

3RD SUNDAY OF LENT

Today, I want us to reflect on the gardener and that little fruitless fig tree we have heard about in the Gospel

St Paul, the great teacher, in his teachings expounded on three key virtues: **Faith Hope** and **Love** and he himself affirmed that the greatest is love.

- ❖ True, I agree with him: while the greatest is love but the most neglected is **HOPE** and yet, throughout the bible HOPE is a major theme.

There is a message for all of us in the ministry of service:

- priests, physicians, politicians, parents, teachers and many who find themselves serving others.

The whole point here is that: Every leader must be a “dealer in hope!”

Q: WHY?

Because, out there, in every sector of life there are those who are waiting for their “**little fruitless**” fig tree to grow.

- These people need “**voices of hope.**”
- a) *Someone out there needs to be encouraged to let your hopes, not your hurts, shape your future.*
- b) *Hope is important because **As long as we have hope, we have direction, the energy to move, and the map to move by.***

In Luke’s parable today it is not a poet, a priest, or a physician who offers hope, but a gardener.

- ❖ It is the vocation of the gardener
 - a) to give people hope,
 - b) to have nothing to do with despair

- ❖ People who plant learn to be people of hope.
They in fact learn to wait for the harvest,
They learn to know that even beneath the winter snow lies the seed that in the springtime becomes the rose.

What a contrast we find between the owner of the vineyard and the gardener:

The owner of the fig tree has given up.

He is counting the cost:

- Coming three years now, just wasting his fuel there is no fruit
- The tree is just eating up the soil: cut it down

The gardener on the other hand, pleads for restraint and offers a prescription of hope.

- ***“sir, leave it for this year also and I shall cultivate the ground around it and fertilise it; it may bear fruit in future.”***

And the gardener says something which really is really outstanding:

- ***“If it does not, you can cut it down”.***

- ❖ So, even if the fig tree still does not bear fruit, the gardener will have ***“nothing to do with destroying it.”***

This respectful gardener tells the owner to cut it down himself.

- ❖ People of hope are like that.
- ❖ Q: Like the gardener, can we, this week be providers of hope