

February 2022

## **Introduction to Song of Songs**

When God created the world, he established a space in which he could dwell with human beings—or rather, he created a sacred space in which human beings could dwell with him. As we know, something went terribly wrong, and the human beings were exiled from the garden. Thus began the long journey in which God set out to rescue humanity and return us to the Garden. God's desire has always been that we once again dwell with him.

And truly, God never left his people. Here are only some of the ways he assured them of his presence. When God made a covenant with Abraham, the flaming torch passed through the halves of the sacrificed animals. God guided the escaped slaves through the wilderness with the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night, and he protected them from Pharaoh's army. God was present in the cloud at the covenant ceremony with Moses. God's presence filled the Tent that was his Tabernacle, and then his presence filled the Temple too. But as things had gone wrong in the garden, so, too, they went wrong later for Israel. Israel was disobedient again and again. The Temple was destroyed, and Ezekiel saw the glory of God leave the Temple.

One way of reading the Song of Songs is as inspired reflection on the creation story in Genesis. With this perspective, we can understand that human beings are "sacred space." According to one scholar, the "third temple" God will create will somehow be within human beings. And of course, this vision for us is prefigured in Jesus.

In the fullness of time, Jesus, who is God, came to dwell with humanity. The church has long understood Jesus' body to be the Temple that would not be destroyed. At Pentecost, he poured out his Spirit on the Church and on each believer. At that moment, we too became the new Temple. Marriage imagery reveals the intimate nature of the sacred space where God and human beings dwell together.

God's love is passionate and personal. It is also the most powerful creative force in the cosmos. His love transforms ordinary married life and love into a sacred space, a space Pope Francis calls the "temple of marital communion" where God dwells.

"The Lord's presence dwells in real and concrete families, with all their daily troubles and struggles, joys and hopes. Living in a family makes it hard for us to feign or lie; we cannot hide behind a mask. If that authenticity is inspired by love, then the Lord reigns there, with his joy and his peace. The spirituality of family love is made up of thousands of small but real gestures. In that variety of gifts and encounters which deepen communion, God has his dwelling place. This mutual concern "brings together the human and the divine," for it is filled with the love of God. In the end, marital spirituality is a spirituality of the bond in which divine love dwells." *Amoris Laetitia* 314.

The following meditations on the Song of Songs invite us as married couples to enter into the world of love and symbol. Our ordinary lives, so full of regular ordinary stuff that is transformed by God's grace, reveal to the world the beauty, wonder, creativity and healing power of God's own life. We participate in the "love song" which is God's song, his longing to be one with the bride on whom he has spent everything to win her for himself.

The famous Jewish rabbi Akiva (AD 40–137) said the Song of Songs is the holy of holies of religious literature because of the way it speaks of God's love for his people as well as the love of a man and woman—the lover and his beloved.

As you would savor a fine wine or a sweet dessert, take your time with the selected passages and the meditations. Allow yourselves to move back and forth between your love for your spouse in all its delight and your relationship with the Lord as individuals and as a couple. Enjoy the dialogue between lovers. Delight in the language of physical beauty, sexuality, fullness of femininity and masculinity, gift of self, passion, and personal love. Allow yourselves to rekindle your own love for each other in all its richness—eros, agape, and friendship.



## Song of Songs 1:1–7

### Pray

*God, come to our assistance.*

**-Lord, make haste to help us.**

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit*

**-As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

### Reading: Song of Songs 1:1–7

The Song of Songs, which is Solomon's. <sup>2</sup> Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth! For your love is better than wine, <sup>3</sup> your anointing oils are fragrant, your name is perfume poured out; therefore the maidens love you. <sup>4</sup> Draw me after you, let us make haste. The king has brought me into his chambers. We will exult and rejoice in you; we will extol your love more than wine; rightly do they love you. <sup>5</sup> I am black and beautiful, O daughters of Jerusalem, like the tents of Kedar, like the curtains of Solomon. <sup>6</sup> Do not gaze at me because I am dark, because the sun has gazed on me. My mother's sons were angry with me; they made me keeper of the vineyards, but my own vineyard I have not kept! <sup>7</sup> Tell me, you whom my soul loves, where you pasture your flock, where you make it lie down at noon; for why should I be like one who is veiled beside the flocks of your companions?

