

DAY ONE

1. What thought from last week’s reflection or commentary gave you new insight? Share with your group.

Read Revelation 3:14-16

2a. This week’s lesson begins with a seventh and final letter directed to the church of Laodicea. How did Jesus describe himself in verse 14?

NOTE: Laodicea was situated 40 miles southeast of Philadelphia and eighty miles east of Ephesus. It was a wealthy industrial and commercial center and home to a renowned medical school. The city was famous for its eye salves and fine woolen garments. Its prosperity allowed the city to be rebuilt without the aid of government subsidies after an earthquake around A.D. 60. **NABRE**

b. Choose one of these descriptions of Jesus and comment on what you think it means.

The Amen (refer to 2 Corinthians 1:20)

Faithful and true witness (refer to Revelation 1:5)

Source of God’s creation (refer to Colossians 1:18 or Proverbs 8:22)

3. What did Jesus “know” and “wish” concerning the people in Laodicea according to verse 15?

4. Think of someone you know who is hot or cold in their faith and how that would appeal to Jesus.

5a. What did Jesus say would happen because of their lukewarm condition, being neither hot nor cold (verse 16)?

b. What would cause you to spit something out of your mouth? What is the message Jesus wants to convey through these words?

6. CONNECTION: The people of Laodicea were described as being lukewarm, neither hot nor cold. Hot water cleanses and purifies, while cold water refreshes. There is no similar value in being lukewarm, content with self-satisfaction, complacency and indifference. What makes the greatness of a church, or its people, is not economic or cultural status, but the liveliness of its faith. Can you name an area in your life where you are lukewarm? How can you change and bring a burning zeal or freshness to your heart? Share some thoughts with your group.

Spend some time in prayer today and listen for God's voice to cleanse and refresh your heart.

DAY TWO

Read Revelation 3:17-19

7a. Today we read that the Laodiceans considered themselves rich and affluent with no need of anything. How did Jesus see them according to verse 17?

b. How do you think Jesus sees you? What five words would you use to describe your lifestyle?

8a. Jesus advised the people to come to him for their needs. Below is a list of things they could buy from him. Complete from verse 18 how each would be helpful.

gold refined by fire

white garments to put on

ointment to smear on their eyes

b. If you possessed spiritual currency, what would you want to "buy" from Jesus to fulfill your needs?

9. What did Jesus say to the people of Laodicea to remind them of his love for them (verse 19)? (Good memory verse)

10. Jesus' messages to the seven churches were motivated by his love for the people. Read one of the following verses and record a phrase that shows this love for his people even as they are being corrected.

Job 5:17-18

Proverbs 3:11-12

Hebrews 12:5-6

11. CONNECTION: In spite of the people's assessment of themselves as rich and affluent, Jesus saw the Laodiceans as wretched, pitiable, poor, blind and naked. After chastising them, Jesus urged the people to repent and be earnest. To be earnest is to pursue your purpose in a steady, sincere and eager way. It is an authentic, genuine quality of the heart. To repent in earnest is to face the truth and acknowledge your shortcomings while striving to make amends. Think of a recent time when you made an earnest appraisal of your spiritual life. Were you surprised to learn something new about yourself? Can you share your story with your group?

Read and record 2 Chronicles 7:14 and praise God's eagerness to forgive when you repent in earnest.

DAY THREE

Read Revelation 3:20-22

12a. The final letter concludes with an invitation from Jesus to anyone who hears his voice, whether in ancient times or in our world today. Record the opening statement in verse 20. (Good memory verse)

b. To whomever opens the door, a promise was given, "I will enter his house and dine with him, and he with me." What image speaks to you from one of these phrases?

13. John's revelation of Christ at the door recalls numerous events in scripture. Look up one of the following verses and record a phrase or two that are similar.

Song of Songs 5:2

John 10:9

Luke 13:25

14a. What will be given to the victor according to the first part of verse 21?

b. To what did Jesus compare this victory in the remainder of that verse?

15. What do you think is necessary for you to become the victor?

16. To whom was the concluding message of this final letter directed to and what did it say (verse 22)?

17. CONNECTION: Jesus made a beautiful promise to anyone who heard him knocking and opened the door. "I will enter his house and dine with him, and he with me." To dine with someone suggests a special relationship, one of friendship and trust. It usually begins with an invitation, may include a blessing and always a sharing of food. It can be a time of connecting, building community or even healing. Think of a special meal shared with family or friends. Describe how it was a time of nourishment both physically and spiritually.

In your prayer today think about how we have an open invitation to Jesus' table, to share in the Eucharistic feast, to be blessed, to heal our brokenness and be spiritually nourished with God's grace.

Note: The following chart is from *The Second Coming of Jesus* by Fr. Alfred McBride, O. Praem.

Overview of the Seven Churches

	Virtue	Vice	Reward for Fidelity
Ephesus	Discerns True Teaching	Lost First Love	Will Eat From the Tree of Life
Smyrna	Poor, But Rich in Faith		Crown of Life
Pergamum	Resisted Paganism	Some Ate Idol Food	Hidden Manna
Thyatira	Faith, Love Service	Idol Food Sexual Freedom	Authority Over Nations
Sardis		The Greedy Living Dead	Enrolled in Book Of Life
Philadelphia	Never Denied Jesus		Pillars of Church
Laodicea		Greedy Cultural Christians	Will Dine With Jesus

DAY FOUR

Read Revelation 4:1-3

NOTE: Following the prologue in Chapter 1 and the seven letters to the churches in Chapters 2-3, Chapters 4-5 in the Book of Revelation bring John to heaven at the invitation of Jesus Christ. The chapters divide according to the focus of worship: Revelation 4 praises the Father Creator and Revelation 5 praises the Son, the Lamb as Savior. *Ignatius Study Bible*

18a. After having communicated with the seven churches and revealing their present condition, our passage today begins in Chapter 4 with a vision. What did John see according to the first phrase in verse 1?

b. What did he hear the trumpet-like voice say in the latter part of verse 1?

