

Forty Weeks ~ Sacred Story



Week Seventeen Encouragements & Wisdom

E & W reflections are additional helps for your Sacred Story prayer journey. Reflect on them ahead of your prayer exercises for the week or outside of your fifteen-minute prayer windows during the week.

Reload, Recommit, Re-engage, Your Fifteen-Minute Daily Prayer

For twelve weeks we have been clearing underbrush, pulling weeds and preparing the soil for a new harvest—a harvest that can produce fruit that endures to eternity. Now is the time to reload, recommit, and reengage your fifteen-minute daily prayer sessions—for life—so you can realize your most profound hopes.

The whole-life confession was our house-cleaning operation. It was also our opportunity to see all the “stuff” in the house of our lives—our whole story. Because of the preparation work leading up to the whole-life confession, many have started to see “with new eyes” how all the different parts of their lives fit together. Many are starting to see how there is, *indeed* a story that is being written.

There is always tremendous relief *and* relaxation after a whole-life confession. That is perfectly natural. I have directed six-day Ignatian retreats for people of all ages for 30 years. A very serious confession, like the one you just engaged, happened mid-way through the retreat. On *every single retreat*, I would always joke with the group: “Well, I guess it is time to go home!” The line *always* elicited laughter because people felt that “the work was complete!” They were hugely relieved that the hard work of confession was done and now it felt time to let down. Yet, the most important work was only beginning. I would tell my retreatants that because of the confession, they were now ready to be more fully open to God’s graces *and* their own lives. Now they were capable of really seeing, hearing and understanding God’s designs for them because of the confession’s graces.

What would happen in those last days of retreat by “reloading, reengaging and

recommitting” to the discipline of silence and prayer was that they were able to realize their most profound hopes. And, God always came through!

You are beginning the second third of a year-long (hopefully life-long) *Sacred Story* journey. Savor the graces from your whole-life confession. Let God teach you what happens when you face your fears and open your heart and life to the Divine Physician. Yet realize that you are only at the *beginning* of the graces God has planned for you:

For I know well the plans I have in mind for you—says the LORD—plans for your welfare and not for woe, so as to give you a future of hope. When you call me, and come and pray to me, I will listen to you. When you look for me, you will find me. Yes, when you seek me with all your heart, I will let you find me...” Jer. 29:11-14.

I would be liable to pastoral malpractice if I failed to strongly urge you *not* to let down your guard now. Recommit to your fifteen-minute prayer times! Because now we begin the true work for which those fifteen-minute prayer sessions are designed. The *enemy of human nature* that Ignatius knows so well will make you feel the work is over. But it is not—and quite frankly, it never is! Reload, reengage, and recommit so that God can write your *Sacred Story* to produce fruit that endures!

