

REVELATION



John the Evangelist, brother of James the Martyr (Acts 12), was deported to Patmos Island because of his faith. From there he sent us this “Revelation.” Skies opened, angels and tragedies, corruption of the well-to-do and the blood of martyrs: God’s judgment goes down the centuries. God’s glory has come near and only a curtain divides us. Everything is brought to an end in the heavenly city.

Why does *Revelation* have the reputation of being a mysterious book, hard to understand and why, for many people, does it have a terrifying meaning? Can it be because there, many seek secret figures and messages which might be adapted to current events as if John had announced them in detail?

If we want to avoid misunderstanding the images and the style of the Revelation of John we should first know that “revelations,” or “apocalypses,” were a popular form of literature at the time of Jesus. There was an Apocalypse of Isaiah, one of Moses, and many others. It was a way of interpreting contemporary events wrapped up in formidable images, with visions and angels. The author of the book attributed it to a known prophet of the past, but only related events that were already known, trying to draw conclusions and showing what God wanted to achieve.

The style and the images of Revelation (Apocalypse) bewilder many people to the extent that today the term is mostly used to refer to worldwide tragedies. We are going to give the needed explanations, but from the beginning, we have to understand that John was answering the questions that his Christian contemporaries were asking, and questions that we are still asking ourselves today. Why didn't the Savior bring justice and peace to the world and why do we see so much evil and suffering?

John answers that if centuries follow after Christ's coming, this is not so that we may enjoy heaven on earth but rather because this world is at stake in the conflict between good and evil. John probably wrote at the time of Emperor Domitian, namely, the start of the great Church persecutions in the Roman Empire. John is going to say, again and again, that being Christian means being faithful and if need be, being a martyr.

Understanding the importance of this conflict in today's history is much more useful than searching the Book of Revelation for secret messages that would surely enable us to expect extraordinary events and, perhaps, to have the chance to survive. We will better understand this Revelation if we interpret the visions, numbers, and symbols according to the rules of apocalyptic literature. Then we shall see that the Revelation of Jesus Christ is neither difficult nor terrifying but full of joy and hope.

The risen Christ is the center of history; the world is the place of the struggle between the Church, headed by Christ, and Satan's forces; Christians are called to give their witness with courage.

In this book we can see seven series, each with seven elements, in four major parts:

- the seven messages to the churches, Chapters 1–3;
- the fulfillment of the Old Testament, Chapters 4–11;
- the Church facing the Roman Empire, Chapters 12–19;
- the last days and the heavenly Jerusalem, Chapters 20–22.

We have attributed the Book of Revelation to John the Evangelist. In fact, there were many doubts on this point during the first two centuries. The western Church, differently from that in the East, did not see it as the work of John the Evangelist and while today's criticism does not

raise major difficulties, it does raise many doubts. It is interesting to notice that the image of the Sacrificed Lamb, a central theme of the book, is found throughout the entire book. This theme, along with the same quotation from the prophet Zechariah (Rev 1:7), bears the personal mark of John in his Gospel (Jn 19:31-37).



REVELATION

1 ¹ *The Revelation of Jesus Christ.*

God gave it to him to let his servants know what is soon to take place. He sent his angel to make it known to his servant, John,

² who reports everything he saw, for this is the word of God and the declaration of Jesus Christ.

³ Happy is the one who reads aloud these prophetic words, and happy those who hear them, and treasure everything written here, for the time is near.

⁴ From John to the seven churches of Asia:

receive grace and peace from him who is, who was, and who is to come, and from the seven spirits of God, which are before his throne,

⁵ and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, the ruler of the kings of the earth.

To him who loves us, and has washed away our sins with his own blood, ⁶ making us a kingdom and priests for God his Father,

to him be the glory and power, for ever and ever. Amen.

⁷ See, he comes with the clouds, and everyone will see him, even those who pierced him; on his account, all the nations of the earth will beat their breast. Yes. It will be so.

⁸ "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "the one who is, and who was, and who is to come: the Master of the universe."

REVELATION 1:1-8

Read: The Book of Revelation is not about the future, it is about the presence of God with us in every trial; we are never

alone. It is a song of hope for Christians: “Happy those who hear them, and treasure everything written here, for the time is near.”

Reflect: Are you aware of God’s presence in your life? Is the Word of God a source of joy for you? Are you optimistic toward the future knowing that your life leads to God?

Pray: Place your life in God’s hands and ask for the strength to be faithful to the faith you profess.

Act: Look back at your life and see how Jesus has been present in it. Plan your life in such a way that Jesus will occupy a relevant place.

⁹I, John, your brother, who shares with you, in Jesus, the sufferings, the kingdom, and the patient endurance, was on the island of Patmos, because of the word of God and witnessing to Jesus. ¹⁰On the Lord’s day, the spirit took possession of me and I heard a voice behind me, which sounded like a trumpet, ¹¹“Write down all that you see in a book, and send it to the seven churches; of Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea.”

¹²I turned to see who was speaking to me; behind me were seven golden lampstands ¹³and, in the middle of these, I saw someone like a *son of man* dressed in a long robe tied with a golden girdle.

¹⁴*His head and his hair are white as wool, or as snow, and his eyes are like flames of fire.* ¹⁵His feet are like burnished bronze when it has been refined in a furnace. His voice is like the roaring of the waves.

¹⁶I saw seven stars in his right hand, and a sharp, double-edged sword coming out of his mouth; his face shone like the sun in all its brilliance.

¹⁷Seeing him, I fell at his feet like one dead; but he touched me with his right hand and said, “Do not be afraid. It is I, the First and the Last. ¹⁸I am the living one; I was dead; and now I am alive, for ever and ever; and mine are the keys of death and the netherworld. ¹⁹Now write what you have seen, both what is and what is yet to come. ²⁰Know the secret of the seven stars you saw in my right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.

REVELATION 1:9-20

Read: Writing to all the churches, John describes Christ using the words of the Book of Daniel. His point is Christ is always with them.

Reflect: The Risen Lord was present and active in the Church of that time. Are you aware of the presence of the Lord in today's Church? How do you think is this manifested?

Pray: Ask the Lord the grace to profoundly feel his presence in today's Church. Ask also that your life be an inspiration and a manifestation of his real and active presence in the world.

Act: Trust in the Lord's presence in the midst of the Church in spite of the scandals and mistakes of her members.

The seven messages to the churches

2¹ Write this to the angel of the church in Ephesus, "Thus says the one who holds the seven stars in his right hand, and who walks among the seven golden lampstands:

²I know your works, your difficulties, and your patient suffering. I know you cannot tolerate evildoers, but have tested those who call themselves apostles, and have proved them to be liars. ³You have persevered, and have suffered for my name without losing heart.

⁴Nevertheless, I have this complaint against you: you have lost your first love. ⁵Remember from where you have fallen, and repent, and do what you used to do before. If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place; this I will do unless you repent. ⁶Yet, it is in your favor that you hate the doings of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

⁷Let anyone who has ears listen to what the Spirit says to the churches: To the victor, I will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in God's paradise."

REVELATION 2:1-7

Read: Revelation has a pattern: start with Christ, a short list of good and bad points about the local church, what they must do, and the promise of the Lord to strengthen them to do it.

Reflect: Being a Christian is not just about doing good, it is based on a love for Christ. Do you feel that love, have you ever?

Pray: Ask that Jesus may renew your faith; that he may bring you to a passion for his person, his life and his message. Ask: "Show me your face, O Lord."

Act: Make a re-examination of life at night and see if your faith is growing stale or boring. Know where Jesus is present, where you could and could not recognize him.

⁸Write this to the angel of the church in Smyrna, "Thus says the first and the last, he who was dead, and returned to life:

⁹I know your trials and your poverty: you are rich, indeed. I know how you are slandered by those who pretend to be Jews but are not, for they are, in fact, the synagogue of Satan. ¹⁰Do not be afraid of what will happen to you. The devil will throw some of you into prison, to test you, and there will be ten days of trials. Remain faithful, even to death, and I will give you the crown of life.

¹¹Let anyone who has ears listen to what the Spirit says to the churches: The victor has nothing to fear from the second death."

REVELATION 2:8-11

Read: The Church of Smyrna will be persecuted for her fidelity to Jesus. Listening to the Spirit they will be faithful in the face of death and be with Christ forever. In spite of that, Jesus asks her to be faithful until death and thus conquer life eternal.

Reflect: How does the contemporary world make it difficult for you to be a Christian? There are places in this reading where anti-Semitic feeling creeps in: "synagogue of Satan." Do you see Christians as intolerant of others?

Pray: Ask God for strength to remain firm and faithful in times of difficulties, fortitude to confront sufferings, and Faith to realize Jesus is always at your side.

Act: Think of a particular situation when you have not been faithful to the message of Jesus. Resolve to act differently in similar circumstances in the future: following the way Jesus taught us.

¹²Write this to the angel of the church in Pergamum, “Thus says the one who has the sharp, double-edged sword:

¹³I know where you live, where Satan’s throne is, but you cling firmly to my name; you have not renounced me, not even in the days when Antipas, my faithful witness, was killed; in your place where Satan lives.

¹⁴Nevertheless, I have a few complaints against you: Some among you hold the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak how to make the Israelites stumble by eating food sacrificed to idols and committing adultery. ¹⁵Also among you, some follow the teaching of the Nicolaitans. ¹⁶Therefore, repent; if not, I will come to you soon to attack these people with the sword of my mouth.

