

DAY ONE

1. What was most meaningful to you from last week's lesson, commentary or talks?

Read Revelation 21:1-4

NOTE: This passage in Revelation strengthens the hope and faith of the Church for all generations. The Second Vatican Council says: We do not know the time for the consummation of the earth and of humanity, nor do we know how all things will be transformed. As deformed by sin, the shape of this world will pass away; but we are taught that God is preparing a new dwelling place and a new earth where justice will abide, and whose blessedness will answer and surpass all the longings for peace which spring up in the human heart. *Gaudium et spes 39*
We cannot imagine what heaven will be like. In this chapter, the seer uses a variety of colorful, imaginative symbols from human language to try to describe heaven and life in God's presence.

2a. Today's passage opens with a new vision. What did John see according to the first sentence in verse 1?

b. The former heaven and earth had passed away and the sea was no more (remainder of verse 1)? Why do you think the sea, a great beauty of the earth, had to pass away?

3a. John compared the city, a new Jerusalem, to a bride adorned for her husband (verse 2). Think of a wedding you have planned or attended recently. How does this image or metaphor describe the relationship between God and his church?

b. In this vision, earthly images are used to describe heaven. Why do you think the seer is using these images?

4. A loud voice from the throne was heard saying God's dwelling is with the human race. How is the relationship between God and his people described in verse 3?

5a. Complete below the wonderful promises declared to God's people (verse 4). (Good memory verse)

He will wipe every

and there shall be no more

for the old order

b. Promises made in the Old Testament are renewed in verse 4. (see Isaiah 25:8) Why are these promises so important, and what are their implications for you?

6. CONNECTION: John's final vision reveals a glorious message, the establishment of the Kingdom of God in all its fullness. God is preparing a new dwelling place and a new earth. He will wipe away our tears and death will be no more. This is a story with the ending we long for, a story we can hear again and again. This is a glimpse of God's tender and compassionate care and concern. What does it mean to you to live in the hope of an eternal life of love, comfort and joy in relationship with God? Share some thoughts with your group.

Read John 14:1-4 and prayerfully reflect on the wonderful plans and preparations God has in store for you.

DAY TWO

Read Revelation 21:5-8

7a. Today's lesson opens with words of reassurance from God who spoke directly for only the second time in Revelation (first time in 1:8). Record them here (first sentence of verse 5). (Good memory verse)

b. Record the command given to John to emphasize the importance of this message (remainder of verse 5).

8a. While John and his readers remained in a world of suffering, God affirmed he is making a new creation. How does this message continue to speak to you?

b. Read 2 Corinthians 5:17 and record the words that correspond with Revelation 21:5.

9a. The voice of God spoke with authority and certainty with the words, “They are accomplished.” How did God describe himself in the first part of verse 6?

b. What gift did he promise to the thirsty (remainder of verse 6)?

10. Today we read that the victors will live as God’s children in his presence forever (verse 7). There are special stories in the gospels about how Jesus has always loved children. What is it about children that bring about the special love of God for us? How can children teach us how to love God?

11. God spoke about the fate of those who are persistent sinners, the second death in the burning pool of fire and sulfur. Record one or two examples of a sinner from verse 8.

NOTE: The reference to those who are doomed to the pool of fire is a message to the people and a reminder that nothing evil will exist in the new city. *New Collegeville Commentary*

12. CONNECTION: The victors spoken of in this passage will receive the blessings God has promised. John has been recording these for us all along, beginning with the seven letters to the churches. These rewards will be given to the victors, the believers who are faithful to God to the end. As you read this list of promises below, which one holds particular meaning for you and explain why? Record some thoughts.

2:7 eat from the tree of life in the garden of God

2:11 will not be harmed by the second death

2:17 will be given a new name

2:26 have authority over the nations;

3:5 will remain in the book of life;

3:12 will be a pillar in God's temple

3:21 sit with the enthroned Jesus Christ

7:16 hunger and thirst no more

14:13 rest from their labors

19:9 be invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb

21:3 dwell with God

21:4 be free of sorrow and pain

21:6 drink from the spring of life-giving water

Read and record [Joshua 23:14](#) and realize that these promises were given to you as one of God’s faithful. With that thought in mind begin your prayer.

DAY THREE

Read Revelation 21:9-14

NOTE: Revelation 21:9 begins John's final vision and is a symbolic explanation of a new Jerusalem and life within it. The term "new Jerusalem" refers to the people of God as the bride of the Lamb and the place of their eternal dwelling. *Williamson*

13a. As we begin today, one of the seven angels who held the seven bowls (see Revelation 17) said to John, "Come here." What did he want John to see (verse 9)?

NOTE: The bridegroom is the Lamb, an image for Christ used seven times in the last two chapters (Revelation 21:9, 14, 22, 23, 27; 22:1,3) to highlight his atoning work that makes the eternal marriage possible.

b. An angel summoned John with the words "Come here" in Revelation 17:1. What did he want to show John in that passage and how does it compare to verse 9?

14. To what place was John taken in the spirit and what did the angel show him according to verse 10?

15a. Complete below the description of the holy city Jerusalem (verse 11).

It gleamed with

Its radiance was like

like jasper,

b. How does this verse suggest the presence and glory of God?

16a. The walls of the city and their foundations are described with the symbolic number "twelve," signifying perfection or wholeness (verses 12-14). Record the groups of twelve you find in these verses.

b. The names of the twelve tribes and twelve apostles played a significant role in the structure of the city. How would you explain this symbolically?

17. Gates were very familiar to the people of biblical times, thus scripture refers to them frequently. Gates were opened to allow access or closed to provide security. What gates, literally and figuratively, do you have and for what reason?

