

Ruby and David's Story  
By Fr. Garabed Kochakian

The Holy Spirit shall come upon you and the power of the Most High shall overshadow you.  
[Luke 1:35]

Հոգին Սուրբ +եկեսցէ ի քեզ, եւ զօրութիւն բարձրելոյն հովանի լիցի ի վերայ քոյ:

I remember these words well from the prayer of the prothesis [preparation of the bread and wine] for the Divine Liturgy. We call upon the Holy Spirit to make good and holy not just the Bread and Wine of the Eucharist but all of God's creation. We never cease to call upon the Holy Spirit of Christ to restore, renew and recover.

I had performed the rite of marriage for David and Ruby in our holy sanctuary with the beautiful prayers of Holy Crowning, whereby the power of Christ's Holy Spirit they were imbued with a new life. No longer two but one flesh. Now, husband and wife. David was an extraordinary chef and Ruby worked in the restaurant supply industry. In fact our parish caterer was one of her clients. That's how I got to know her so closely and helped them prepare for their new life together. Truly, they had a loving relationship any pastor would welcome.

We celebrated the day of their wedding together and their married life moved on. I would see them at Liturgy often and prayed with them, always welcoming them in their vows as they approached the altar to receive the Blessed Sacrament of Holy Communion. Then one summer day I heard a report on the evening news of a young man--and the name was instantly familiar to me--who had been accosted and beaten after an evening out with his wife. I immediately reached out to the family with whom I had been close over the years to check the accuracy of this story. Yes. It was true.

It happened like this. After the end of a long work day, David had met his wife Ruby for dinner. Having separate cars for work, they bid farewell at the restaurant--each to go to their respective autos and then meet up at home. On his way to his car, David had been beaten and mutilated by thugs; his head bashed in, in a coma, near death. I went to the hospital to meet Ruby and his family. They were devastated, not knowing where things would go or work out. We prayed together at his side and continued without ceasing every day, lighting candles and enjoining others to pray as well. Thanks be to God, David lived and recovered somewhat. He suffered severe memory loss to a point where he could not recognize his new bride Ruby as his wife. Nonetheless, she was a great and patient support, faithful and hopeful that the Holy Spirit that overshadowed them at their marriage would somehow restore her husband David's memory.

Time passed and outwardly David seemed to be improving. His ugly wounds healed over, but inside his head and his heart, there were many empty holes. Ruby called me and asked, "Can we come and meet with you, Der Hayr?" I asked her if it would be better that I drop by, but she said no. I wondered why not, nonetheless we set a date and time that week to meet. They came to my office around 6 pm, we embraced, sat down and began to chat about his progress. He

remembered her in their relationship but just couldn't put it together that he was married to her. For over an hour our conversation moved from one topic to another. Attempting to focus on them as a couple, I tried to bring David particularly back to some memory of their marriage. Then the Holy Spirit overshadowed me. I had an insight and ideas. I reminded them that we'd been praying all along for improvement, and by God's grace it had happened. I suggested that, since we were at church, we go into the sanctuary to pray in front of the Altar. They answered, "Sure, Der Hayr, let's go".

Without any thought as to what I might use as a prayer, I took with me the Marriage Service Book of prayers as it was sitting there on my desk for a forthcoming wedding service. We stood in front of the Altar and I began to pray for David and Ruby, thanking God for his recovery. Then something compelled me to have them face each other as they did at their wedding and join their foreheads. As I opened my book there in front of my eyes was the prayer of Holy Crowning. I began to read it aloud slowly, deliberately pausing between sentences so that they could reflect on the words. We finished, I blessed them with my hand cross and they venerated it. Then I said "Now David you can kiss your wife." A bit hesitant, he did so and we ended our time together. They left the church to go home.

I had other work in my office to finish, and not watching my desk clock time pass, I stayed much later than I had intended. My phone rang at about 10:30 pm. I thought Yeretgin was calling to see if I was okay because I had told her I would be home earlier. I picked it up and was surprised to hear Ruby's voice saying excitedly, "Der Hayr, Der Hayr, you are not going to believe this!" I replied, "Try me." She told me that she and David had gone out for dinner after they left and started talking about that evening's meeting when all at once he looked up at her and remembered she was his wife.

"WOW! Ruby, are you sure?" She answered that she was. It became apparent that walking through that portion of the wedding service sparked something. Glory to God  $\Phi\omega\nu\eta\rho\ \rho\tau\eta\ \text{U}\sigma\tau\eta\nu\omega\delta$ . I thought . . . and the power of the Most High shall overshadow you. In reflection it was a learning edge for us all about how God works in his time, with his plan through us and for us. I thought about all the gifts graced to me in my priestly ministry, Time, Patience, Reaching out, Listening, Consistency, Obedience and Prayer; it all came together in a miraculous and power-filled way.

Never underestimate the Power of God, in your priestly calling. His presence and power shine through you and with you. You are a priest after the order of Melchizadek. [Hebrews 7:17] and as our Lord said in Luke 1:35, The power of the Most High shall overshadow you . . . without ceasing.

Jesus said, The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor. [Luke 4: 18-19].

This is how Faith, Hope, and Love work in our lives. Faith gives us strength, Hope spurs every possibility, and Love gives life. For what God has joined together, let no man separate.

Today Ruby and David are still happily married and live on the island of Maui in Hawaii. And with their permission I shared their story with you, the reader. We still stay in touch on social media.