¹⁷Let anyone who has ears listen to what the Spirit says to the churches: To the victor, I will give the hidden manna. And I will also give a white stone with a new name written on it, which no one knows, except the one who receives it.”

REVELATION 2:12-17

Read: The speaker is Jesus who knows they are being persecuted (Satan’s throne). Struggling to remain faithful, their behavior is negatively affected by local customs and beliefs. The faithful are fed by God as Israel in the desert.

Reflect: Do you live in the midst of a social, economic and political environment that is far from the Word of God and the doctrine of the Church? How are we to show our fidelity to Jesus in these circumstances?

Pray: Ask God for wisdom to stay faithful to the Gospel when peer pressure and public opinion try to lead you elsewhere.

Act: Identify specific instances of Church teaching at odds with current lifestyle. How do you articulate what you believe? Try to form and inform yourself regarding those issues.

¹⁸Write this to the angel of the church in Thyatira, “Thus says the Son of God, whose eyes are like flames of fire, and whose feet are like burnished bronze. ¹⁹I know your works: your love, faith, service, patient endurance; and your later works, greater than the first.

²⁰Nevertheless, I have a complaint against you: you tolerate your

Jezebel, this woman who calls herself a prophetess; and is deceiving my servants; she teaches them prostitution, and the eating of food sacrificed to idols. ²¹I have given her time to repent, but she is unwilling to leave her prostitution. ²²So I am going to throw her onto a bed, and inflict severe trials on her partners in adultery, unless they repent of their evil. ²³I will strike her children dead, and all the churches will know that I am he who probes the heart and mind; I will give each of you what your conduct deserves.

²⁴Listen to me, now, the rest of you in Thyatira. You do not hold with this teaching and have not learned ‘the secrets,’ as they are called, which are in fact, those of Satan. So I have no cause to reproach you, ²⁵only, hold on to what you have, until I come. ²⁶To the victor who keeps to my ways to the end, *I will give power over the nations, ²⁷to rule them with an iron rod, and shatter them like earthen pots*; he will be like me, who received this power from my Father. ²⁸Moreover, I will give him the Morning Star.

²⁹Let anyone who has ears listen to what the Spirit says to the churches.”

REVELATION 2:18-29

Read: The early days of Christianity were made difficult by public persecutions and internal fights about what Christian life should be. The basic theme is repeated: the good and bad works of the community, the changes that are needed, and the promise of Christ’s presence in the Spirit.

Reflect: How do conflicts outside and inside the Church affect our faith? How is Christ present to you when this happens? “Morning Star” refers to fresh beginnings, the new day promised by Christ to those working through difficult times. Have you experienced this?

Pray: Ask the Lord for wisdom to discern what really comes from Christ and what is contrary to the Gospel.

Act: External and external conflict is part of the life of the Church and can confuse your heart. Find that private place where the Spirit speaks to you for clarity.

3¹Write this to the angel of the church in Sardis, “Thus says he who holds the seven spirits of God and the seven stars:

I know your worth: you think you live, but you are dead. ²Wake up, and strengthen that which is not already dead. For I have found your works to be imperfect in the sight of my God. ³Remember what you were taught; keep it, and change your ways. If you do not repent, I will come upon you like a thief, at an hour you least expect.

⁴Yet, there are some left in Sardis who have not soiled their robes; these will come with me, dressed in white, since they deserve it. ⁵The victor will be dressed in white, and I will never erase his name from the book of life; instead, I will acknowledge it before my Father and his angels.

⁶Let anyone who has ears listen to what the Spirit says to the churches.”

REVELATION 3:1-6

Read: All the churches experience trouble, this time Sardis, whose faith looks alive and awake but has grown tired and flat. They are encouraged to wake up and walk with Christ who will bring them mercy and eternal life.

Reflect: Think of a time when your faith life went flat. How did you wake up your heart and walk with the Lord?

Pray: Give thanks to God for the gift of His Word and ask for strength and resolution to live according to its teaching.

Act: Read the Word of God every day and look for something to refresh your life. Instead of doing the same old thing, challenge your faith with something new.

⁷Write this to the angel of the church in Philadelphia, “Thus says he who is holy and true, who holds the key of David; if he opens, nobody shuts, and if he shuts, nobody opens.

⁸I know your worth; I have opened a door before you, which nobody can close, because you have kept my word, and not renounced me in spite of your lack of power. ⁹I am giving you some of the synagogues of Satan, who call themselves Jews, but they are only liars. I will make them fall at your feet, and recognize that I have loved you.

¹⁰Because you have kept my words with patient endurance, I, for my part, will keep you safe in the hour of trial that is coming upon the whole world, to test the people of the earth. ¹¹I am coming soon; hold fast to what you have, lest anyone take your crown.

¹²I will make the victor into a column, in the Sanctuary of my God where he will stay forever. I will write on him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down from my God in heaven, and my own new name. ¹³Let anyone who has ears listen to what the Spirit says to the churches.”

REVELATION 3:7-13

Read: The Christ has set up an open door through which he passes to be near the persecuted Church in Philadelphia, so others know Christ loves them. “Conquering” means martyrdom, and when this happens Christ will bring them to God.

Reflect: How would you describe your faith community: weak but faithful to the Word or distant and self-reliant? Do you feel God’s presence in your community? When you die do you believe Christ will bring you God?

Pray: Give thanks to God for your community and ask that it may remain faithful to the Gospel in spite of difficulties.

Act: How does your church support people who are struggling with life, with faith? Find a way to participate in these efforts.

¹⁴Write this to the angel of the church in Laodicea, “Thus says the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of God’s creation:

¹⁵I know your works: you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were cold or hot! ¹⁶You are lukewarm, neither hot nor cold; so I will spit you out of my mouth. ¹⁷You think you are rich and have piled up so much that you need nothing, but you do not realize that you are wretched, and to be pitied; poor, blind, and naked.

¹⁸I advise you to buy from me gold that has been tested by fire, so that you may be rich, and white clothes to wear, so that your nakedness may not shame you; and ointment for your eyes, that you may see. ¹⁹I reprimand and correct all those I love. Be earnest, and change your ways.

²⁰Look, I stand at the door and knock. If you hear my call and open the door, I will come in to you and have supper with you, and you with me. ²¹I will let the victor sit with me, on my throne, just as I was victorious, and took my place with my Father on his throne. ²²Let anyone who has ears listen to what the Spirit says to the churches.”

REVELATION 3:14-22

Read: Laodicea was pathetically self-complacent and had become lukewarm with the Gospel. But God wants her to return and be faithful, thus, He reproaches her and gives her another chance.

Reflect: Are you trapped in routine and comfort? How do you live your Christian witness? What does the following text suggest to you: “I stand at the door and knock. If you hear my call and open the door, I will come into you and have supper with you, and you with me”?

Pray: Ask God the grace to be fervent in your faith; that it may not become lukewarm because of comfort or lack of problems. When Christ knocks at your door, listen and allow the Spirit to enter your life.

Act: Make an examination of conscience focusing on the things and people you used to care about but have not done much for lately.

A LOOK AT THE PAST: CHRIST AND ISRAEL

The throne in heaven

4¹After this, I looked up to the wall of the sky and saw an open door. The voice, which I had first heard speaking to me like a trumpet, said, “Come up here and I will show you what will come in the future.”

²Immediately, I was seized by the spirit. There, in heaven, was a throne, and one sitting on it. ³He who sat there looked like jasper and carnelian, and, round the throne was a rainbow, resembling an emerald.

⁴In a circle, around the throne, are twenty-four thrones, and seated on these are twenty-four elders, dressed in white clothes with golden crowns on their heads. ⁵Flashes of lightning come forth from the throne, with

voices and thunderclaps. Seven flaming torches burn before the throne; these are the seven spirits of God.

⁶Before the throne, there is a platform, transparent like crystal. Around and beside the throne, stand four living creatures, full of eyes, both in front and behind. ⁷The first living creature is like a lion, the second, like a bull; the third has the face of a man, and the fourth looks like a flying eagle. ⁸Each of the four living creatures has six wings, full of eyes, all around as well as within; day and night, they sing without ceasing,

*Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God,
master of the universe,
who was, and is, and is to come.*

⁹Whenever the living creatures give glory, honor, and thanks to the one on the throne, he who lives for ever and ever, ¹⁰the twenty-four elders fall down before him and worship the one who lives for ever and ever. They lay their crowns in front of the throne and say,

*¹¹Our Lord and God, worthy are you
to receive glory, honor, and power!
For you have created all things;
by your will, they came to be and were made.*

REVELATION 4:1-11

Read: Worship of God is prominent in the imagery of this chapter which is borrowed from the prophets. God cannot be completely described even by the most precious elements, but is worshiped.

Reflect: In the middle of all their problems the Churches are asked to focus their attention on God. They don't escape their troubles by worshiping God but find the strength to deal with them because they worship God.

Pray: Proclaim the greatness of God who cares for you as part of Creation.

Act: Write a one sentence prayer that focuses your attention on the love of the Creator and use it in times of struggle.

The coming of the Lamb

5¹Then, I saw in the right hand of him who was seated on the throne, a scroll written on both sides, sealed with seven seals. ²A mighty angel exclaimed in a loud voice, “Who is worthy to open this and break the seals?”