### Meditation

Do you remember your first kiss? The tenderness of her touch? The strength in his arms? The way in which you were moved, overwhelmed? Do you remember becoming a willing captive? Do you remember the joy and sweetness of that first blush of love?

Now do you remember the first time you were aware that Jesus loved you? Do you remember being willing to do anything for him? To go anywhere with him?

As a couple, seek him together. Let the presence of his Holy Spirit be his tender kiss, his loving embrace. Remember and invite him to renew those first blushes of love and know that his love is better than any wine you have ever had.

**Quiet reflection:** *Reflect on one or two ideas that came to mind in the reading or the meditation. Share one idea with your spouse.*

**Prayers and Intentions:** *As if to a friend, tell the Lord what and who are on your mind.*

**Lord's Prayer:** *Conclude your intentions by praying the Lord's Prayer together.*

**Blessing:** *May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.*

**Unity Prayer:** *God, make our hearts one. Amen.*



## Song of Songs 1:8–17

### Pray

*God, come to our assistance.*

**-Lord, make haste to help us.**

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit*

**-As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

### Reading: Song of Songs 1:8–17

If you do not know, O fairest among women, follow the tracks of the flock, and pasture your kids beside the shepherds' tents. <sup>9</sup> I compare you, my love, to a mare among Pharaoh's chariots. <sup>10</sup> Your cheeks are comely with ornaments, your neck with strings of jewels. <sup>11</sup> We will make you ornaments of gold, studded with silver. <sup>12</sup> While the king was on his couch, my nard gave forth its fragrance. <sup>13</sup> My beloved is to me a bag of myrrh that lies between my breasts. <sup>14</sup> My beloved is to me a cluster of henna blossoms in the vineyards of En-gedi. <sup>15</sup> Ah, you are beautiful, my love; ah, you are beautiful; your eyes are doves. <sup>16</sup> Ah, you are beautiful, my beloved, truly lovely. Our couch is green; <sup>17</sup> the beams of our house are cedar, our rafters are pine.

### Meditation

Each of us possesses a unique beauty and splendor. It is the beauty and splendor of God's reflected glory; it is his image that we see in each other. But sometimes we cover that beauty. We hide it from each other. Sometimes we don't see it because we have been hurt by the other; sometimes we don't see it because we ourselves have caused hurt and are filled with shame. Sometimes we get caught up in the busyness of life and simply take each other for granted. But how does God see his beloved? She is the fairest, most beautiful of all women. "You are beautiful, my beloved, truly lovely!" We should pray that God grant us the great gift of seeing our spouse as God sees him or her. When we do, we behold the reflected glory of God himself.

**Quiet reflection:** *Reflect on one or two ideas that came to mind in the reading or the meditation. Share one idea with your spouse.*

**Prayers and Intentions:** *As if to a friend, tell the Lord what and who are on your mind.*

**Lord's Prayer:** *Conclude your intentions by praying the Lord's Prayer together.*

**Blessing:** *May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.*

**Unity Prayer:** *God, make our hearts one. Amen.*



## Song of Songs 2:3–7

### Pray

*God, come to our assistance.*

***-Lord, make haste to help us.***

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit*

***-As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.***

### Reading: Song of Songs 2:3–7

<sup>3</sup> As an apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among young men. With great delight I sat in his shadow, and his fruit was sweet to my taste. <sup>4</sup> He brought me to the banqueting house, and his intention toward me was love. <sup>5</sup> Sustain me with raisins, refresh me with apples; for I am faint with love. <sup>6</sup> O that his left hand were under my head, and that his right hand embraced me! <sup>7</sup> I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, by the gazelles or the wild does: do not stir up or awaken love until it is ready!

### Meditation

Our love, God's love. What does it mean to be faint with love? In our ordinary, practical experience of the sacred space that is our marriage, we might miss the profound experience of being "faint with love." But we experience many wonderful moments, and just need to stop and notice them. Moments. Think of the tender moments when our spouse holds us at just the right time, the funny comment that turns a tense moment into a light moment, the moments when we use the power we have over our spouse to heal or help, rather than to hurt or hinder. At these times, we sustain each other with a kind word, a simple touch, a tender kiss. Pondering them, we can become "faint with love."

