We’re nearing the end of the liturgical year. Days are getting shorter. The darkness is growing outside. Feelings of internal darkness can also grow, especially if we have concerns that are weighing heavy on the heart. Jesus and His disciples are in Jerusalem before the Temple. The disciples were country folk. Seeing the Temple was an awesome experience for these fishermen. It would be like standing in front of St. Peters or the Capital Building for the first time. As the disciples are taking in the amazing view of the Temple, what does Jesus say? The day is coming when all of this will be destroyed. It’s shocking language. Jesus doesn’t stop there. Not only will the Temple be destroyed; the world will be destroyed. The sun will be darkened, the moon will not give its light, the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavens will be shaken. The language Jesus employs is called “apocalyptic”. This kind of language is meant to shake us from complacency and make us aware of our mortality since time is short.

Apocalypse doesn’t mean the end of the world at all. It means “unveiling”. This is why the word apocalypse is translated into the word “revelation”. Something that’s hidden in the old is now being unveiled in the new. For the ancient people, the sun, the stars, and the moon were tools of navigation and telling time. They didn’t have watches or compasses. They believed in cosmic powers governing the sun, moon and stars. These things gave them direction in life. Jesus is saying: all the ways you steer and govern your life are going to change. The Temple is going away, which happened in 70 AD when the Romans destroyed it. The leaders you have trusted are going to let you down, which they did. Jesus is saying something is going to be unveiled, a new way to order your life. He’s talking about His death and resurrection. Take a moment to contemplate Jesus’ death. Jesus was put to death after being rejected by the religious and political leaders of His day. The religious leaders and the political leaders were the ones who were supposed to give people direction in life. Something is wrong with these leaders if the “Lord of Life” Himself would be sentenced to death by them. Think about the finality of death. If I’m going to steer my life by something I can be completely certain of, it would be that I’m going to die someday. The Good News of apocalypse is that Jesus’ resurrection changes this forever. With Christ, ordering my life on the fact I’m going to die someday no longer makes sense. I know death has been conquered by Christ. Death no longer governs me. The Christian apocalypse is this: by being baptized into Christ Jesus I have been baptized into His death so that just as Christ rose from the dead I too can have resurrection and new life. I steer the ship of my life by a different star than popular culture, public leaders or by world events that disappoint or tempt us into fear. The apocalypse, the unveiling, this new way of thinking, this new way of steering my life has been revealed to me. I have a new light to guide my life’s journey. The old order has passed away and a new order has been ushered in. His name is Jesus. This is what St. Paul meant when he said it’s no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me. I no longer need the light of the sun, moon or stars. I now steer my life by the light of Christ. The invitation is to not steer our lives by the myriad of false lights around us. Don’t be steered by the media. Don’t be steered by any public leader who doesn’t point us to Jesus. In the end, all these lights go dark. We’re the people of the apocalypse. We order our lives in this way because no one other than Jesus has the power to save.