³But no one in heaven or on earth, or in the netherworld, was found able to open the book and read it. ⁴I wept much when I saw that no one was found worthy to open the book and read it. ⁵Then one of the elders said to me, “Do not weep. Look, the lion of the tribe of Judah, the shoot of David, has conquered; he will open the book of the seven seals.”

⁶And I saw next to the throne, with its four living creatures, and the twenty-four elders, a Lamb, standing, although it had been slain. I saw him with seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out to all the earth.

⁷The Lamb moved forward and took the book from the right hand of him who was seated on the throne. ⁸When he took it, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders bowed before the Lamb. They all held in their hands, harps, and golden cups full of incense, which are the prayers of the holy ones.

⁹This is the new song they sang:

*You are worthy to take the book
and open its seals,
for you were slain,
and by your blood, you purchased for God,
people of every race, language, and nation;
¹⁰and you made them a kingdom, and priests for our God,
and they shall reign over the land.*

¹¹I went on looking; I heard the noise of a multitude of angels, gathered around the throne, the living creatures and the elders, numbering millions of millions, ¹²crying out with a loud voice:

*Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive
power and riches, wisdom and strength,
honor, glory, and praise.*

¹³Then, I heard the voice of the whole universe, heaven, earth, sea, and the place of the dead; every creature cried out:

To him who sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb, be praise, honor, glory, and power, for ever and ever.

¹⁴And the four living creatures said, Amen, while the elders bowed down and worshiped.

REVELATION 5:1-14

Read: A sealed parchment contains God's meaning and will for the world. Only Christ Jesus, the Lamb who sacrificed himself for the world, can open it. As they worshiped the Creator, so do people now worship Christ the Lamb.

Reflect: Do you recognize in Jesus the fullness and realization of the saving plan of the Father? What does the following expression suggest to you: "To him who sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb, be praise, honor, glory, and power, for ever and ever"?

Pray: Give thanks to God for Jesus' presence in your life and in history and ask for his guidance to follow in his steps.

Act: Praise God by inviting your people to pray the Rosary. Afterward, share with them what Jesus means in your life.

The seven seals

6¹I saw the Lamb opening the first of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures cry out, with a voice like thunder, "Come and see!"

²A white horse appeared, and its rider had a bow. He was crowned, and he went out as a conqueror, and he will conquer.

³When he opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature cry out, "Come!" ⁴Then, another horse, the color of fire, came out. Its rider was ordered to take peace away from the earth, that people might kill one another; so he was given a great sword.

⁵When he opened the third seal, I heard the third creature cry out, "Come!" This time, it was a black horse, and its rider held a balance in his hand. ⁶Then, from the midst of the four living creatures, a voice was heard: "A measure of wheat for a piece of silver, and three measures of barley for a piece, as well! Do not spoil the oil or the wine."

⁷When he opened the fourth seal, I heard a cry from the fourth living creature, "Come!" ⁸A greenish horse appeared, its rider was called

Death, and the Netherworld rode behind him. He was allowed to utterly destroy, by sword, famine, pestilence and wild beasts, a fourth of the inhabitants of the earth.

REVELATION 6:1-8

Read: The Lamb opens the first four seals. Fear, want, hunger, pestilence, and beasts appear. It is the description of the destructive power of humanity.

Reflect: Are you scared about the future of humanity? How is it possible that with such an abundance of food production we have more hungry people now than 50 years ago? Do you trust in God's power? How does God show Himself in these circumstances?

Pray: Ask God to increase your faith and confidence to live with serenity and committed to the wellbeing of humanity. Ask the Lamb to help you open the seals of your own life.

Act: Do something concrete to make out of this a better world: share your table with your friends, visit prisoners, and take care of the earth.

⁹When he opened the fifth seal, I saw, under the altar, the spirits of those who proclaimed the word of God and were slain for its sake. ¹⁰They began to cry aloud, "Holy and righteous Lord, how long will it be before you render justice, and avenge our blood on the inhabitants of the earth?" ¹¹Then each one of them was given a white garment, and they were told to wait a little while, until the number of their brothers and sisters, and fellow servants who would be killed, as they had been, would be completed.

REVELATION 6:9-11

Read: The Lamb opens the fifth seal and the martyrs of the faith appear. They are alongside God who has embraced them, not forgotten them.

Reflect: Do you know anyone who, because of being a Christian, is suffering ridicule, marginalization or persecution? How can we express our solidarity with them?

Pray: Give thanks to God for the witnesses of a strong faith that are present in the Church, and ask also for help that you can endure difficulties and thus be on the side of God.

Act: Look for a biography, or a martyr's witness, from the old or recent times. Look at your life and see how you can imitate those examples.

¹²And my vision continued. When the Lamb opened the sixth seal, there was a violent earthquake. The sun became black as a mourning dress, and the whole moon turned blood-red, ¹³and the stars in the sky fell to the earth, like dry figs falling from a fig tree shaken by a hurricane. ¹⁴The sky was folded up like rolled parchment; there was no mountain or continent that was not removed from its place. ¹⁵The kings of the earth and their ministers, the generals, the rich and the powerful, and all the people, slaves, as well as free persons, hid in caves, or among rocks, on the mountains, ¹⁶saying, "Fall on us, mountains and rocks, and hide us, for we are afraid of him who sits on the throne, and of the wrath of the Lamb. ¹⁷The great day of his wrath has come, and who can endure it?"

REVELATION 6:12-17

Read: With the opening of the sixth seal, the world as we know it is being dismantled. This is especially true for the leading powers. (In the following chapters we learn it will be replaced by a new world from God.)

Reflect: Sometimes things need to change altogether to make room for God. What about change frightens you? The kings and generals have to be replaced for change to happen, how do you understand this?

Pray: Ask for serenity and trust when confronted with the dangers and disaster of our time. Place your life in God's hands and be faithful to the commandment of love.

Act: Show in your life God's goodness: love others, forgive, share your food, welcome the marginalized, be generous with those who approach you.

144,000 from Israel and the great crowd from every nation

7¹After this, there were four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds, to prevent their blowing against the earth, the sea, and the trees. ²I saw another angel ascending from the sunrise, carrying the seal of the living God, and he cried out with a loud voice to the four angels empowered to harm the earth and the sea, ³“Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees, until we have sealed the servants of our God upon their foreheads.”

⁴Then, I heard the number of those marked with the seal: a hundred and forty-four thousand from all the tribes of the people of Israel:

⁵from the tribe of Judah, twelve thousand were sealed;

from the tribe of Reuben, twelve thousand;

from the tribe of Gad, twelve thousand;

⁶from the tribe of Asher, twelve thousand;

from the tribe of Naphtali, twelve thousand;

from the tribe of Manasseh, twelve thousand;

⁷from the tribe of Simeon, twelve thousand;

from the tribe of Levi, twelve thousand;

from the tribe of Issachar, twelve thousand;

⁸from the tribe of Zebulun, twelve thousand;

from the tribe of Joseph, twelve thousand;

from the tribe of Benjamin, twelve thousand.

REVELATION 7:1-8

Read: The winds moving over the waters created the world and they will destroy it so it can be reformed. God takes care of his own, marking them with a seal. The number 144,000 is a perfect one (12 x 12 x 1000). It is the number of the chosen people of the new Israel, much more numerous than the former twelve tribes of Israel.

Reflect: God does not just care for individuals, they are cared for as a people, a new Israel. Do you feel that you belong to a community loved by God?

Pray: Give thanks to God for knowing Him, for having Him present in your life, and ask for an increase in faith and help for sharing that with others.

Act: Knowing that you have been chosen by God (one of the 144,000 sealed), share this Good News by the way you live your everyday life: forgiving, helping, welcoming, showing that Jesus continues to be present today.

⁹After this, I saw a great crowd, impossible to count, from every nation, race, people and tongue, standing before the throne and the Lamb, clothed in white, with palm branches in their hands, ¹⁰and they cried out with a loud voice, “Who saves, but our God, who sits on the throne, and the Lamb?”

¹¹All the angels were around the throne, the elders and the four living creatures; they then bowed before the throne with their faces to the ground, to worship God. ¹²They said,

Amen. Praise, glory, wisdom, thanks, honor, power and strength to our God forever and ever. Amen!

¹³At that moment, one of the elders spoke up and said to me, “Who are these people clothed in white, and where did they come from?” ¹⁴I answered, “Sir, it is you who know this.”

The elder replied, “They are those who have come out of the great persecution; they have washed and made their clothes white in the blood of the Lamb.

¹⁵This is why they stand before the throne of God, and serve him, day and night, in his Sanctuary. He, who sits on the throne, will spread his tent over them.

¹⁶Never again will they suffer hunger or thirst, or be burned by the sun, or any scorching wind.

¹⁷For the Lamb, near the throne, will be their Shepherd, and he will bring them to springs of life-giving water, and God will wipe away their tears.”

REVELATION 7:9-17

Read: The martyrs of the faith are “a great crowd, impossible to count, from every nation, race, people, and tongue.” This scene is reminiscent of the worship service the Feast of Booths, a worship service that rejects idolatry, praises God for the gifts

of water and life, and asks God's protection from hunger, thirst and sorrow. The prayers are answered.

Reflect: When you face trouble, do you pray for an awareness of God's presence with you? Are ordeals likely to lead you to trust or abandon God?