**Quiet reflection:** *Reflect on one or two ideas that came to mind in the reading or the meditation. Share one idea with your spouse.*

**Prayers and Intentions:** *As if to a friend, tell the Lord what and who are on your mind.*

**Lord's Prayer:** *Conclude your intentions by praying the Lord's Prayer together.*

**Blessing:** *May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.*

**Unity Prayer:** *God, make our hearts one. Amen.*



## Song of Songs 2:10–17

### Pray

*God, come to our assistance.*

***-Lord, make haste to help us.***

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit*

***-As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.***

### Reading: Song of Songs 2:10–17

<sup>10</sup> My beloved speaks and says to me: "Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away; <sup>11</sup> for now the winter is past, the rain is over and gone. <sup>12</sup> The flowers appear on the earth; the time of singing has come, and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land. <sup>13</sup> The fig tree puts forth its figs, and the vines are in blossom; they give forth fragrance. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away. <sup>14</sup> O my dove, in the clefts of the rock, in the covert of the cliff, let me see your face, let me hear your voice; for your voice is sweet, and your face is lovely. <sup>15</sup> Catch us the foxes, the little foxes, that ruin the vineyards—for our vineyards are in blossom." <sup>16</sup> My beloved is mine and I am his; he pastures his flock among the lilies. <sup>17</sup> Until the day breathes and the shadows flee, turn, my beloved, be like a gazelle or a young stag on the cleft mountains.

### Meditation

We belong to each other. We have made a gift of ourselves to the other. But it is not always easy. There are times when we are tempted to withhold all or some of that gift. There are times when the "little foxes" of life wreak havoc. They appear as lost jobs, financial difficulties, dashed hopes, crises with our children, difficult neighbors, false friends, the death of parents and loved ones—to name but a few of the challenges of a lifetime together. What sustains us? A love that is both mutual and exclusive. "My beloved is mine and I am his." In this love, we know that we are not alone. We belong to each other; even more important, we belong to God, and he to us.

**Quiet reflection:** *Reflect on one or two ideas that came to mind in the reading or the meditation. Share one idea with your spouse.*

**Prayers and Intentions:** *As if to a friend, tell the Lord what and who are on your mind.*

**Lord's Prayer:** *Conclude your intentions by praying the Lord's Prayer together.*

**Blessing:** *May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.*

**Unity Prayer:** *God, make our hearts one. Amen.*



## Song of Songs 3:1–5

### Pray

*God, come to our assistance.*

**-Lord, make haste to help us.**

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit*

**-As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

### Reading: Song of Songs 3:1–5

Upon my bed at night I sought him whom my soul loves; I sought him, but found him not; I called him, but he gave no answer. <sup>2</sup> "I will rise now and go about the city, in the streets and in the squares; I will seek him whom my soul loves." I sought him, but found him not. <sup>3</sup> The sentinels found me, as they went about in the city. "Have you seen him whom my soul loves?" <sup>4</sup> Scarcely had I passed them, when I found him whom my soul loves. I held him, and would not let him go until I brought him into my mother's house, and into the chamber of her that conceived me. <sup>5</sup> I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, by the gazelles or the wild does: do not stir up or awaken love until it is ready!

### Meditation

We have all had the experience of feeling like God is distant. There are moments when we, like the woman in the Song, have searched the city and not found him. It is possible that even as we read this meditation, we are longing to find "him whom my soul loves." It is at these times that we take consolation that God has turned our marriage into a sacred space in which he dwells. In our love for each other, he is there. His presence is not dependent on our feelings; it rests entirely on his promise and his nature. He is the faithful lover who, even when we don't feel his presence, is near to us. We can call out to him, even cry out to him. He always hears, and often we are surprised to find "him whom our soul loves"—in the kind words, tender caresses, considerate actions, and faithful presence of our spouse.

