

Forty Weeks ~ Sacred Story



Week Thirty 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.

In our initial Seattle project at two thirds through the Forty Weeks, some of our participants offered reflections on the spiritual benefits received through Forty Weeks *Sacred Story* prayer. The reflections cover many different and important themes:

- Awareness and Attention to Reality
- Finding Balance in Life
- Concern for Others
- Difficulties Encountered
- Gratitude and Healings
- Intimacy and Friendship with God
- God's Love and Mercy
- Peace and Hope
- The Structure and Routine of Prayer
- Appreciation of the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist
- Growth in Self-Understanding

For these next weeks, please find your encouragement and wisdom in reflecting on the spiritual benefits received in praying with *Sacred Story*. This week's reflections cover the theme of Awareness and Attention to Reality. *Sacred Story* prayer is a prayer of awakening and attentiveness. It is a confirmation of the power of *Sacred Story* prayer that both of these gifts are coming to so many people who pray it regularly. St. Ignatius awoke to his life by God's grace. His prayer is still helping us awaken to God and reality today. God is healing the world one life at a time while he writes our sacred story.

AWARENESS/ATTENTION TO REALITY

1. I have realized God and the Holy Spirit are with me always, and also present in, and present to, those around me.
2. (I am) forming a habit of regular and frequent reminders of my reasons for gratitude, God's presence in the here and now, my sins and my need for forgiveness.
3. (The prayer has been) inspirational and personal.
4. Greater consciousness of God's presence in my daily life.



5. I am no longer consumed with "figuring out" what God wants me to do with my life. I am no longer "living" in the future of "life as God wants me to live." Does that make sense? I am here in the present and offering to Him the desires I feel He places on my heart- really big things I greatly desire to do for the Kingdom. The greatest blessing is that I feel God clearly telling me- "Now is not the time. Your desires are good and holy and trying to discern My will for you is good. Your intentions are holy, but you are teetering on obsessing and this is clouding who I need you to be

now. Now is the time to focus on the incredible blessings of today and the gifted obligations I have blessed You with. Continue to offer up and let go of the desires of your heart to be in My hands and not your own. Become the prayerful person I desire you to be. Find meaning in every task I give You. Do everything in praise of Me. I am and will be leading and guarding your future so there is no need to continuously persevere about My will for you. Be at, and return to, peace in Me moment by moment."

6. A new awareness that my spirituality runs from my very beginning through death. Sometimes that is a burden to me and sometimes it is a blessing. It is also a huge responsibility.
7. I like the reminder to live in the present moment. When I apply that, it really helps keep my mind more focused and relaxed. I am definitely more aware of people around me and more open to being present to them and their feelings. It has made me more compassionate and sensitive to other's needs.
8. Sacred Story has helped me reframe my life in the context of God's love and forgiveness. I find myself more awake and more aware of God's grace in my life. I find myself more willing to forgive myself and others. I find myself reflecting more on the roots of behaviors I don't like in myself and communicating my shortcomings with God. I find myself living my life more in accordance with eternal goals. I know I am just beginning on this path, but I feel that I am much less ego-centric than I was at the start, and closer to the person I would like to be. I am so grateful for Sacred Story, particularly the affirmations and encouraging weekly notes. Thank you!
9. (I am developing a) mindful relationship with God.
10. (I am finding) increased awareness of God as I move through my daily life. Sacred Story has made me stop and reflect/ pray without multitasking, doing my quiet reflection time while I sit and drink my tea in the morning. I've had to actually move to a different chair for my 15 minute prayer time so I can try to focus better. I've learned that it isn't easy to really focus on God and that the enemy is always looking to distract me! I'm plugging away, but realize that I can go way deeper than I've been doing to connect with God. It helps me also remember during the day to pray for others. Overall, I liken this connection to God to keeping the "line" open. Even if I'm quiet, I am still connected to God.
11. I am becoming more AWARE, especially when I am tempted by my greatest weakness. I still fall often, but there have been victories as well.
12. As I go through my daily routine apart from my 15 minutes, I try to relate to the five components of the prayer exercise. I recognize the Ignatian method in other places. For example, I had not picked up on my alma mater as a college in the "Ignatian tradition". A book I was reading talking

about "presence" as tending to a nest by being fully present – i.e. noting the details. I try to block out the distractions by concentrating on how I've let my mind wander as the attempts to gain my attention come in. I suppose I'd just say being more aware of my thought process.

13. Sacred Story has brought me senses that I had overlooked at times in the past because of others, or because I did not take time to really get into what the God-meaning was. It is so beautiful to see things with the “eyes of Sacred Story” and get more meaning in life. Thank you for getting me on board.
14. Sacred Story exercises have helped me to be more like Jesus and aware of what I need to work on to continue to walk in his light. Every day presents challenges. How I respond and keep the spirit of Jesus in my heart, mind and soul makes all the difference in how I feel and the outcome achieved.

