

# *A Weekly Word From The Pastor's Desk*

## *The Divine Gardener*

### *Third Sunday of Lent (Year C)*

*"For three years now I have come in search of fruit on this fig tree but have found none. So cut it down. Why should it exhaust the soil?" He said to him in reply, 'Sir, leave it for this year also, and I shall cultivate the ground around it and fertilize it; it may bear fruit in the future. If not you can cut it down.'"* Luke 13:7-9

Imagine for a moment that you were the owner of the orchard in which this fig tree was planted. After the gardener asked you to wait for one more year and promised to fertilize the unfruitful fig tree and cultivate the ground around it, you agreed. Then imagine coming to inspect that same fig tree the next year. Imagine three scenarios. First, what would you do if, once again, there were no figs present? Second, what if there were only a few figs? Third, what if the tree suddenly produced an abundance of good fruit?

It seems clear that in the first scenario, if for the fourth year in a row not a single fig was produced, it would be time to cut down the tree. This depicts the justice of God sent forth on those who obstinately resist His grace. In the second scenario, the decision might be more difficult. If the tree produced only a few figs for the first time, then perhaps that would provide enough hope for the future of that tree to ask the gardener to continue caring for it. This depicts those who are in a state of grace but are still lazy in their service of the will of God. In the third scenario, however, the reaction of the owner of the orchard would be clear. There would be much excitement and gratitude that the gardener's good work paid off.

Jesus is the Gardener, and we are the fig tree. This parable should lead us to look at our lives and examine whether or not we bear good fruit for the Kingdom of Heaven. Jesus comes to you to cultivate the soil of your heart, fertilizing it with His holy Word, watering it with His Sacraments and doing all He can to give you the opportunity to produce the fruit of charity in your life. How successful are these actions of our Lord in your life?

Too often, when we see only a little good fruit being borne from our lives, we are satisfied. And though any good fruit is good, we are wasting our lives if we do not do all we can to become as abundantly fruitful as possible. Imagine the joy in the Hearts of our Lord and the Father in Heaven if they were to look upon you and see good fruit being produced beyond expectation. Why wouldn't this be your goal in life? Our Lord is patient, but He is also just. Do not try His patience, and do not succumb to His justice.

Reflect, today, upon the image of you being this fig tree and our Lord as the divine Gardener. Commit yourself to His actions of tilling and fertilizing. You do so by strengthening your commitment to reading and understanding the Word of God, by participating more fully in the Sacraments, by being more focused upon your daily prayer, by examining your conscience more fully, and by sincerely confessing your sins. Do all you can to cooperate with the action of our divine Gardener and you will be amazed at the good fruit that begins to pour forth from your life.