**Quiet reflection:** *Reflect on one or two ideas that came to mind in the reading or the meditation. Share one idea with your spouse.*

**Prayers and Intentions:** *As if to a friend, tell the Lord what and who are on your mind.*

**Lord's Prayer:** *Conclude your intentions by praying the Lord's Prayer together.*

**Blessing:** *May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.*

**Unity Prayer:** *God, make our hearts one. Amen.*



## Song of Songs 4:7–11

### Pray

*God, come to our assistance.*

**-Lord, make haste to help us.**

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit*

**-As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

### Reading: Song of Songs 4:7–11

<sup>7</sup> You are altogether beautiful, my love; there is no flaw in you. Come with me from Lebanon, my bride; come with me from Lebanon. Depart from the peak of Amana, from the peak of Senir and Hermon, from the dens of lions, from the mountains of leopards. <sup>9</sup> You have ravished my heart, my sister, my bride, you have ravished my heart with a glance of your eyes, with one jewel of your necklace. <sup>10</sup> How sweet is your love, my sister, my bride! how much better is your love than wine, and the fragrance of your oils than any spice! <sup>11</sup> Your lips distill nectar, my bride; honey and milk are under your tongue; the scent of your garments is like the scent of Lebanon.

### Meditation

The groom says to his bride, “you have ravished my heart.” It could also be translated, “you have stolen my heart,” or “you have bewitched me.” The groom has been captured by his beloved, and he is a willing captive. Do you remember when that happened in your relationship with your spouse? Do you remember being head over heels in love?

This song is about God and us as much as it is about our love for each other. The sacred author invites us to believe that God is moved to love us. Something about us has stolen his heart. This is the nature of love. This dialogue between lovers reveals so much. We see not only our love for our spouse, but God’s love for his people, Christ’s love for his bride the Church, and the intense love that God has for each human person. Our marriages are designed to be sacred places where the life and love of God can be encountered. Tell your spouse that you remain his/her willing captive. Then, hear the Lord say the same thing to you. As he speaks, he is inviting you into the very life of the Trinity.

**Quiet reflection:** *Reflect on one or two ideas that came to mind in the reading or the meditation. Share one idea with your spouse.*

**Prayers and Intentions:** *As if to a friend, tell the Lord what and who are on your mind.*

**Lord’s Prayer:** *Conclude your intentions by praying the Lord’s Prayer together.*

**Blessing:** *May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.*

**Unity Prayer:** *God, make our hearts one. Amen.*



## Song of Songs 4:12–5:1

### Pray

*God, come to our assistance.*

***-Lord, make haste to help us.***

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit*

***-As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.***

### Reading: Song of Songs 4:12–5:1

A garden locked is my sister, my bride, a garden locked, a fountain sealed. <sup>13</sup> Your channel is an orchard of pomegranates with all choicest fruits, henna with nard, <sup>14</sup> nard and saffron, calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense, myrrh and aloes, with all chief spices -- <sup>15</sup> a garden fountain, a well of living water, and flowing streams from Lebanon. <sup>16</sup> Awake, O north wind, and come, O south wind! Blow upon my garden that its fragrance may be wafted abroad. Let my beloved come to his garden, and eat its choicest fruits. <sup>5:1</sup> I come to my garden, my sister, my bride; I gather my myrrh with my spice, I eat my honeycomb with my honey, I drink my wine with my milk. Eat, friends, drink, and be drunk with love.

### Meditation

We saw in the last meditation that the bride had “stolen the heart” of the beloved. He had caught a glimpse of her unique glory and splendor, her beauty—and he was changed. Here we see that she is a garden locked, a fountain sealed. She is master of her own person and her own future. Her love cannot be taken; it must be given. For the groom to “have and to hold from this day forward,” the bride must first make a gift of herself to him. This is true of the groom’s love as well; he is a gift to her that must be renewed daily.

This mutual gift of selves is the occasion for a great party. Think of the banquets and feasts celebrated at Israel's covenant making (Exodus 24:11) and those feasts that Isaiah promises will accompany the great day of the Lord (see Isaiah 25:6; 55:1–3). Think too of the many times that Jesus anticipated the great messianic feast in his Father's kingdom by eating with tax collectors and sinners. Think as well of his Last Supper and all the Eucharistic feasts that have followed in our own lives. Finally, think of the promised wedding feast of the Lamb as John is inspired to foretell it (Revelation 19:7-10). Celebrating with our spouse, with Christ, with all those who have given themselves to him—what a great party that will be.

