

**DAY ONE**

1. Share with your group any new thoughts from last week's lesson, reflection or commentary.

**Read Revelation 8:1-2**

2. Our lesson this week leaves the heavenly interlude in Chapter 7 and returns to the opening of the seventh and final seal. What occurred when the seal was broken open (verse 1)?

3. What do you think the reason might be for this sudden change from the exuberant heavenly worship?

4. Describe a time when you experienced an extended silence.

5. In Scripture we read that through silence we can encounter God. Read and record one of the following scripture verses that speaks to you about silence.

Job 33:33

Psalm 46:11

Lamentations 3:26

6a. Who did John see standing before God, and what was given according to verse 2?

**NOTE: Most commentators consider the seven angels standing in God's presence to be archangels including Raphael, Gabriel and Michael. Jewish tradition reveals the other archangels found in the Book of Enoch as Raguel, Uriel, Saraqael and Remiel. Trumpets were used by the Israelites to warn of trouble, in temple worship and feasts, to herald in a new king and as a summons to war. *Williamson, Ignatius***

b. What do you think is the purpose of these trumpets? You might refer to Matthew 24:31; 1 Corinthians 15:51-52 to help with your answer.

7. CONNECTION: The opening of the seventh seal brought silence to heaven for about half an hour. Silence is known to be good for the brain and a great stress reliever. We are constantly filling our ears with music and television, traffic, telephones and noises of everyday busy life. Practicing silence is a way to detach from daily responsibilities and the people around us and seek inner peace and closeness to God. Although some find silence uncomfortable, many learn to embrace it through walking alone in nature or in Eucharistic Adoration. Do you reserve time for silence as part of your day? Share some thoughts with your group.

Read and record Mark 1:35 and think how Jesus restored himself through silence and prayer.

## **DAY TWO**

**Read Revelation 8:3-4**

8a. Our lesson begins today with the appearance of another angel. Where was he and what was he holding (first sentence of verse 3)?

b. The angel was given a great quantity of incense. What was its purpose (remainder of verse 3)?

9. The angel seemed to be making a sacrificial offering of the prayers of the holy ones. Have you ever considered your prayers as sacrifice? How can you make your prayers a sacrifice?

10. Describe what happened to the smoke of the incense accompanied by the prayers of the holy ones (verse 4)?

11. The use of incense in the Mass is for solemn occasions. The fragrance and vision of the rising smoke allow us to connect to God. Share some memories that come to mind when you experience the smell of incense.

12. CONNECTION: Today we read that the prayers of the holy ones were carried to God in the hand of an angel. This passage brings to mind our prayer life and the beauty and mystery of the intercessors who carry our prayers. The Second Vatican Council reminds us of the Church's teaching that the saints in heaven, our Blessed Mother and the holy angels intercede with God on our behalf. Do you pray to a specific intercessor to carry your needs to God? Share with your group how this affects your prayer life.

Read and record Psalm 141:2 and as you pray today, visualize your prayers being placed before God.

### **DAY THREE**

**Read Revelation 8:5-6**

13. What did the angel do with the censer after handing over the prayers to God according to the first sentence of verse 5?

14. What do you think the burning embers hurled to earth might symbolize?

15a. Record the results of this action from the second sentence of verse 5.

b. What do these elements often accompany when found in Scripture? See Exodus 19:16-19.

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6. Describe the actions of the seven angels that would mark the end of the great silence in heaven (verse 6).

17. Describe a recent occasion, happy or somber, when you heard the sounding of trumpets and how that impacted the event.

18. CONNECTION: In today's lesson we read of the angel hurling burning coals down to earth in the censer that once was a prayer offering. God always answers the prayers of the faithful and responds in accordance with his will. In this case, it was a response to the prayers for justice and vindication, a fiery judgment. It is important to align our prayers with the will of God and trust in his answer. How can you make your prayer one of faith and acceptance of God's will?

Pray the Our Father today and spend some time reflecting how Jesus taught us to accept the will of God on earth and in heaven.

#### DAY FOUR

Read Revelation 8:7-9

**NOTE:** The setting of John's visions shifts from the heavenly to the earthly realm, where the blowing of the first four trumpets signals plagues inflicted upon the earth, similar to the plagues in Exodus.

19a. Today we begin as the first angel blew his trumpet (verse 7). What was hurled down to earth as the trumpet was blown?

b. From the remainder of verse 7, describe what happened on earth?

