

Thoughts on the Daily Word

6th Week of Year. Tuesday 17th February. Readings: James 1:12-18; Psalm: 93; Gospel: Mark 8:14-21.

I love the saying, ‘I can resist anything but temptation!’. It describes that constant problem of discernment, just what is good and what is temptation to evil? Discernment has always fascinated me just because I find it so difficult in real life. Not that it is always good against evil, but often good versus better. Just being good can be just as much a temptation, leading to conceit, pride and even worse, self-satisfaction. Temptation in the proper sense can challenge and wake us up. Make us more alert to what is going on around us. Often, though, it sneaks in without being seen until it is too late. That is the worst kind I find, especially when it hides behind supposed virtue. This is why I like the story about leaven. It is such a powerful symbol, both of decay and new life. In the old days, before yeast was purified, it was simply decaying old bread which was then placed in new dough to bring life. A wonderful and powerful image of what our lives are all about. Just as our eucharistic bread does not have leaven in order to symbolise the spiritual leaven that Christ brings.