**Quiet reflection:** *Reflect on one or two ideas that came to mind in the reading or the meditation. Share one idea with your spouse.*

**Prayers and Intentions:** *As if to a friend, tell the Lord what and who are on your mind.*

**Lord’s Prayer:** *Conclude your intentions by praying the Lord’s Prayer together.*

**Blessing:** *May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.*

**Unity Prayer:** *God, make our hearts one. Amen.*



## Song of Songs 5:8–16

## **Pray**

*God, come to our assistance.*

**-Lord, make haste to help us.**

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit*

**-As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

## **Reading: Song of Songs 5:8–16**

I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if you find my beloved, tell him this: I am faint with love.

<sup>9</sup> What is your beloved more than another beloved, O fairest among women? What is your beloved more than another beloved, that you thus adjure us? <sup>10</sup> My beloved is all radiant and ruddy, distinguished among ten thousand. <sup>11</sup> His head is the finest gold; his locks are wavy, black as a raven. <sup>12</sup> His eyes are like doves beside springs of water, bathed in milk, fitly set. <sup>13</sup> His cheeks are like beds of spices, yielding fragrance. His lips are lilies, distilling liquid myrrh. <sup>14</sup> His arms are rounded gold, set with jewels. His body is ivory work, encrusted with sapphires. <sup>15</sup> His legs are alabaster columns, set upon bases of gold. His appearance is like Lebanon, choice as the cedars. <sup>16</sup> His speech is most sweet, and he is altogether desirable. This is my beloved and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem.

## **Meditation**

Listen to the woman extol the beauty and virtue of the man. She is describing the man with words and language that evoke the beauty and splendor of Solomon's Temple. Again, the mixing of imagery of sacred space and marriage reveal the true nature of the sacrament of marriage. Our marriage is a sacred space that invites us to see the ordinariness of daily life in new and stunning ways. While it may seem incongruous for a wife to describe her spouse with morning breath, disheveled hair, and unshaven stubble as "radiant and ruddy, distinguished among ten thousand," she can rejoice in his everyday person as well as his best-presented self. Of his whole person, she can declare proudly, "this is my beloved and this is my friend."

**Quiet reflection:** *Reflect on one or two ideas that came to mind in the reading or the meditation. Share one idea with your spouse.*

**Prayers and Intentions:** *As if to a friend, tell the Lord what and who are on your mind.*

**Lord's Prayer:** *Conclude your intentions by praying the Lord's Prayer together.*

**Blessing:** May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.

**Unity Prayer:** God, make our hearts one. Amen.



## Song of Songs 7:1–9

### Pray

*God, come to our assistance.*

**-Lord, make haste to help us.**

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit*

**-As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

### Reading: Song of Songs 7:1–9

How graceful are your feet in sandals, O queenly maiden! Your rounded thighs are like jewels, the work of a master hand. <sup>2</sup> Your navel is a rounded bowl that never lacks mixed wine. Your belly is a heap of wheat, encircled with lilies. <sup>3</sup> Your two breasts are like two fawns, twins of a gazelle. <sup>4</sup> Your neck is like an ivory tower. Your eyes are pools in Heshbon, by the gate of Bath-rabbim. Your nose is like a tower of Lebanon, overlooking Damascus. <sup>5</sup> Your head crowns you like Carmel, and your flowing locks are like purple; a king is held captive in the tresses. <sup>6</sup> How fair and pleasant you are, O loved one, delectable maiden! <sup>7</sup> You are stately as a palm tree, and your breasts are like its clusters. <sup>8</sup> I say I will climb the palm tree and lay hold of its branches. Oh, may your breasts be like clusters of the vine, and the scent of your breath like apples, <sup>9</sup> and your kisses like the best wine that goes down smoothly, gliding over lips and teeth.

### Meditation

See how the bridegroom, the king, describes his beloved. He is captivated by her beauty. It is physical and sensual. As we age, our love matures just as our bodies do. Though our bodies change, they still express that personal identity that first won the heart of our beloved. While others might think that beauty has faded, a spouse sees with the eyes of love, and affection grows and deepens. Just as we never tire of seeing a beautiful sunrise, a sunset, new spring leaves with their fragrant blossoms, or autumn colors, we delight in the sight of our beloved, in all times and seasons of life. But to see this way, with true vision, requires our daily efforts and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, who transforms our love and keeps it new and fresh. Let us pray: Come, Holy Spirit!

