

# SACRED STORY



July 28, 2013

Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Encouragement & Wisdom

*E & W reflections are additional helps for your Sacred Story prayer journey.  
Reflect on them at week's beginning or outside of your 15-minute prayer periods.*

## Silence<sup>1</sup>

Mid-last century two Christian scholars separated by distance and discipline identified the same threat as humanity's gravest. C.S. Lewis and Josef Pieper wrote works identifying loss of the examined life, contemplative rest, and God consciousness as eroding culture and destroying humankind.<sup>2</sup> Lewis' *Screwtape Letters* sketch a plan for humanity's destruction by blinding persons' awareness of the present and the eternal. The goal is a world devoid of reflective contemplation.<sup>3</sup> Pieper's, *Leisure, the Basis of Culture*, affirms that the very survival of Western society hinges on the re-establishment of contemplative rest (leisure) as the preeminent, foundational value of an enlightened and creative culture.

Each writer identifies the fundamental challenge confronting the person seeking a measure of self-reflection. For Pieper, the world of *total work* is annihilating all unstructured time thus rendering impossible the capacity for self-awareness to open human consciousness to "the-world-as-a-whole."<sup>4</sup> Lewis sees a strategist's hand in this global, evolutionary trend toward darkened conscience. The world of noise and chaos will in the end silence every heavenly voice as well as human sensitivity to the inner stirrings of conscience.<sup>5</sup> Pieper sees the erosion of a contemplative, reflective space slipping away with such "monstrous momentum" that he wonders whether its

loss and the hyperactivity filling the void has demonic origins. His solution is to reclaim a space for leisure that provides “contact with those superhuman life-giving forces that can send us renewed and alive again into the busy world of work.”<sup>6</sup>

Lord Jesus, help me resist the violence of hyper-activity. Give me grace to find islands of quiet and silence in my days so I can receive Your wisdom. In this I will be grateful always for  
*Creation, Presence, Memory, Mercy and Eternity.*



*The LORD is exalted, yet the lowly he sees,  
and the proud he knows from afar.  
Though I walk amid distress, you preserve me;  
against the anger of my enemies you raise your hand.*

(Psalm 138: 6-7)



**St. Ignatius, Pray for Us!**

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<sup>1</sup> We are revisiting this material that was used in the Week 24 E&W because it is so important.

<sup>2</sup> C.S. Lewis, was a medieval scholar and literary critic from Oxford University, and Josef Pieper, a philosopher from the University of Münster.

<sup>3</sup> “For the present is the point at which time touches eternity. Of the present moment, and of it only, humans have an experience analogous to the experience which our Enemy has of reality as a whole; in it alone freedom and actuality are offered to them. He would therefore have them continually concerned either with eternity (which means being concerned with Him) or with the Present—either meditation on their eternal union with, or separation from, Himself, or obeying the present voice of conscience, bearing the present cross, receiving the present grace, giving thanks for the present pleasure. Our business is to get them away from the eternal and from the Present.” C.S. Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters* (New York: Collier Books, 1982), 103), 68. Cited hereafter as: “Lewis.”

<sup>4</sup> “Or to put the matter more concretely: will it ever be possible to keep, or reclaim, some room for leisure from the forces of the total world of work? And this would mean not merely a little portion of rest on Sunday, but rather a whole ‘preserve’ of true, unconfined humanity: a space of freedom, of true learning, of attunement to the world-as-a-whole?” Josef Pieper, *Leisure, The Basis of Culture* (South Bend: St. Augustine Press, 1998), 37. Cited hereafter as: “Pieper.”

<sup>5</sup> Lewis, 103.

<sup>6</sup> Pieper, 35.