

Living Life as Sacred Story 2014: FORTY WEEKS

Weeks 29: Advice and Suggestions

Week 29 reveals the truth about human nature as “creation” in the image and likeness of God. We need to understand that we are spiritual beings created to know, love and serve God and share in the very joy of the Trinity. We also need to understand that we freely turn away from our Divinely-created nature and reject this love. This conflict tears our hearts in opposing directions. We need to become expert in the art of spiritual discernment precisely because of this conflict within our hearts.

As we go through these lessons, we want to pay attention to our affective states – our emotions, just as we did in the first few weeks while reading Ignatius’ story. Attentiveness to our affective state is an essential diagnostic exercise to measure what is happening in our hearts – it takes practice to simultaneously experience emotions and assess them for their spiritual content. It is an art that we will learn slowly and it will change our lives. Because learning how to spiritually assess the origins of our emotional states and distinguish their difference IS the art of spiritual direction. Most of us walk through life unaware of these spiritual movements and are thus easy prey in the struggle between truth and falsehood.

We continue to remember that the readings are done separately from the 15-minute prayer times – if something occurs to us during the reading, we might want to write it down so we can consider it in the context of the 5-words of *Sacred Story Prayer* during our next prayer session. By the same token, our prayer will often prompt us to pay attention to specific details in the readings. It is good to have this back-and-forth dynamic, and we do not need to worry if we still have questions after the reading – the Lord will help us understand in His time!

Our [Week 29 E&W](#) gives us ideas for **Creating Your Own Encouragement and Wisdom File**. We also find helpful examples for how to understand the Whole-Life Confession process from Part 1 – there are many pieces that will make much more sense now in Part 3. Indeed, we have grown much since then – praise God who is always at work in us! *“Therefore, neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who causes the growth.”* (1 Cor 3:7)