18. CONNECTION: In this vision, John was taken to a great high mountain to see the radiant glory of God. When he lived on earth, Jesus took Peter, James and John up on a mountain where he was transfigured and they saw his glory. We too have “mountain top experiences” where we encounter the glory of the Lord. Recall such an experience, a place where something was shown to you “as clear as crystal,” reflecting the glory of God. Share some thoughts with your group.

Reflecting on your mountain top experience, begin your prayer aware of other mountains you have climbed with the Lord.

DAY FOUR

Read Revelation 21:15-18

19. Today’s passage begins with the angel speaking to John. What did he hold and for what reason (verse 15)?

20a. According to the first sentence of verse 16, the city was square, its length and width equal. How did it measure and what new dimension was added (remainder of verse 16)?

b. The walls of the city measured one hundred and forty-four cubits, roughly two hundred and sixteen feet in height (verse 17). The commentary (pg. 90) states that a city of this size is not feasible but is important symbolically. What does this symbolism suggest to you?

NOTE: The city is immense: fifteen hundred miles in length, width and height, extending in every direction as far as the Roman Empire did from east to west. The wall that surrounds the city and manifests its security is extraordinarily high compared to walls that surrounded ancient cities.
Williamson

21. The heavenly city is more three-dimensional than two-dimensional—a cube rather than a square. The “Holy of Holies,” the place where the Ark of the Covenant was kept in the Jewish temple, was also a cube. Why do you think the new Jerusalem is based on the same architecture of the Holy of Holies?

22. What were the walls and the city composed of according to verse 18?

23. Jasper is a gem that symbolizes the radiance of the divine presence. Read Revelation 4:2-3 and record the words that illustrate this.

24. CONNECTION: Just as God measured out the boundaries for the new Jerusalem, he has measured out the perimeters of our lives according to his perfect plan. Those of us who live within the walls of God's protection enjoy many of the gifts and blessings of heaven here on earth. Boundaries protect and benefit us by guiding our lives to maintain our health, safety and a thriving connection with God. Our boundaries may include attitudes, behaviors, talents, and relationships. What are some areas in your life in which you have set boundaries? Share some thoughts with your group.

Read and record Psalms 125:2. Write a prayer to God, aware of how he lovingly measures every detail of your life.

DAY FIVE

Read Revelation 21:19-22

25a. Continuing our study of the description of the new Jerusalem, we learn that the foundations of the city wall were decorated with twelve precious stones. Record one or two of these twelve stones from verses 19-20.

b. Read Ezekiel 28:13 where similar details concerning precious stones are found. Record their location and why they were formed.

26. The twelve gates were twelve pearls, each made from a single pearl according to verse 21. What qualities of a pearl would you ascribe to the twelve gates?

NOTE: This is the source of the familiar phrase "the pearly gates of heaven."

27. The street of the city was described as pure gold, transparent as glass (verse 21). John's words seem to contradict one another. How would you explain this vision?

28. Why do you think the new city in heaven was shown lavishly adorned with jewels, a sign of wealth and treasure?

29. John's vision did not reveal a temple in the city. From verse 22, record the reason why.

NOTE: No temple is needed as an earthly dwelling for God because Christ is present throughout the church. (see Matthew 18:20; 28:20; John 4:21) *NABRE*

30. CONNECTION: In the new Jerusalem there is no need for a temple in which to worship. The Lord God, the Almighty and the Lamb are the temple. Even in our world today, we know that the presence of God is not limited to our church buildings. We can live in his presence and worship him anywhere and any time. Describe in detail where and how you look for or find the presence of God in a place beyond the walls of a church.

Read and record Genesis 28:15 and as you pray today, be mindful of God's presence in all places and moments.

DAY SIX

Read Revelation 21:23-27

31. As we begin today, we read that the city had no need of the sun or moon to shine on it. What was its source of light according to verse 23?

32. Read Isaiah 60:19-20. How do the prophet's words connect to John's vision?

33. By what shall the nations walk and what will the kings of the earth bring to the city (verse 24)?

34a. Record from verse 25 some remarkable facts regarding the city and its gates.

b. We live in a safety-conscious society fortified with walls and gates. What do you do to ensure the safety of your home and family? How do you imagine it would feel to live in a place of complete safety?

35a. Complete below the remaining details of the new city found in verses 26-27.

The treasure and wealth of the nations

but nothing unclean

nor anyone who does

Only those will enter whose names

b. Heaven will be the place where nothing will be unclean. What is one thing you will not be sad to leave behind in the earthly world as you enter the gates of heaven?

NOTE: C. S. Lewis' *The Last Battle*, the final book in the Narnia series, has an apocalyptic world's ending followed by paradise. The final paragraph has been compared to the close of Revelation.

"And as He spoke, He no longer looked to them like a lion; but the things that began to happen after that were so great and beautiful that I cannot write them. And for us this the end of all the stories, and we can most truly say that they all lived happily ever after. But for them it was only the beginning of the real story. All their life in this world and all their adventures in Narnia had only been the cover and the title page: now at last they were beginning Chapter One of the Great Story which no one on earth has read: which goes on for ever: in which every chapter is better than the one before."

36. CONNECTION: As we complete this chapter about the new heaven and new earth, the eternal city, we learn that God's purpose is to live among his people who will dwell in safety and comfort for eternity. Have you thought more about heaven and what kind of place you think it might be? What wonderful, glorious experiences in this life would you wish to carry over into the next? Share some thoughts with your group.

Read and record 2 Corinthians 5:1 and reflect in gratitude for all the wondrous promises we have been given and the expectation and hope of a new life in the glory of God's dwelling place.

Read pages 87-90 in the *New Collegeville 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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