**Quiet reflection:** *Reflect on one or two ideas that came to mind in the reading or the meditation.*

*Share one idea with your spouse.*

**Prayers and Intentions:** *As if to a friend, tell the Lord what and who are on your mind.*

**Lord's Prayer:** *Conclude your intentions by praying the Lord's Prayer together.*

**Blessing:** May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.

**Unity Prayer:** God, make our hearts one. Amen.



## Song of Songs 8:1–4

### Pray

*God, come to our assistance.*

**-Lord, make haste to help us.**

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit*

**-As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

### Reading: Song of Songs 8:1–4

O that you were like a brother to me, who nursed at my mother's breast! If I met you outside, I would kiss you, and no one would despise me. <sup>2</sup> I would lead you and bring you into the house of my mother, and into the chamber of the one who bore me. I would give you spiced wine to drink, the juice of my pomegranates. <sup>3</sup> O that his left hand were under my head, and that his right hand embraced me! <sup>4</sup> I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, do not stir up or awaken love until it is ready!

### Meditation

In the dialogue of lovers, “brother and sister” are terms with special significance. To call our spouse “sister” or “brother” speaks of our union in mankind. We are part of a common family. To call our spouse “sister” or “brother” is to see each other as beloved from the time of our childhood. The term expresses a special, intimate familiarity, a desire to embrace each other entirely. It reveals the gift of our whole selves to the other, including our past. To be brother and sister is to find security and comfort in each other.

And yet we remain a mystery to each other. The joy of discovery never ends. Love longs to know the beloved more deeply, and the more we know, the more we love. Love continues to search, to woo, to long for the other’s touch, the other’s embrace. Our marriage is a sacred space, filled with a love that is both old and ever new. It holds a love that is “strong as death.”

**Quiet reflection:** *Reflect on one or two ideas that came to mind in the reading or the meditation. Share one idea with your spouse.*

**Prayers and Intentions:** *As if to a friend, tell the Lord what and who are on your mind.*

**Lord’s Prayer:** *Conclude your intentions by praying the Lord’s Prayer together.*

**Blessing:** May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.

**Unity Prayer:** God, make our hearts one. Amen.



## Song of Songs 8:5–7

### Pray

*God, come to our assistance.*

***-Lord, make haste to help us.***

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit*

***-As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.***

### Reading: Song of Songs 8:5–7

Who is that coming up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved? Under the apple tree I awakened you. There your mother was in labor with you; there she who bore you was in labor. <sup>6</sup> Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm; for love is strong as death, passion fierce as the grave. Its flashes are flashes of fire, a raging flame. <sup>7</sup> Many waters cannot quench love, neither can floods drown it. If one offered for love all the wealth of his house, it would be utterly scorned.

### Meditation

We began our meditations on the Song of Songs by proposing that the author was reflecting on the creation story in Genesis. The author was pointing prophetically to the time when human beings would be the new Temple in which God would dwell. In creation and in the building of the Temple, God had done something new: he had created a space in which he, the lover, and his people, the beloved, would dwell together.

Now, our marriages, transformed by God's grace and filled with the Holy Spirit, are instances of that sacred space. Our marriages are places where divine love dwells. Today, in the light of the resurrection of Jesus and in the power of the Holy Spirit, we can make known to a world starving for good news that love is stronger than death! Love's "flashes are flashes of fire, a raging flame. Many waters cannot quench love, neither can floods drown it. If one offered for love all the wealth of his house, it would be utterly scorned." Love will never end. And in our marriage in Christ, we participate in that wonderful truth today.

**Quiet reflection:** *Reflect on one or two ideas that came to mind in the reading or the meditation. Share one idea with your spouse.*

**Prayers and Intentions:** *As if to a friend, tell the Lord what and who are on your mind.*

**Lord's Prayer:** *Conclude your intentions by praying the Lord's Prayer together.*

**Blessing:** *May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.*

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