

In the bible, we are told that each of us is a masterpiece of God's creation. I understand this very well because of two very important masterpieces that God sent my family.

In August of two thousand and eight, God called his own masterpiece of creation, my older sister Elise, who was ten years old at the time, back to him. Elise had curly, blond hair and blue eyes. She was a singer, a swimmer, and she played softball. I was six at the time of her death, and because of that, I have very distant memories of her. I do remember how kind she was. She had been healthy prior to her death and died very suddenly. Elise was very strong in her faith and served as an altar server at mass the morning she died.

My family was incomplete for a long time after Elise's death. We are a faith filled family and we turned to God after such a horrendous loss. Our faith helped us to heal, but the void in our hearts remained. Slowly, over time, my parents decided to adopt a child. The news made me happy but also unsure of what would happen with a sister other than Elise. The idea of becoming an older brother to a little girl I did not know made me nervous. Would she love me? Would I love her? Eventually, my parents adopted a little girl from North Africa named Rita who was almost two years old when she came home to us.

Rita is an olive skinned girl with curly brown hair and brown eyes. She's now almost five years old, and she's awesome! She is always smiling and is crazy running around the house. Although she can be devilish, Rita is always an enjoyable presence and makes everyone happy. I love Rita and cannot have asked for a better sister. If we hadn't adopted her, Rita would have lived a very unhappy life in an orphanage in Essaouira, Morocco. Rita is not Elise's replacement, although they have many similarities. How can you replace one of God's masterpieces with another? Rita has brought us much joy where there was much sadness.

Both of my sisters are masterpieces of God's creation. The very sad loss of Elise, which we never thought we would survive, led us to meet another extraordinary little girl. I feel very blessed to have both of these masterpieces as my sisters.