Pray: Ask God to increase your trust in Him and in the fullness of life that He promises. Ask also that persecuted Christians may be helped and sustained by the prayers and solidarity of the universal Church.

Act: Give witness of hope in the fullness and happiness of life that Jesus offers. Share with a member of your community the reflection that the Holy Spirit inspires you today.

8¹When the Lamb opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. ²Then, I looked at the seven angels standing before God, who were given seven trumpets.

³Another angel came, and stood before the altar of incense, with a golden censer. He was given much incense to be offered, with the prayers of all the holy ones, on the golden altar before the throne; ⁴and the cloud of incense rose with the prayers of the holy ones, from the hands of the angel to the presence of God. ⁵Then, the angel took the censer, and filled it with burning coals from the altar, and threw them on the earth: and there came thunder, lightning and earthquakes.

REVELATION 8:1-5

Read: The Lamb opens the seventh seal. It is a solemn moment. Seven trumpets are given to the seven angels who are in the presence of God. The prayer of all the saints goes up to God together with the perfume of the incensory carried by another angel.

Reflect: These verses are like a slow beginning of a worship service, deliberately slow clearing our minds for God. Prayers don't control God; in prayer we wait for God. How do you experience waiting for God?

Pray: Ask for God's grace to recognize His manifestations in

your daily life, and the grace to honor and praise Him; and to follow His commandments.

Act: Pray without words, just trying to be present to the presence of God.

The seven trumpets

⁶The seven angels with the seven trumpets prepared to sound them. ⁷When the first angel blew his trumpet, there came hail and fire mixed with blood, which fell on the earth. And a third of the earth was burned up with a third of the trees and the green grass.

⁸When the second angel blew his trumpet, something like a great mountain was thrown into the sea, and a third of the sea was turned into blood. ⁹At once, a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships perished.

¹⁰When the third angel sounded his trumpet, a great star fell from heaven like a ball of fire, on a third of the rivers and springs. ¹¹The star is called *Wormwood*, and a third of the waters were turned into wormwood, and many people died because of the water, which had turned bitter.

¹²The fourth angel blew his trumpet, and a third of the sun, the moon, and the stars were affected. Daylight decreased one third, and the light at night as well.

¹³And my vision continued: I noticed an eagle flying through the highest heaven and crying with a loud voice, “Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the land when the last three angels sound their trumpets.”

9¹And the fifth angel blew his trumpet. I, then, saw a star fall from heaven to earth. The star was given the key to the depths of the abyss. ²He opened the abyss and a cloud of smoke rose as if from a great furnace, which darkened the sun and the air.

³Locusts came from this smoke and spread throughout the earth. They were given the same harmful power as the scorpions of the earth. ⁴Then they were told not to harm the meadows, the green grass or the trees, but only the people who do not bear the seal of God upon their foreheads. ⁵They were not to kill them, but only torture them for five months. This pain is like the sting of scorpions. ⁶In those days, people will look for death, but will not find it; they will long to die, but death

will elude them. ⁷These locusts look like horses equipped for battle; they wear golden crowns on their heads, and their faces are like those of human beings. ⁸Their hair is like women's hair, and their teeth, like lion's teeth; ⁹their chests are like iron breastplates; and the noise of their wings, like the roar of an army of chariots and horses rushing for battle.

¹⁰Their tails are like those of scorpions and have stings; the power they have to torture people for five months is in their tails. ¹¹These locusts have a king who is the angel of the abyss, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon, or Apollyon in Greek (Destruction).

REVELATION 8:6—9:11

Read: The sound of the first six trumpets is heard calling attention to the analogy to the plagues sent to Egypt to soften the hard heart of Pharaoh. These represent the urgent call that God makes to us for conversion. Time is running out; we should always be ready for the encounter with the Lord.

Reflect: Trumpets are sounded to get attention; how does God get your attention? Do you pay attention to God only when bad things happen?

Pray: Ask for God's forgiveness for the mistakes of humanity and also of your own. Ask for the grace of conversion and that each day, men and women may work to transform this world close to His will.

Act: Do not panic for today's catastrophes. Rather work with your people and with your parish community to help those who are being affected.

¹²The first woe has passed. Two others are to come.

¹³The sixth angel blew his trumpet. Then, I heard a voice calling from the corners of the golden altar before God. ¹⁴It said to the sixth angel who had just sounded the trumpet, "Release the four angels chained at the banks of the great river Euphrates."

¹⁵And the four angels were released, who had been waiting for this year, this month, this day and this hour, ready to utterly destroy a third of humankind. ¹⁶The number of soldiers on horses was two hundred million; this is the number I heard.

¹⁷In my vision, I saw those horses and their riders: they wore breastplates the color of fire, hyacinth, and sulfur. The heads of the horses look like lions' heads; and fire, smoke, and sulfur come out of their mouths.

¹⁸Then, a third of humankind was killed by these three plagues: fire, smoke and sulfur, which the horses released through their mouths, ¹⁹for the power of the horses was both in their mouths and in their tails. Their tails, in fact, look like serpents, and their heads are able to inflict injury as well.

²⁰However, the rest of humankind who were not killed by these plagues did not renounce their way of life: they went on worshiping the demons, keeping those idols of gold, silver, bronze, stone, and wood that cannot see, hear or walk. ²¹No, they did not repent of their crimes, or their sorcery, or their sexual immorality or their theft.

What has been proclaimed by the prophets is fulfilled

10¹Then, I saw another mighty angel coming down from heaven, wrapped in a cloud. A rainbow was around his head; his face was like the sun, and his legs, like pillars of fire. ²I could see a small book open in his hand. He stood with his right foot planted on the sea and his left on the land, ³and called in a loud voice like the roaring of a lion. ⁴Then, the seven thunders sounded their own message.

I was about to write what the seven thunders had sounded, when a voice from heaven said to me, "Keep the words of the seven thunders secret and do not write them down."

⁵And the angel I saw standing on the sea and land, raised his right hand to heaven, ⁶swearing by him who lives for ever and ever, and who created the heavens, the earth, the sea and everything in them.

He said, "There is no more delay; ⁷as soon as the trumpet call of the seventh angel is heard, the mysterious plan of God will be fulfilled, according to the good news he proclaimed through his servants, the prophets."

⁸And the voice I had heard from heaven spoke again, saying to me, "Go near the angel who stands on the sea and on the land, and take the small book open in his hand." ⁹So, I approached the angel and asked him for the small book; he said to me, "Take it and eat; although it be sweet as honey in your mouth, it will be bitter to your stomach."

¹⁰I took the small book from the hand of the angel and ate it. It was

sweet as honey in my mouth, but when I had eaten it, it turned bitter in my stomach. ¹¹Then I was told, “You must again proclaim God’s words about many peoples, nations, tongues, and kings.”

REVELATION 9:12—10:11

Read: The process of breaking open the final scroll which reveals God’s will is compared with the seven days of Creation. The message that must be preached is God is acting now as God has acted in the past.

Reflect: God entrusts His Word to those who will share it with others. Have you made the Word of God your own? Is your life a witness to that? Is it Good News for others?

Pray: Ask from God the grace to be faithful and strong in giving witness to His Word; that it may be Good News for others.

Act: Give yourself time for prayer and biblical formation, at the personal and the communitarian level. Talk to your people about the importance to share the Word of God with others.

The two witnesses

11 ¹Then I was given a staff, like a measuring stick, and I was told, “Go and measure the temple of God and the altar, and count those who worship there. ²Do not bother to measure the outer courtyard, for this has been given to the pagans who will trample over the holy city for forty-two months. ³Meanwhile, I will entrust my word to my two witnesses, who will proclaim it for one thousand two hundred and sixty days, dressed in sackcloth.”

⁴These are *the two olive trees, and the two lamps, which are before the Lord of the earth.* ⁵If anyone intends to harm them, fire will come out of their mouths to devour their enemies: this is how whoever intends to harm them will perish. ⁶They have the power to close the sky and hold back the rain during the time of their prophetic mission; they also have the power to change water into blood and punish the earth with a thousand plagues, any time they wish.

⁷But when my witnesses have fulfilled their mission, the beast that comes up from the abyss will make war upon them and will conquer and kill them. ⁸Their dead bodies will lie in the square of the great city,

which the believers figuratively call Sodom, or Egypt, where their Lord was crucified. ⁹And their dead bodies will be exposed for three days and a half to people of all tribes, races, languages, and nations, who will be ordered not to have them buried.

¹⁰Then, the inhabitants of the earth will rejoice, congratulate one another, and exchange gifts among themselves because these two prophets were a torment to them.

¹¹But after those three and a half days, a spirit of life, coming from God, entered them. They then stood up, and those who looked at them were seized with great fear. ¹²A loud voice from heaven called them, "Come up here." So they went up to heaven, in the midst of the clouds, in the sight of their enemies.

¹³At that moment, there was a violent earthquake, which destroyed a tenth of the city and claimed seven thousand victims. The rest were overcome with fear and acknowledged the God of heaven.

¹⁴The second woe has passed. The third is coming soon.

REVELATION 11:1-14

Read: The temple represents the Christian community. It is the place where God dwells and where He receives worship from His faithful. The Christian community are also God's witnesses to the entire world. These are going to be killed by the evil that comes from the world, but they will rise like Jesus and will have eternal life.

Reflect: Those who are inside the temple, in the Church, are saved. But does that guarantee us to stay in the Church as authentic followers of Jesus? Are you prepared to give witness to your faith until the last consequences? Do you believe in eternal life? What are the implications in your daily life?

