

Discernment and Reflection Thirty-fourth Week in Ordinary Time Friday, December 1, 2017 8:15 AM Dn 7:2-14; **Lk 21:29-33** (Deducing from what you see.)

“In the same way, when you see these things happening, know that the Kingdom of God is near.”

Today Jesus is speaking to his disciples, whether that includes modern-day Christians is a matter of interpretation. **To be a disciple means that we learn how to discern;** this is about discernment, and it expects quite a bit. When I was brought up in the seminary, I was taught **St. Thomas Aquinas’s view of humanity**, and it was this: that all human beings are endowed with reason. **All human beings are oriented toward the good, and they simply need a little help in determining what is really the best good.**

I have a hard time believing that today. What I see today is a great deal of indifference. What I see today is **people never bothering to try to reason anything out or really think or reflect on anything very seriously for very long.** I see people today simply going after what they just imagine to be good, and it seems that often that’s because someone else has told them it’s good or because something has been advertised as good or because that’s what people say. **It’s a different world from the world that St. Thomas thought existed.**

Here **Jesus is expecting his disciples to exercise discernment.** That means deducing—here that means—deducing from various signs. “In the same way, when you see these things happening, know”—so **deducing from what you see.**

When I was a young priest, there was a woman that I was somewhat close to. She was very devout, very spiritual, very Christlike, but not too much prone to thinking. She was brought up Catholic. She joined the Assembly of God. One day she said to me, “You know why I joined the Assembly of God? I said, “No.” I never asked her because I don’t ask those kinds of questions. If people want to tell me, they do, and she did. She said, “When I was growing up as a girl in the 40s and 50s in the Catholic Church **everything was black and white. Now it’s all shades of gray**, but in the Pentecostal Church it’s all black and white. **What would Jesus say about that?**