

## Sacred Stories

# God's Plan in it All



*spirituality*

### **Suggested Sacred Text**

*Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God.*

1 John 4:7

Annie and Ken first met more than 40 years ago, when they were students at the same university. Their connection was rooted in shared interests: literature, education, theology and art. Yet, as many do, the paths of these friends drifted apart, and it seemed they were only meant to be in each other's lives for that short time.

Fast forward through decades of life, with the highs of love and faith and the lows of frustration and loss. Ken found himself in the unfamiliar territory of a rehabilitation unit after weeks of failing health that had nearly resulted in death.

His long hair and gray beard didn't hide the fatigue on his face.

Annie found herself winded and waning from a cancer diagnosis, no longer able to live independently. She had a hospitalization that led to a period of rehabilitation, prior to a permanent move into assisted living.

Call it coincidence, but I prefer providence. Each had been in the same rehabilitation unit at Madonna Manor for more than a week before they had the energy to process the changes they were living through and begin to meet the other 19 individuals who resided there. When they began traversing the hallways and reading the names outside of each room, each had a "light-bulb" moment: Ken? Annie? From the university? Is that really you?

Just like that, a flood of memories and a time of catching up began for Annie and Ken. In just a

few minutes, they rekindled their friendship, each offering encouragement to and faith in the other. Soon, their paths would diverge again, but this time, they remained in touch.

Ken regained the strength he needed to return home and serve as primary caregiver for his elderly mother. Annie created her new home in the Madonna Manor assisted living community, making many new friends. On the Feast Day of St. Francis; her life ended peacefully; she knew she would reunite with her husband and be with her Creator.

Interestingly, it turns out that the connection between Annie and Ken will continue even after her death. Soon, a children's book that Annie wrote will be published. Within that book are two precious watercolor illustrations, created by Ken decades ago, when he and Annie knew each other at the University.

When we set out in life, we don't know who we will meet, or why we will meet them. We often don't see the ripples and intersections created by our connections with others. Yet, God has a plan in it all – in our sorrows and joys, our pain and our growth. God sends the right people, at the right time, to keep us moving ahead, to ease us into or out of situations, and to teach us about relationships with each other and with God. Sometimes, God even allows a connection to find its way into a book for future generations to enjoy, as happened for Annie and Ken.

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### **Questions for Reflection**

*What experiences or people do you remember that created ripples and intersections with connections in your past, and that you found again later in life?*

*What can you do now and in the future to recognize and appreciate God's divine providence as you journey down the path of life?*