Pray: Ask for God's forgiveness for the times you were not faithful to the commandment of love. Ask also for strength and valor to be always His witness, even in the midst of difficulties.

Act: What are the most important messages you want to say with your life? How are you delivering your message?

¹⁵The seventh angel blew his trumpet; then, loud voices resounded in heaven: “The world has now become the kingdom of our God and of his Christ. He will reign for ever and ever.”

¹⁶The twenty-four elders, who sit on their thrones before God, bowed down to worship God, ¹⁷saying,

*We thank you, Lord God,
Master of the universe,
who are and who were,
for you have begun your reign,
making use of your invincible power.*

¹⁸*The nations raged
but your wrath has come,
the time to judge the dead
and reward your servants the prophets,
the saints and those who honor your Name—
whether great or small—
and destroy those who destroy the earth.*

¹⁹Then, the Sanctuary of God in the heavens was opened, and the Ark of the Covenant of God could be seen inside the Sanctuary. There were flashes of lightning, peals of thunder, an earthquake, and a violent hailstorm.

REVELATION 11:15-19

Read: Finally, the last trumpet sounds. Strong voices announce the coming of the kingship of God. The time for judgment has arrived: “the time to judge the dead and reward your servants the prophets, the saints and those who honor your Name—whether great or small—and destroy those who destroy the earth.”

Reflect: What reaction does the divine judgment give you? Do you trust in God’s mercy? Do you hope in the final triumph of good over evil? How does it show in your everyday life?

Pray: Pray God’s grace sustains you in times of trouble and give you the energy to build the kingdom of God.

Act: Show your hope in the final triumph of good over evil by performing the works of mercy that the Gospel presents to Christians (read Mt 25:31-46).

TOWARD THE FUTURE: THE WORLD AND THE CHURCH

The woman and the dragon

12¹A great sign appeared in heaven: a woman, clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and a crown of twelve stars on her head. ²She was pregnant, and cried out in pain, looking to her time of delivery.

³Then, another sign appeared: a huge red dragon, with seven heads and ten horns, and wearing seven crowns on its heads. ⁴It had just swept along a third of the stars of heaven with its tail, throwing them down to the earth.

The dragon stood in front of the woman who was about to give birth so that it might devour the child as soon as it was born. ⁵She gave birth to a male child, the one who is to rule all the nations with an iron scepter; then, her child was seized and taken up to God, and to his throne, ⁶while the woman fled to the desert where God had prepared a place for her; there, she would be looked after for one thousand two hundred and sixty days.

REVELATION 12:1-6

Read: The final conflict is between the work of God, represented by the woman who has been interpreted as either Mary, or the Church, or both, and the dragon—the forces of evil thought to be the Romans.

Reflect: Mary and the Church have been recognized by tradition as “our mothers.” Do you feel like a son/daughter of Mary and the Church? Do you think that the way you live gives testimony to the teachings of Jesus? Where do you see evil today?

Pray: Give thanks to God for the incarnation of His Son, for the faith and companionship of Mary, for the Church that gathers us as a mother. Ask God for the grace to respond to God like what Mary, our mother, did.

Act: Read John 19:25-27. Contemplate Mary with Jesus on the cross. Contemplate also her presence in your life and the life of the Church. Promote the Marian devotion in your family.

⁷War broke out in heaven, with Michael and his angels battling with the dragon. The dragon fought back with his angels, ⁸but they were defeated and lost their place in heaven. ⁹The great dragon, the ancient serpent, known as the devil, or Satan, seducer of the whole world, was thrown out. He was hurled down to earth, together with his angels.

¹⁰Then, I heard a loud voice from heaven:

*Now has salvation come,
with the power and the kingdom of our God,
and the rule of his anointed.*

*For our brothers' accuser has been cast out,
who accused them night and day, before God.*

¹¹*They conquered him by the blood of the Lamb,
and by the word of their testimony,
for they gave up their lives, going to death.*

¹²*Rejoice, therefore, O you heavens,
and you who dwell in them;
but woe to you, earth and sea,
for the devil has come to you in anger,
knowing that he has but a little time.*

¹³When the dragon saw that he had been thrown down to earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child. ¹⁴Then the woman was given the two wings of the great eagle so that she might fly into the desert, where she would be looked after for three and a half years. ¹⁵The serpent poured water out of his mouth after the woman to carry her away in the flood, ¹⁶but the earth came to her rescue: it opened its mouth and swallowed the flood, which the dragon had poured from its mouth. ¹⁷Then the dragon was furious with the woman and went off to wage war on the rest of her children, those who keep God's commandments and bear witness to Jesus. ¹⁸And he stood on the seashore.

REVELATION 12:7-18

Read: Evil, represented by the dragon, is not as strong as God. The dragon is defeated by the Lamb and continues to "make war on the rest of her children, those who keep the commandments of God and the testimony of Jesus."

Reflect: How do you think of the conflict between good and evil? In what ways does evil continue to make war on those who follow Christ? How does evil make war on you?

Pray: Ask for the Risen Lord's protection for the whole Church that she may be a good witness of the Good News she announces: the final victory of good over evil.

Act: Evil drains people's hope. Do an act of goodness that gives encouragement to someone who has lost hope.

The beast and the false prophet

13¹Then, I saw a beast rising out of the sea, with ten horns and seven heads, with ten crowns on its horns. On each head was a title challenging God. ²The beast I saw looked like a leopard, with paws like a bear and a mouth like a lion. The dragon passed on his power, his throne and his great authority to the beast.

³One of its heads seemed to be fatally wounded, but this wound healed. The whole earth wondered and they followed the beast. ⁴People prostrated themselves before the dragon who had given such authority to the beast, and they prostrated themselves before the beast saying, "Who is like the beast? Who can oppose it?"

⁵The beast was given speech, and it spoke boastful and blasphemous words against God; it was allowed to wield its power for forty-two months. ⁶It spoke blasphemies against God, his name and his Sanctuary, that is, those who already dwell in heaven.

⁷It was allowed to make war on the saints and to conquer them. It was given authority over people, of every tribe, language, and nation; ⁸this is why all the inhabitants of the earth will worship before it, those whose names have not been written in the book of life of the slain Lamb since the foundation of the world.

⁹Let anyone who has ears to hear, listen: ¹⁰*If your lot is the prison, to prison you will go; if your lot is to be killed by the sword, by the sword will you be slain.* This is, for the holy ones, the time of endurance and faith.

¹¹Then, I saw another beast rise out of the earth with two horns like the Lamb but speaking like the dragon. ¹²This second beast is totally at

the service of the first one and enjoys its authority. So, it makes the world, and its inhabitants, worship the first beast, whose mortal wound has been healed. ¹³It works great wonders, even making fire descend from heaven to earth in the sight of all.

¹⁴Through these great wonders, which it is able to do on behalf of the beast, it deceives the inhabitants of the earth, persuading them to make a statue of the beast, which, although wounded by the sword, is still alive. ¹⁵It has been allowed to give a spirit to this statue; the statue of the beast speaks, and those who refuse to worship it are killed. ¹⁶So, this second beast makes everyone—great and small, rich and poor, free and enslaved—be branded on the right hand, or on the forehead, ¹⁷and no one can buy or sell, unless he has been branded with the name of the beast, or with the number of its name.

¹⁸Let us see who is wise! If you are clever, you can interpret the number of the Beast; it is 666 and it is the name of a certain person.

REVELATION 13:1-18

Read: The poetic images of dragons and beasts are drawn from the Hebrew Scriptures. When written they referred to the Roman Empire, perhaps Nero, perhaps the imperial Roman cult that everyone had to worship. The passage talks about what is happening right then rather than predicting the future.

Reflect: What does contemporary evil look like? Are people persecuted for their religious beliefs particularly vulnerable? Who else do you see evil attacking?

Pray: Ask God for the grace not to give up when confronting temptations of power, riches and fame. May your life always be praised to the only true God.

Act: Review your life and identify the circumstances when you were swayed by the cult of the false gods of power, wealth, and prestige. Renew your Christian commitment and in the future, in similar circumstances, remember that the only God that deserves adoration is the God of Jesus.

144,000 on Mount Zion

14¹I was given another vision:

The Lamb was standing on Mount Zion, surrounded by one hundred and forty-four thousand people, who had his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads. ²A sound reverberated in heaven like the sound of the roaring of the waves, or deafening thunder; it was like a chorus of singers, accompanied by their harps.

³They sing a new song before the throne, in the presence of the four living creatures and the elders, a song which no one can learn, except the hundred and forty-four thousand who have been taken from the earth. ⁴They are those who were not defiled with women, but were chaste; these are given to follow the Lamb wherever he goes. They are the first taken from humankind who are already of God and the Lamb. ⁵No deceit has been found in them; they are faultless.

REVELATION 14:1-5

Read: Good triumphs over evil, John's vision presenting all the saints brought close to God by Jesus—the Lamb. They are those who remained faithful, uncontaminated, and trustworthy, those who lived as Jesus lived.

Reflect: The phrase “uncontaminated by women” is problematic and harkens back to concepts of ritual purity. It should not be taken literally and reflects cultural bias against women.

Pray: In your small ways, ask Jesus to help you to be holy in your daily life, to live at all times as Jesus lived.

