

## World Without End....Amen

**Intro.** Wherever we are from, we know the signs that mark the end of summer and the beginning of winter. The leaves start to change from green to beautiful bright red and yellow colors before falling, completely covering yards. The leaves are raked into piles to jump on and then burned. Here in Florida, if we look hard enough, some oak and red maple leaves turn red. My grandmother had a big fig tree in her yard. This time of year, the large leaves would begin to rain down. The tree that in summer my brothers and I could hide in was now sadly bare. There are artificial signs as well. Things are changing. This is nothing like the changes the Lord told his disciples were in the offing, although for some facing the shopping season, it might seem similar.

**I.** The disciples had been admiring the beauty of the Jerusalem temple and the Lord told them to enjoy it while they could, it would soon be destroyed. They were shocked and wanted to know how. After the devastating news of the temple being destroyed, they got more bad news about persecutions, famines, wars. In today's gospel, the Lord in effect says then the *really bad stuff* will happen - earthly and cosmic upheaval. The sun and moon will go dark. And after that, a judgment scene with the Son of Man coming on the clouds. It is a wonder the disciples didn't pack it in and head back to fishing or collecting taxes. Hidden in all the gloom, there is good news: the angels led by Michael will gather God's faithful people from all over the world. Peace will cover the earth. I wonder if the disciples missed that part the same way they missed the good

part when the Lord told them about resurrection after his suffering and death.

**Concl.** The end of the year and the change of seasons can be cause for reflection on our lives the past twelve months. With the pandemic it seems a repeat of last year. It is like the movie, “Groundhog Day,” in which the self-focused main character must repeat the same day over and over until he chooses to change his attitude. The readings for today and next week speak of endings. The Lord told his disciples about what seemed to be nothing but disaster ahead for them and their world. Why should they continue? When we see the turmoil around us, we might wonder the same thing. Why continue following the Lord and be concerned for our neighbor if it all turns out bad. There *is* good news after all the disturbing news. The disciples didn’t at

first see it either. They came to understand the resurrection of the Lord interrupted, broke the pattern of hopelessness. Yesterday, I witnessed the marriage of two people who believe in love. Today, I baptized two children of parents who obviously believe in a future. These and other moments like this are all around us. Don’t focus on the gloom that some days seems like it will overcome us, focus on the moments that speak of love and joy. We will soon celebrate the feast that commemorates, not darkness, but the light of the world. That light of Jesus Christ is our hope-filled response.

Fr. Michael Pendergraft

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