

Commentary on the Gospel for Thu, Jun 4th 2015

For those celebrating the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ today, use this reflection.

It's amazing what can happen to people when they turn their fears over to God and invite him into their lives as Tobiah and Sarah did in today's moving passage from the Book of Tobias.

I didn't originally plan to write this reflection on this passage because it was so long. But as I was waiting for Ascension Thursday Mass to start, I scanned it and got caught up in this story.

It also dawned on me that I knew nothing about Tobias or the background of the story. If Wikipedia is to be believed, he was a member of a tribe from northern Israel that was driven into exile. God sent the angel Raphael to lead him to Sarah's father, Raguel, to propose marriage. Poor Sarah had been cursed by a demon that had killed seven previous bridegrooms before the weddings.

Would Tobiah be the demon's eighth victim? Raguel warned Tobiah about the fate of the others and Sarah also was understandably frightened. Tobiah, trusted that God wanted this marriage but took the precaution of praying with Sarah first.

"Call down your mercy on me and on her and allow us to live together to a happy old age." The passage ends with the couple going to bed (where we can surmise what happened!), just like in an old movie when the door closes and credits roll. According to Wikipedia, Tobiah and Sarah enjoyed a long life together.

Who doesn't enjoy a love story that ends happily? But this story has a larger message for all of us.

At some point, many of us may feel that God is calling us to do something almost beyond our capability such as caring for a handicapped child or a parent with Alzheimer's. Like Tobiah, will we trust enough to say yes? Like Sarah will we believe that God can help us defeat the demons of our lives? Like the two of them, will we turn to prayer for courage and comfort?

Many such stories won't have happily ever after endings but with Tobias and Sarah, can we say "Amen, Amen?" Blessings on all of you facing such challenges.

Eileen Wirth Creighton University Department of Journalism, Media and Computing