Act: Help someone struggling to live in communion with Christ. Invite someone to come to Church with you.

⁶Then, I saw another angel flying high in the sky, sent to proclaim the definitive good news to the inhabitants of the earth, to every nation, race, language, and people. ⁷He cried out with a loud voice, “Give God glory and honor, for the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him, who made the heavens, the earth, the sea, and all the waters.”

⁸Another angel followed him, crying out, “Fallen is Babylon the great, fallen the prostitute who has made all the nations drunk with her unleashed prostitution!”

⁹A third angel then followed, shouting aloud, “If anyone worships the beast, or its image, or has his forehead or hand branded, ¹⁰he will also drink the wine of God’s anger, which has been prepared undiluted in the cup of his fury: he will be tortured by fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and the Lamb.”

¹¹The smoke of their torment goes up for ever and ever; for there is no rest, day or night, for those who worshiped the beast and its image, and for those who were branded with the mark of its name.

¹²This is the time for patient endurance among the holy ones, for those who keep the commandments of God and faith in Jesus. ¹³I heard someone from heaven say, “Write this: Happy from now on are the dead who have died in the Lord. The Spirit says: Let them rest from their labors; their good deeds go with them.”

¹⁴Then, I had this vision. I saw a white cloud, and the one sitting on it like a *son of man*, wearing a golden crown on his head and a sharp sickle in his hand. ¹⁵An angel came out of the Sanctuary calling loudly to the one sitting on the cloud, “Put in your sickle and reap, for harvest time has come, and the harvest of the earth is ripe.” ¹⁶He, who was sitting on the cloud, swung his sickle at the earth and reaped the harvest.

¹⁷Then, another angel, who also had a sharp sickle, came out of the heavenly Sanctuary. ¹⁸Still, another angel, the one who has charge of the altar fire, emerged and shouted to the first who held the sharp sickle, “Swing your sharp sickle, and reap the bunches of the vine of the earth, for they are fully ripe.” ¹⁹So, the angel swung his sickle and gathered in the vintage, throwing all the grapes into the great winepress of the anger of God. ²⁰The grapes were trodden outside the city, and blood flowed from the wine press to the height of the horses’ bridles, and over an area of sixteen hundred furlongs.

REVELATION 14:6-20

Read: These angels will reap the grapes of wrath that the enemies of God will drink at the last judgment.

Reflect: Could you name the false gods of today? How do you live your fidelity to Jesus’ message in your everyday life?

Pray: Ask the Spirit for fortitude and fear of God to be faithful to Jesus’ message and to build his kingdom already now among us.

Act: Make a gesture or a concrete deed today that shows the presence of the kingdom in the world. Share with your group what the Spirit inspired you in your reflection.

15¹Then, I saw another great and marvelous sign in the heavens: seven angels brought seven plagues, which are the last, for, with these, the wrath of God will end. ²There was a sea of crystal mingled with fire, and the conquerors of the beast, of its name and the mark of its name, stood by it.

They had been given the celestial harps, ³and they sang the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb:

Great and marvelous are your works,

O Lord,

God and Master of the universe.

Justice and truth guide your steps,

O King of the nations.

⁴*Lord, who will not give honor and glory to your name?*

For you alone are holy.

All the nations will come and bow before you,

for they have now seen your judgments.

The seven cups

⁵Then, the Sanctuary of the Tent of Divine Declarations was opened, ⁶and the seven angels, bringing the seven plagues, came out of the Sanctuary clothed in pure and bright linen, with their waists girded with golden belts. ⁷One of the four living creatures gave the seven angels seven golden cups, full of the wrath of God who lives for ever and ever. ⁸Then the Sanctuary was filled with smoke that wraps God's glory and power so that no one could enter until the seven plagues of the seven angels were completed.

REVELATION 15:1-8

Read: The last seven plagues are announced in heaven. There "the conquerors of the beast, of its name and the mark of its name" sing praise to God. From inside the celestial temple

come seven angels carrying seven plagues with the wrath of God.

Reflect: This judgment scene is to reassure us that God is greater than evil, an important message when it seemed there was no end to the Roman Empire. In the light of evil present today, what reassures you that God is stronger?

Pray: Pray that God increase your faith and hope that you have the strength and optimism to follow Christ.

Act: Talk to your people about the importance for Christians to be prepared for the final encounter with the Lord. God is love and we shall be judged by the love we had given to others (read Mt 25:31-46).

16¹I heard a loud voice calling from the Sanctuary to the seven angels, “Go and empty on the earth the seven cups of the wrath of God.”

²The first angel went to empty his cup on the earth, and malignant and painful sores appeared on the people who bore the mark of the beast and had bowed before its image. ³The second angel emptied his cup into the sea, which turned into blood like that of the dead, and every living thing in the sea died.

⁴The third angel emptied his cup into the rivers and springs that turned into blood. ⁵And I heard the angel of the waters say, “You, who are and who were, O Holy One, you are just in punishing them in this way; ⁶since they have shed the blood of your holy ones and the prophets, you have made them drink blood; they rightly deserved it.” ⁷I heard another cry from the altar, “Yes, Lord and God, Master of the universe, your judgments are true and just.”

⁸The fourth angel poured out his cup on the sun, and its heat began to scorch people. ⁹They were severely burned and began to insult God, who has power over those plagues, instead of acknowledging him.

¹⁰The fifth angel emptied his cup on the throne of the beast, and suddenly his kingdom was in darkness, and the people bit their tongues in agony. ¹¹They insulted the Most High God for their pain and wounds, but they did not repent.

¹²The sixth angel poured out his cup on the great river Euphrates;

then, its water was dried up, leaving a free passageway for the kings of the east. ¹³I saw coming from the mouths of the monster, the beast and the false prophet, three unclean spirits, which looked like frogs. ¹⁴They are, in fact, spirits of demons that perform marvelous things, and go to the kings of the whole world to gather them for battle on the great day of God, the master of the universe.

¹⁵“Beware! I come like a thief; happy is the one who stays awake, and does not take off his clothes; so he will not have to go naked, and his whole body be exposed for all to see.”

¹⁶Then, they assembled them at the place called Armageddon in Hebrew (or the Hills of Megiddo).

¹⁷The seventh angel emptied his cup into the air. Then, a voice came forth from the throne, and was heard outside the Sanctuary saying, “It is done.” ¹⁸And there were flashes of lightning, peals of thunder and a violent earthquake. No, never has there been an earthquake, so violent, since people existed on earth. ¹⁹The great city was split into three while the cities of the nations collapsed. For the time had come for Babylon the Great to be remembered before God, and to be given the cup of the foaming wine of his anger.

²⁰Then, the continents withdrew and the mountain ranges hid. ²¹Great hailstones from heaven, as heavy as stones, dropped on the people, and the people insulted God, because of this disastrous hailstorm, for it was truly a terrible plague.

REVELATION 16:1-21

Read: There have been seven letters, seals, trumpet calls, visions and now the outpouring of God’s wrath. The imagery is drawn from the Old Testament and applied to contemporary manifestations of evil forces attacking God’s beloved. The seven plagues reach the earth, gradually destroying everything on earth. Babylon, the sin city, is destroyed.

Reflect: How do you understand God’s judgment of evil? What sources of evil anger you?

Pray: Loving God, forgive me a sinner.

Act: Make an examination of conscience and ask for God’s forgiveness for the times you were not able to listen to his voice inviting you to conversion.

The judgment of Babylon

17¹Then, one of the seven angels of the seven cups came to me, and said, “Now, I will show you the judgment of the sovereign prostitute who dwells on the great waters. ²She, it is, who let the kings of the earth sin with her; and with the wine of her lewdness, the inhabitants of the earth have become drunk.”

³The angel brought me to the desert: it was a new vision. There, a woman was seated on a red beast. The beast, which had seven heads and ten horns, covered itself with titles, and statements that offend God. ⁴The woman was clothed in purple and scarlet, with ornaments of gold, precious stones, and pearls. She held in her hands a golden cup full of loathsome idolatry and impure prostitution. ⁵Her name could be read on her forehead, written in a mysterious way: *Babylon the Great, mother of prostitutes and of the loathsome idols of the whole world.* ⁶And I saw that the woman was drunk with the blood of the holy ones and the martyrs of Jesus.

What I saw greatly surprised me, ⁷but the angel said to me, “Why are you surprised? I will reveal to you the secret of this woman, and of the beast with seven heads and ten horns that she mounts. ⁸The beast you saw has been, though, it, is not. It will come up from the abyss and then go to perdition. What a surprise for the inhabitants of the earth, whose names are not written in the book of life, from the creation of the world! They will marvel on discovering that the beast who has been, is not, and passes away.

⁹Let us see if you guess: the seven heads are seven hills on which the woman sits. And they are also seven kings, ¹⁰five of which have already fallen, one is in power, and the seventh has not yet come, but will remain only a short while. ¹¹The beast that has been but, is not, can be considered as the eighth, though it takes place among the seven; and it goes to perdition.

¹²The ten horns are ten kings, who have not yet received power, but will have authority, for an hour, with the beast. ¹³They all have, only one aim, and they place their authority and power at the service of the beast. ¹⁴They will fight against the Lamb, but the Lamb will conquer them, for he is Lord of lords and King of kings; and with him will be his followers, who have been called, and chosen, and are faithful.

