is hard to see; we can be as blind as Tobit. But the love and charity that God has placed in your heart will provide a firm foundation, the solid rock upon which you build your home.