20. In Exodus 9:17-26 we read of another rain of hail on earth. Record some similarities between this passage and verse 7.

21a. What resulted when the second trumpet was blown (first sentence of verse 8)?

b. Can you compare this to something that might happen in our lives today?

22. Look up and record 1 Peter 1:7 and comment on how fire can symbolize how God tests us in our lives.

23. Complete below what took place when the burning mountain was hurled into the sea (verses 8-9).

A third of the sea

a third of the creatures

a third of the ships

24. CONNECTION: The destruction brought forth from the first two trumpets was restricted to one third of the earth and the sea. Though terrifying, these were signs of a merciful and compassionate God who allows time for repentance and brings a message of hope to the many survivors of the destruction. God's divine mercy is much greater than any punishment or final judgment. God waits for us to turn to him with open arms ready to forgive. Are you able to see your life as two thirds full despite trials or suffering? Share some thoughts with your group.

Read and record Isaiah 54:7 and write a prayer today in gratitude for your loving and merciful God.

#### **DAY FIVE**

**Read Revelation 8:10-11**

25a. A third angel sounded his trumpet. What was the result according to the first sentence of verse 10?

b. Where did the burning star fall (remainder of verse 10)?

26. The vision of the third trumpeter echoes the words of Jesus in Matthew 24:29: "Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken." How do they speak to you?

27a. The star was called Wormwood. What effect did it have on the water and the people (verse 11)?

b. Read the following scripture passages concerning wormwood and record below a reason for the judgment upon the people.

Passage

Reason for Judgment

Deuteronomy 29:17-18

Jeremiah 23:15

**NOTE:** Wormwood is a very bitter herb that is not actually poisonous, but caused death according to some scripture passages. One ounce will alter the taste of 524 gallons of water. It symbolizes the bitter consequences of evildoers and God's bitter judgment. *Williamson*

28. Water is a fundamental human need and precious gift of nature. Each person on earth requires at least 5-13 gallons of clean safe water for drinking, sanitary and hygienic use per day to survive. Consider recent natural disasters and comment on what your life would be like if your water supply were contaminated.

29. The poisoning of the water recalls incidents in Exodus 7:21 and Exodus 15:22-26. Record one or two details from one of these passages noting any similarities or differences.

30. CONNECTION: The blast of the third trumpet brought forth a burning star and bitter waters as judgment upon the people who turned away from God. Sometimes we allow these same things to enter our lives causing havoc: relationships with the people we love dissolve into *burning* anger and we become filled with *bitter* resentment. Anger and bitterness can destroy the joy of living in the present, creating distrust, negativity, anxiety and depression causing our health and well-being to suffer. John's revelation was a forewarning to all people including us. Share some thoughts of a recent time when God's grace helped you to remove anger and bitterness from your life.

As you pray today be mindful of a loving God who is always ready to put out the fires that burn in your heart.

#### **DAY SIX**

**Read Revelation 8:12-13**

31. We begin today with the blast of the fourth trumpet. Describe the visual events that took place in the heavens from the first sentence of verse 12.

32a. How were the day and the night affected (remainder of verse 12)?

b. What do you think it means to lose one third of the day and night? How might this affect your life?

33. John's visions are rooted in familiar events in the Old Testament. What do you think is the reason for the similarities?

34a. As John looked again, he saw an eagle flying overhead. What did the eagle cry out and to whom were the words directed (verse 13)?

b. What was the reason for this message or warning to the people in verse 13?

35. The triple "woe" indicated the sounding of the final three trumpets. It was a warning from a solitary eagle, soaring across the sky. Warnings or warning signs are placed in our lives to help us on our life journey. Recall a warning that you received or gave this past week.

36. CONNECTION: There are times in our lives when we have a premonition, feel a nagging caution or receive a warning about something that needs correction in our life. Sometimes God uses nature to send his messages to the people as with the eagle in today's readings. It's important to turn to God and pray about the message you have received and discern where he is guiding or directing you. If we pay attention to this message, we can often look back and see how fortunate it was that we listened and acted. Can you describe a recent example of a premonition and your discernment process for your group?

Aware that God can send us warnings through our thoughts, feelings and the words of others, begin your prayer today asking for ears that hear and the will to follow the message.

Read pages 41-43 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.