¹⁵The angel went on, “Those waters you saw, on which the prostitute is seated, are peoples, multitudes, and nations of every language. ¹⁶The ten horns, and the beast itself, will plan evil against the prostitute. They will destroy her, and leave her naked; they will eat her flesh and set her on fire. ¹⁷God makes use of them to carry out his plan, so he has inspired them with their common purpose, and they will place their power at the service of the beast until the words of God are fulfilled. A last word: ¹⁸the woman you saw, is the great city which reigns over the kings of the whole world.”

REVELATION 17:1-18

Read: John speaks enigmatically of the political power of the time: Rome and its rulers. Their struggle against the Lamb is futile because the Lamb will destroy them. He is the lord of lords and king of kings.

Reflect: Do you trust in the total power of Jesus? Do you trust that love is mightier than hatred? How do you picture the coming of the kingdom of God in the world?

Pray: Ask God the grace to trust in His power, His love and His justice. May the Holy Spirit help you to wait for the irruption of the kingship of God by putting into practice the commandment of love He left us.

Act: In the difficult moments of your everyday life, keep trusting in the presence and company of the Lord. Repeat interiorly the following invocation: “Lord Jesus, Lord of lords, king of kings.”

18¹After this, I saw another angel coming down from heaven. So great was his authority that the whole earth was lit up with his glory. ²In a strong voice he cried out:

“Fallen is Babylon the great! Fallen!
She has become a haunt of demons,
a lodge for every unclean spirit,
a nest for any filthy and disgusting bird.

³She has made all nations drunk
with the wine of her lewdness,

fornicated with kings of the earth,
and glutted the world's merchants
with her wantonness and wealth.”

⁴Then, I heard another voice from heaven:

“Depart from her, my people,
lest you share in her evil,
and so share in her punishments;

⁵for her sins are piled up to heaven,
and God keeps count of her crimes.

⁶Give back to her as she has given,
pay her twice for what she has done.

Let her drink a double portion
of what she made others do.

⁷Give her as much torment and grief
as the wantonness she enjoyed herself.

For she said to herself,
‘I sit as queen, I am not a widow,
never will I go into mourning!’

⁸And so, suddenly, her plagues will come—
death, mourning, and famine.

She will be consumed by fire,
for mighty is the Lord, the judge,
who has passed sentence on her.”

⁹The kings who shared her luxury, and committed adultery with her,
will see the smoke as she burns, and they will weep and lament. ¹⁰They
will, nevertheless, keep their distance, terrified at her punishment, and
exclaim:

“Alas, alas! Great city that you are,
O Babylon, seat of power!

Your doom has come in a single hour!”

¹¹The merchants of the world will mourn over her, for they will lose a
market for their goods—¹²their cargoes of gold and silver, precious
stones and pearls, fine linen and purple garments, silk and scarlet cloth,
fragrant wood, ivory pieces and expensive furniture, bronze, iron and
marble, ¹³cinnamon and spices, perfume, myrrh and frankincense, wine
and olive oil, fine flour and grain, cattle and sheep, horses and carriages,
slaves and human lives. ¹⁴They will say:

“Gone is the fruit you longed for.
Gone are your luxury and splendor.
Never will you recover them, never!”

¹⁵The merchants who dealt in these goods, who grew rich from business with the city, will stand at a safe distance for fear of her punishment. Weeping and mourning, ¹⁶they will cry out:

“Woe, woe to the great city,
to the linen and purple and scarlet you wore,
to your gold and pearls, your finery,
¹⁷your great wealth, destroyed in an hour!”

Every captain and navigator, every sailor and seafarer, will stand afar, ¹⁸crying out, on seeing the smoke going up as the city burns to the ground. “What city could have compared with this one?” ¹⁹They will pour dust on their heads and cry out in mourning:

“Alas, alas, great city,
where all who had ships at sea
grew rich through her trade!
In an hour, she has been devastated.”

²⁰*Rejoice over her, O heavens!
Rejoice, prophets, saints, and apostles!
God has rendered justice to you.*

²¹A powerful angel picked up a boulder, the size of a large millstone, and threw it into the sea, saying:

“With such violence will Babylon, the great city, be thrown down, never again to be seen.

²²Never again will tunes of harpists, minstrels, trumpeters, and flutists be heard in you. Never again will an artisan of any trade be found in you. Never again will the noise of the mill be heard.

²³Never again will the light of a lamp shine in you. The voice of bridegroom and bride will never again be heard in you.

Because your traders were the world’s great, and you led the nations astray by your magic spell. ²⁴In this city was found blood of prophets and saints—yes, the blood of all who have been slain on the earth.”

Songs in heaven

19¹After this, I heard what sounded like the loud singing of a great assembly in heaven:

*Alleluia! Salvation, glory and might belong to our God,
 2 for his judgments are true and just.*

He has condemned the great harlot who corrupted the world with her adultery.

He has avenged his servants' blood, shed by her hand, in harlotry.

3 Once more, they sang: Alleluia! The smoke from her goes up for ever and ever!

4 The twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshipped God seated on the throne. And they cried: Amen! Alleluia!

REVELATION 18:1—19:4

Read: Babylon falls, the great sinful city: idolatrous, unjust, and lustful. Its followers cry its fall. On the contrary, the martyrs and saints rejoice because the power of God will now reign in its place.

Reflect: Does your community have inequalities and injustices? What can Christians do to change this situation?

Pray: Ask from God the grace to be always able to act according to justice; may your community give witness to the divine will.

Act: Identify in your community a situation of inequality or injustice that could be eliminated. Discern with the community how to carry that out.

5 A voice came from the throne: "Praise our God, all you, his servants, all you who revere him, both small and great!"

6 Then, I heard what sounded like a great crowd, like the roaring of the waves, like peals of thunder, answering:

*Alleluia! The Lord now reigns,
 our Lord, the Master of the universe!*

*7 Let us rejoice and be glad
 and give him glory!*

*This is the time to celebrate the wedding of the Lamb,
 his bride has made herself ready.*

*8 Fine linen, bright and clean,
 is given her to wear.*

This linen stands for the good works of the holy ones.

⁹Then, the angel told me, “Write: Happy are those invited to the wedding of the Lamb.” And he went on, “These are true words of God.”

¹⁰As I fell down at his feet, to worship him, he said to me, “Beware, I am but a servant, like you and your brothers, who utter the testimonies of Jesus (these testimonies of Jesus are proclaimed through the spirit of the prophets). Worship God alone.”

REVELATION 19:5-10

Read: This heavenly worship celebrates God’s victory over evil, and is attended by all who stand with God, those who accepted Jesus’ invitation to the wedding feast.

Reflect: The Lamb and his Church are inseparable. Can one be a Christian without belonging to the Church? How are Christians to respond when those in the Church do evil? What does it mean to say the Church is a place for sinners?

Pray: Ask that the Church may always show the merciful love she receives from Jesus.

Act: Be an active member of your parish and, in spite of her faults, contemplate in her the ever-living presence of Jesus.

The triumph of the word of God

¹¹Then, I saw heaven opened, and a white horse appeared. Its rider is the *Faithful and True*; he judges, and wages just wars. ¹²His eyes are flames of fire; he wears many crowns, and written on him is his own name, which no one can understand, except himself. ¹³He is clothed in a cloak drenched in blood. His name is the Word of God.

¹⁴The armies of heaven, clothed in pure white linen, follow him on white horses. ¹⁵A sharp sword comes out of his mouth. With it, he will strike the nations, for he must *rule them with an iron rod*. He treads the winepress of the burning wrath of God, the Master of the universe. ¹⁶This is why this title is written on his cloak and on his thigh: King of kings and Lord of lords.

¹⁷I also saw an angel standing in the sun. He cried out with a loud voice to all the birds of the air, “Come here, to the great feast of God. ¹⁸Come and eat the flesh of kings, of generals and of the mighty; come

and devour the soldier and his horse, flesh of all, both free and slaves, both small and great.”

¹⁹Then, I saw the beast with the kings of the earth and their armies, gathered together to fight against him who rides on the horse, and his army. ²⁰But the beast was captured, with the false prophet who served it and performed signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and worshiped its statue. The two were thrown, alive, into the fiery lake of burning sulfur, and all ²¹the rest were killed by the sword, which comes from the mouth of the rider who mounts the horse. And all the birds were fed with their flesh.

REVELATION 19:11-21

Read: A horse rider appears. He is Jesus himself; his name is the Word of God. With it, he will overcome evil and its followers.

Reflect: The sword of Jesus does not hurt by force but through the Word of God. Do Christians use the Word of God to overcome evil? Is the Word of God a source of inspiration for your Christian life?

Pray: Ask the Holy Spirit for the inspiration to always use wise and saintly words to overcome the evil that surrounds us.

Act: May your word always be a witness to the Word of God that welcomes, heals, and liberates.

The thousand years

20¹Then, an angel came down from heaven, holding in his hand the key to the Abyss and a huge chain. ²He seized the monster, the ancient serpent, namely Satan or the devil, and chained him for a thousand years. ³He threw him into the abyss, and closed its gate with the key, then secured it with locks, that he might not deceive the nations in the future until the thousand years have passed. Then he will be released for a little while.

⁴There were thrones, and seated on them were those with the power to judge. I then saw the spirits of those who had been beheaded for having held the teachings of Jesus, and on account of the word of God. I saw all those who had refused to worship the beast, or its image, or receive its mark on the forehead, or on the hand. They returned to life and

reigned with the Messiah for a thousand years. This is the first resurrection. ⁵The rest of the dead will not return to life before the end of the thousand years.