19. What would you imagine a door to heaven to reveal?

20a. Record John's immediate reaction and what he saw according to verse 2?

b. Can you share a time when you were "caught up in spirit"?

NOTE: God's throne is mentioned forty times in the Book of Revelation. The throne, symbolizing divine sovereignty, dominates John's visions. *Williamson*

21a. John saw someone sitting on the throne (verse 2). Describe his appearance in the first part of verse 3.

b. Around the throne was a halo as brilliant as an emerald (verse 3). In some bible translations, this is referred to as a rainbow. (Refer to Genesis 9:16) What do the symbols of a halo or rainbow suggest to you about the meaning of this passage.

22. Read Ezekiel 1:26-28 and note one or two phrases that are similar to John's heavenly vision.

23. The precious stones emerald, carnelian and jasper were used to describe the vision of the heavenly throne. Why would these images of precious stones appeal to the people of that time?

24. CONNECTION: Today's lesson takes us from the churches on earth to the doorway to heaven. God has the power to open many doors to us on our journey to his kingdom. Some may require great courage to walk through, while others may be filled with blessings. When a door of opportunity seems perpetually closed, our persistence in faith and prayer may one day see it opened. It's important to be open to the different means and methods by which God seeks to bless us. Has God brought you to a doorway recently? Were you able to walk through immediately or was it something that required courage? Share some details with your group.

Read John 10:9 and write a prayer of praise and thanksgiving for the doors of blessings God brings to you each day.

DAY FIVE

Read Revelation 4:4-7

25. Today we continue John's vision of the heavenly throne. What did he see surrounding the throne from the first part of verse 4?

NOTE: The twenty-four elders represent the twelve tribes of Israel (Old Testament) and the twelve apostles (New Testament). The Book of Revelation mentions the elders twelve times. The number twelve symbolizes the people of God in Scripture. *Williamson*

26. What did John see emanating from the throne in the first sentence of verse 5?

27. In scripture, there are many references to events of nature when describing the presence or power of God. Look up one of the following verses and record a phrase similar to verse 5.

Exodus 19:16

2 Samuel 22:14-15

Matthew 24:27

28a. What was seen in front of the throne and what did it represent (second sentence of verse 5)?

b. What do you think these represent?

29. Choose one of the features of the throne described in verse 6 and explain what you think it means or represents?

sea of glass like crystal

four living creatures

with eyes in front and back

30a. Today's passage begins with John's description of the four living creatures around the throne (verse 7). Complete the verse below that describes each creature.

The first creature

the second

the third

the fourth

b. Choose one of these creatures and think of an attribute it might possess and what its purpose might be.

NOTE: Christian tradition holds that these creatures symbolize the four evangelists because they bring God's Word to us. The human being is Matthew who begins his gospel with the human genealogy of Christ; Mark's gospel begins with the voice crying in the wilderness, the lion's roar; Luke's gospel opens in the temple, a place where animal sacrifice (calf) was offered; and John begins his gospel with the highest proclamation of God's dominion, soaring like an eagle.
Navarre

31. CONNECTION: In today's lesson, we were given the details of John's vision of the heavenly throne, colorful and powerful images of a place we can only imagine. Heaven is a place of mystery and wonder that helps make our faith grow and strengthen in the hope of one day walking through its doors. We may perceive glimpses of heaven on earth in many ways, such as through a relationship with a loved one, in the beauty and majesty of God's creation, or when circumstances bring unexpected joy. Has there been a time when you described something as "heaven on earth"? Share your experience with your group.

Spend some time today reflecting on your spiritual path to the Kingdom of Heaven.

DAY SIX

Read Revelation 4:8-11

32. How were the four creatures around the throne further described in the first sentence of verse 8?

33. Read Ezekiel 1:5-11. Record one or two similarities or differences found in the description of the four living creatures in both Ezekiel's and John's visions?

34a. Record the words the creatures exclaimed day and night in remainder of verse 8. (Good memory verse)

b. Read similar words from Isaiah 6:3. Why does the author rely on so many themes and images from the Old Testament?

35. Can you name any prayers or hymns of praise we exclaim or sing today? How do they enhance your worship of God?

36a. While the four living creatures offer perpetual praise, honor and glory to the Lord God (verse 9), the twenty-four elders respond in a similar way. Complete below from verse 10 their actions before the throne.

the twenty-four elders

and worship him

They throw down

b. What do you think is meant by the gesture of throwing down their crowns?

37. For what reason do the elders give honor, glory and power to God (verse 11)?

38. CONNECTION: The four living creatures covered with eyes exclaimed beautiful words day and night in heaven, “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God almighty, who was, and who is, and who is to come.” We are called to holiness by God, to live in the presence of holiness and be a holy people. A life of holiness is living in God’s image. We can praise and honor God by taking care of children, the elderly and the needy. We give glory to God when we treat those around us with compassion, kindness and love. Who is a holy person you model your life on, who has helped you grow in holiness? Share with your group.

Read and record Leviticus 19:1-2. In your prayer time today, think of all the ways you are called to holiness.

Read pages 30-33 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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