
DAY ONE

1. What was your favorite thought from the meeting or commentary last week?

Read Revelation 12:1-3

2a. As Chapter 12 begins, a great sign appeared in the sky in the form of a woman. Describe her appearance according to verse 1.

NOTE: Perhaps more than any other, this passage has inspired art and iconography. Most Catholics are familiar with images of the woman in this passage but like other visions in this book, it has multiple levels of meaning. It symbolizes the faithful people of God of the Old and New Testament, and Mary, the mother of the Messiah, the most exalted member of the human race. *Williamson*

b. God has sent signs to people throughout all of recorded history. Look up one of the following verses and record an example of a sign from God.

Genesis 9:13-15

Matthew 2:1-2

Luke 1:39-45

3. In what ways do you consider the woman pictured this way to be a sign?

4. Record the additional details we learn about the woman in verse 2.

5a. In verse 3 John immediately saw another sign in the form of a dragon. Comment on the symbolism of one or two of its features from the following list.

huge and red

seven heads

ten horns

on its heads were seven diadems

b. Who or what do you think this enormous being represented?

NOTE: This symbol was drawn from an Old Testament mythical monster known as Leviathan (Psalm 74:13-14) or Rahab (Job 26:12-13). *NABRE*

6. **CONNECTION:** Today we read about two signs that God sent to John. Signs from heaven also come to us today in many different ways. Though they may not always be as extraordinary or dramatic as those in our readings, these signs require an open and obedient heart to notice them. A sign might be a visit with a friend or priest who tells you exactly what you need to hear in a time of need. It might be as simple as a beautiful sunset or a visit with your grandchildren that stirs your soul to prayer or gratitude. It could be the witness of another living a holy life. Describe for your group an experience you had recently that was a sign from God. What was the message and how did it affect you?

Read and record Mark 16:20. Let an awareness of signs from God lead you into prayer today.

DAY TWO

Read Revelation 12:4-6

7a. As our lesson begins today, the dragon took immediate action. It swept away a third of the stars with its tail and hurled them down to earth (verse 4). Then the dragon stood before the woman about to give birth. What was its intention according to the last sentence of verse 4?

b. In your own words, describe what you think the symbolism of this verse might mean.

8a. The woman then gave birth to a child. List the facts given about the child from the first sentence of verse 5.

b. According to the second sentence of this verse, what happened to the child?

9. The woman fled to the desert. What had God already done for her, and what would happen to her there according to verse 6?

NOTE: Forty- two months or three and a half years symbolizes a limited time. *Collegeville*

10. Explain in your own words what you think happened in verses 5-6 and whom you think the woman and child represent.

11. In scripture, the desert or wilderness is often depicted as difficult and frightening, but it can also be a place of solitude, prayer and growth. Look up one of the following verses and record a phrase that reflects this thought.

Isaiah 58:11

Hosea 13:5

Matthew 4:1, 11

12. CONNECTION: Today in his vision, John saw God lead the woman to a place of protection that he prepared for her in her time of need. In that same way, Jesus has promised you a prepared place whenever you find yourself in need of rest, recovery, protection, encouragement or solitude. Describe for your group an experience of how you were cared for, or when you cared for another, during a time of trial or suffering. Explain how you now understand that this was a place or time prepared by the grace of God.

Record a verse from Psalm 91, a prayer for divine protection, to begin your prayer today.

DAY THREE

Read Revelation 12:7-9

13a. As today's passage begins, John's vision turned from the woman in the desert to a war that broke out in heaven. Who were the combatants in this heavenly war (verse 7)?

Note: In Hebrew the name Michael means, "Who can compare with God?" *NABRE*

b. Look up one of the following verses and record something that you learn about Michael.

Daniel 10:21

Daniel 12:1

Jude 1:9

14. According to verse 8, what were the two outcomes of the war in heaven?

15a. The huge dragon was described further after his defeat in verse 9. List all the names John gave him.

b. Why do you think his identity was not revealed until this verse?

16. What happened to those who lost the war in heaven (end of verse 9)?

17a. Read one of the following verses and record how it connects with verse 9.

Luke 10:17-18

John 8:44

1 Peter 5:8

b. From what you have read so far, describe your thoughts about Satan.

18. CONNECTION: It is no great secret that Satan, deceiver of the world and the father of lies, is alive and at work in our world today. Everyone, in some way, has been wounded by a lie someone has told or has hurt someone else's character or reputation by telling an untruth about another at the bidding of Satan. But God, the Father of Truth will conquer the evil work of the devil. Share a story with your group that reflects how God restored peace and harmony in your life or within your family or community through his mercy and grace or the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Today, reflect on the prayer to St. Michael in your prayer time: *St. Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle. Be our defense against the wickedness and snares of the Devil. May God rebuke him, we humbly pray, and do thou, O Prince of the heavenly hosts, by the power of God, thrust into hell Satan, and all the evil spirits, who prowl about the world seeking the ruin of souls. Amen*

DAY FOUR

Read Revelation 12:10-12

19a. As we begin today, John heard a loud voice in heaven say that several things have come. Name them from the first sentence of verse 10.

b. These things have come because the accuser has been cast out. How was the accuser described from the rest of that verse?

