



Jesus said to the crowds, "When you see a cloud rising in the west you say immediately that it is going to rain -- and so it does; and when you notice that the wind is blowing from the south you say that it is going to be hot -- and so it is. You hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of the earth and the sky; why do you not know how to interpret the present time? Why do you not judge for yourselves what is right? If you are to go with your opponent before a magistrate, make an effort to settle the matter on the way; otherwise your opponent will turn you over to the judge, and the judge hand you over to the constable, and the constable throw you into prison. I say to you, you will not be released until you have paid the last penny."

Introductory Prayer: Lord, I believe that you are here with me. I have come to honor and adore you. Your love sustains me. I want to love you more in return.

Petition: Lord, allow me to comprehend your providence more deeply.

1. Seeing Signs: Jesus expresses some indignation with the spiritual obtuseness of his listeners; in other words, they don't get it! When it comes to earthly matters, they can put two and two together in an almost infallible manner. A dim dullness, however, has the upper hand when the spiritual realm is broached. Why? Possibly because they were not bothering to ponder what the sign of Jesus' presence, miracles and words really meant. They remained on the superficial level without plumbing the depths. Superficiality inhibits our own spiritual progress as well. Seeing signs isn't so much a matter of being able to pick out the shape of a tabernacle or cross in a passing cloud, but of deep and prayerful consideration of the love of God in our lives.

2. God's Presence: People who live a life of consistent prayer are much more in tune with God's presence. Where others see coincidence, they see providence. This gives them a profound sense of peace. They know that God is in charge and that they don't have to figure out everything for themselves. The world doesn't rest on their shoulders, but on God's. So instead of complaining or worrying, they live in an atmosphere of trust and acceptance.

3. Paying Attention: God's providence guides all things. We know this through faith and sometimes he sends a sign to say, "Yes, I'm indeed here." Once a priest was driving down the road and his thoughts were taken up with a difficulty he was having with a particular person. "How should I handle this?" he asked himself. A car pulled out in front of him. The license plate read "CARITAS", which is Latin for "charity." Was it just a coincidence? He couldn't deny that this was the answer he was looking for. The signs that invite us to be more Christ-like are the ones to which we need to pay the most attention.

Conversation with Christ: Lord, the times I really don't pick up on the signs you send me are when they challenge my resistance to your grace. Help me to overcome my spiritual superficiality and perceive your presence in my life.

Resolution: I will try to be prompt in following the inspirations of the Holy Spirit.