

SACRED STORY



December 1, 2013

First Sunday of Advent

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.*

The Affirmations

**The urge to stop *Sacred Story* practice
always comes before my greatest breakthroughs.**

Early in his conversion, St. Ignatius was confronted with two distinct temptations to discouragement that he recorded in his autobiography: *There flashed upon his mind the idea of the difficulty that attended the kind of life he had begun, and he felt as if he heard someone whispering to him, "How can you keep up for seventy years of your life these practices which you have begun?"* Another time a similar discouragement overcame him and he was tempted to retreat back to his "old life." *After these thoughts a sort of disgust seized him, so that he felt an inclination to give up the life he was leading.*

The first discouragement was linked to the panic of giving up his former vices; the second discouragement was linked to his pride in light of his inability to master his sinfulness by only his own effort. The first was a temptation linked to sensual sin and the second was a temptation linked to spiritual sin.

As your own conversion deepens, you will confront similar discouragements. Some will be inspired by the fear of surrendering past pleasures, others will be linked to angers and frustrations at how slowly you find change happening in your life. Both temptations are “designed” by the enemy of human nature to turn you away from God and the practice of your faith. Be on the lookout for such temptations and resist them! They are clear signs that you are on the right track, and close to moments of significant spiritual growth, by the power of God’s grace.

Lord Jesus, keep us alert to the temptations of discouragement used by human nature’s enemy. Give us the grace to hold fast by your grace to the practice of prayer and spiritual disciplines. May our fidelity in times of temptation and discouragement lead us to you in
Creation, Presence, Memory, Mercy and Eternity.



*Pray for the peace of Jerusalem!
May those who love you prosper!
May peace be within your walls,
prosperity in your buildings.*

(Psalm 122: 6-7)