⁶Happy and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection, for the second death has no power over them; they will be priests of God, and of his Messiah, and reign with him a thousand years.

⁷At the end of these thousand years, Satan will be released from his prison; ⁸then, he will set out to deceive the nations of the four corners of the world, namely Gog and Magog, and gather them for war. What an army, so numerous, like the sand of the seashore! ⁹They invaded the land and surrounded the camp of the holy ones, the most beloved city, but fire came down from heaven and devoured them.

¹⁰Then, the devil, the seducer, was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet already were. Their torment will last day and night, for ever and ever.

REVELATION 20:1-10

Read: Now, a period of a thousand years begins with the dragon captive; the martyrs reign together with Jesus. And we can once more imagine a world without evil.

Reflect: The poetry is drawn from Ezekiel 38, and requires a careful reading to appreciate what is being said. The thousand years cannot be understood literally. The point is that evil is not inevitable, but that empowered by Christ, we can defeat it. Is it possible to think of a world without evil? How is evil to be combatted?

Pray: Ask God for the grace to overcome evil daily in your personal struggles. May the Holy Spirit be your shield and strength in difficult moments.

Act: Next time that evil threatens to conquer your life, overcome it by doing good, trusting in the power of Jesus, Lord of lords and king of kings.

The last judgment

¹¹After that, I saw a great and splendid throne and the one seated upon it. At once, heaven and earth disappeared, leaving no trace. ¹²I saw the

dead, both great and small, standing before the throne, while books were opened. Another book, the book of life, was also opened. Then the dead were judged according to the records of these books, that is, each one according to his works.

¹³The sea gave up the dead it had kept, as did death and the netherworld so that all might be judged according to their works. ¹⁴Then death and the netherworld were thrown into the lake of fire. This lake of fire is the second death. ¹⁵All who were not recorded in the book of life were thrown into the lake of fire.

REVELATION 20:11-15

Read: In a last judgment scene, a book with the deeds of all are judged against that found in the “book of life” that comes from God.

Reflect: What have you written so far in your “book of life”? How are you writing this book?

Pray: Place your life in God’s hands. Ask that He always be at your side, that He may guide your hand so you can write your life with words of love, goodness, and truth.

Act: Read Matthew 25:31-46 and see what concrete actions you are asked to do in this earthly life to have life forever.

The new heaven and the new earth

21 ¹Then, I saw a new heaven and a new earth. The first heaven and the first earth had passed away and no longer was there any sea. ²I saw the new Jerusalem, the holy city, coming down from God out of heaven, adorned as a bride prepared for her husband. ³A loud voice came from the throne, “*Here is the dwelling of God among mortals: He will pitch his tent among them, and they will be his people; he will be God-with-them.*”

⁴He will *wipe every tear from their eyes*. There shall be no more death or mourning, crying out or pain, for the world that was has passed away.”

⁵The One seated on the throne said, “See, I make all things new.”

And then, he said to me, “Write these words, because they are sure and true.”

⁶And he said to me: “It is already done! I am the Alpha and the

Omega, the Beginning and the End. I, myself, will give the thirsty to drink without cost from the fountain of living water. ⁷Thus, the winner will be rewarded: *For him, I shall be God and he will be my son.*

⁸As for cowards, traitors, depraved, murderers, adulterers, sorcerers, and idolaters—all those who live in falsehood, their place is the lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death.”

REVELATION 21:1-8

Read: John speaks about a new heavens and new earth, he does not mean heaven, but rather this world transformed by the love made known by Jesus Christ. Renewal, not chaos, is the divine plan.

Reflect: God will live among people and will console them. Do we enjoy already God’s presence among us? Can we feel consoled by Him? How can you come to see Christ as the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and end of your life?

Pray: Do not ask from God to be free of all the pain you may suffer in this life, but that He may always be at your side giving you joy.

Act: Approach the joy of God together with your community. Celebrate a communitarian penitential act or the sacrament of the unction of the sick, for the consolation of the older people, those who are sick or physically challenged.

The new Jerusalem

⁹Then, one of the seven angels came to me, one of those with the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues. And he said, “Come, I am going to show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.” ¹⁰He took me up in a spiritual vision, to a very high mountain, and he showed me the holy city Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven, from God. It shines with the glory of God ¹¹like a precious jewel, with the color of crystal-clear jasper.

¹²Its wall, large and high, has twelve gates; stationed at them are twelve angels. Over the gates are written the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel. ¹³Three gates face the east; three gates face the north; three gates face the south and three, face the west. ¹⁴The city

wall stands on twelve foundation stones, on which are written the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

¹⁵The angel who was speaking to me had a golden measuring rod to measure the city, its gates, and its wall. ¹⁶The city is laid out like a square: its length is the same as its breadth. He measured it with his rod and it was twelve thousand furlongs; its length, breadth, and height are equal. ¹⁷Then he measured the wall: it was a hundred and forty-four cubits high. The angel used an ordinary measure.

¹⁸The wall is made of jasper, and the city of pure gold, crystal-clear. ¹⁹The foundations of the wall are adorned with every kind of precious jewel: the first is jasper, the second sapphire, the third turquoise, the fourth emerald, ²⁰the fifth agate, the sixth ruby, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh hyacinth, and the twelfth amethyst. ²¹The twelve gates are twelve pearls, each gate made of a single pearl, and the square of the city is paved with gold, as pure as transparent crystal.

²²I saw no temple in the city, for the Lord God, Master of the universe, and the Lamb, are themselves its temple. ²³The city has no need of the light of the sun or the moon since God's glory is its light and the Lamb is its lamp.

²⁴*The nations will walk in its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their treasures to it.* ²⁵*Its gates will not be closed at sunset, for there will be no night there.* ²⁶It is there that the wealth, and the most precious things of the nations, will be brought. ²⁷*Nothing unclean will enter it, or anyone who does what is evil and false, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.*

22¹Then, he showed me the river of life, clear as crystal, gushing from the throne of God and of the Lamb. ²In the middle of the city, on both sides of the river, are the trees of life, producing fruit twelve times, once each month, the leaves of which are for healing the nations.

³No longer will there be a curse; the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and God's servants will live in his presence. ⁴They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. ⁵There will be no more night. They will not need the light of lamp, or sun, for God, himself, will be their light, and they will reign forever.

REVELATION 21:9—22:5

Read: The imagery comes from Ezekiel and Isaiah's understanding of the temple as the meeting place between God and humankind. An angel shows the glory of the bride who is united with God: it is heaven, a splendorous and perfect world illuminated by the glory of God, where everything is holy.

Reflect: The intimacy between God and the people is described as marriage. Would you use intimate language to describe your relationship with God?

Pray: Jesus Christ, Risen Lord, be close to me.

Act: See if there are sharing groups in your parish with whom you can grow in faith.

I am coming soon

⁶Then, the angel said to me, "These words are sure and true; the Lord God, who inspires the prophets, has sent his angel to show his servants what must happen soon."

⁷"I am coming soon! Happy are those who keep the prophetic words of this book."

⁸I, John, saw and heard all this. When I had seen and heard them, I fell at the feet of the angel who had shown me everything, to worship him. ⁹But he said, "No, I am a fellow servant like you and your brothers, the prophets, and those who heed the words of this book. It is God you must worship."

¹⁰He, then, said to me, "Do not keep secret the prophetic words of this book, because the time is near. ¹¹Let the sinner continue to sin, and the defiled remain in his defilement; let the righteous continue to do what is right, and he who is holy grow holier."

¹²"I am coming soon, bringing with me the recompense I will pay to each one according to his deeds. ¹³I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End."

¹⁴Happy are those who wash their robes, for they will have free access to the tree of life and enter the city through the gates. ¹⁵Outside are the dogs, sorcerers, the immoral, murderers, idolaters, and all who take pleasure in falsehood!

¹⁶“I, Jesus, sent my angel, to make known to you these revelations concerning the churches. I am the shoot and offspring of David, the radiant morning star.”

¹⁷The Spirit and the Bride say, “Come!” Whoever hears, let him say, “Come!” Whoever thirsts, let him approach, and whoever desires, let him freely take the water of life. ¹⁸As for me, I warn everyone who hears the prophetic words of this book: If anyone adds anything to them, God will pile on him, the plagues described in this book. ¹⁹And if anyone takes away words from this book of prophecy, God will take from him his share in the tree of life, and the holy city described in this book.

²⁰He who has declared all this says, “Yes, I am coming soon.” Amen! Come, Lord Jesus.

²¹May the grace of the Lord Jesus be with you all!

REVELATION 22:6-21

Read: The Book of Revelation closes as it opened, with the announcement that what was revealed is the Word of God, reaching us through Jesus. Those who follow him will obtain glorification.

Reflect: The Book of Revelation is not a book of doom but a song of Christian hope: at the end of time good will conquer evil. Do you also expect that? How? What does the following expression suggest to you: “Come, Lord Jesus”? Are you prepared for the final encounter with the Lord?

Pray: Ask the Holy Spirit to enlighten you to understand His Word, strength to carry it out and the eternal joy that, through your faith and good deeds, will allow you to be always with God.

Act: Promote in your parish community biblical courses, so that no one will be alarmed with fundamentalist readings. If possible reserve each day a special time for praying with the Bible.