20a. What other words could you use for "accuser" in this verse?

b. What actions do you think the accuser was taking that caused him to be cast out of heaven?

21. In verse 11 the heavenly speaker honored his martyred "brothers" for their victory. Explain how you think the following phrases from that verse describe how they were able to conquer the accuser.

by the blood of the Lamb

by the word of their testimony

22. Their "love for life did not deter them from death" (end of verse 11). What important message does this convey about the historical Christians?

23a. All who dwelt in heaven rejoiced that the kingdom had begun and Satan was cast down (beginning of verse 12). What warning was contained in the second sentence of that verse?

b. The war in heaven has ended and the devil has been cast down to the earth. Comment on how the disturbing images in this chapter affect its message to you.

24. CONNECTION: In today's readings, the dragon or devil is referred to by another name, the accuser. Consider how often in the course of a day something goes wrong, and we immediately try to figure out whom we can accuse or worse, we are blamed. A tremendous amount of our time and energy is spent every day on the blame game: with our families and friends and in our public discourse. That's Satan, the accuser, at work spreading hatred, dysfunction and accusation among us. Jesus has taught us to fight the devil by bringing compassion into all of our encounters. Share a story of someone who made a mistake, and you treated them with compassion and kindness instead of blame.

Today, write a prayer for someone who has been treated harshly by others.

DAY FIVE

Read Revelation 12:13-15

25. As we begin today, the dragon (devil) has been defeated in heaven and thrown down to earth. What did it do according to verse 13?

26a. What was the woman given and for what purpose according to the first part of verse 14?

b. Where did she go and for how long according to the second part of that verse?

27. The image of eagles' wings appears frequently throughout scripture. Look up one of the following passages and record a phrase that relates to this topic.

Exodus 19:4

Deuteronomy 32:11-12

Isaiah 40:31

28. Aware that the woman was trying to escape, how did the serpent try to stop her (verse 15)?

29. What else spews in torrents out of the mouth of the serpent (devil) that can do irreparable harm in our lives today? Can you give an example of this?

30. CONNECTION: In our readings today, the woman was rescued from the dragon when God gave her the wings of an eagle to fly her to safety. Sometimes, in our lives, we also experience trauma and crisis and wonder what to do. If we turn to prayer and put our faith in God, he will rescue us. We must trust in the God of hope to rescue us from sorrow, difficult situations or worrisome fears. Share some thoughts with your group of a recent experience you have had when hope in God led to mercy and rescue.

Read and record 2 Corinthians 1:10. In your prayer today offer praise God for the times he has rescued you.

DAY SIX

Read Revelation 12:16-18

31. As we begin today, the woman was dramatically rescued as the dragon pursued her. Record what happened in verse 16.

32a. When the dragon became angry with the woman, it went to wage war on the rest of her offspring. How were they defined in verse 17?

b. To whom do you think this refers?

33. Comment on whether your attitude toward the devil and his evil influence in your life has been affected as you have read this chapter.

34. Three times in this chapter the devil failed to harm the woman who was clearly protected by God. Who do you think she might be or symbolize? Select one or two possibilities from the following list or your own interpretation and explain your reasoning.

Eve

Blessed Mother

Holy Mother Church

Nation of Israel

Faithful people of God

35. What was the final act of the dragon (verse 18) and what do you think might be its significance?

36. CONNECTION: The "woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet and on her head a crown of twelve stars" is a powerful image in the vision of John in this chapter. Some aspects of the vision clearly relate to the Mother of the Messiah who is also our Mother Mary, the Mother of all Christians and Mother of our Church. Mary is very powerful against Satan and he knows it and fears her. Can you think of a situation in your life that you would like to turn over to Mary's powerful protection? Or can you recall a recent time when the strength and goodness of Jesus' mother helped you overcome some power of evil in your life?

Pray a rosary today asking Our Blessed Mother for peace and strength.

Read pages 52-56 in the *New Colledgeville Commentary, The Book of Revelation* by Catherine A. Cory, Ph.D. The Cornerstone Catholic Scripture Study acknowledges that scripture quotations in this study are from the New American Bible, Revised Edition (NABRE) © 2010, 1991, 1970 Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Inc., Washington, DC. All Rights Reserved. Used by permission.

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