



Towards Plenary Council 2020-2021
Third Sunday of Lent 2019

... it may bear fruit next year ...

THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

From the Readings

First Reading: Exodus 3:13-14. Moses said to God ... 'But if they ask me what his name is, what am I to tell them?' And God said to Moses, 'I Am who I Am. This,' he added, 'is what you must say to the children of Israel: I Am has sent me to you.'

Psalm 102/03:2-4. It is the Lord who forgives all your guilt
Who heals every one of your ills,
Who redeems your life from the grave,
Who crowns you with love and compassion.

Gospel: Luke 13:6-9. He told this parable: 'A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came looking for fruit on it but found none. He said to his vinedresser, "For three years now I have been coming to look for fruit on this fig tree and finding none. Cut it down! Why should it be taking up the ground?" "Sir," the man replied, "leave it one more year and give me time to dig round it and manure it. It may bear fruit next year; if not, then you can cut it down."



THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT 1877 - CARL BLOCH

Reflections

We all know from experience that sometimes a task does not bring the satisfaction we seek, results are few and changes are slow, and we are tempted to grow weary. Yet lowering our arms momentarily out of weariness is not the same as lowering them for good.

Pope Francis, *'The Joy of the Gospel'* 277

It can take a long time before this process of discernment comes to a conclusion ... patience and respect are needed ...

Sensus Fidei in the Life of the Church, International Theological Commission 2014, 71

Love needs time and space; everything else is secondary.

Pope Francis, *'The Joy of Love,'* 224

The circumstances of the Church in Australia in our time, including the patterns of change that are evident within the community of the Church, the issues confronting the Church in modern multicultural and secular Australia, the increase in entrusting responsibility for and leadership of the Church's mission to laity, and even the changing face of the Episcopate, prompt the Church to review, analyse, and discern the signs of the times, to listen anew to the Spirit, and to chart its course into the future.' Archbishop Mark Coleridge

For Thinking and Talking

- 1. From these readings and reflections**, what words, phrases and insights stand out for you?
- 2. Imagine** Moses' mysterious encounter with God whose name is revealed, 'I Am Who I Am'. Can you recall a time when the mystery of God touched your life?
- 3. Remember** a situation in your life that required patience, careful decision making and respect.
- 4. Express** a hope or intention for the future.

Prayer

We live our lives like potted fig trees
until we are shaken, wakened and answer the cry to be set free.

It's the cry for a fuller life the life love desires for each of us.

What then holds us back from committing ourselves to being set free,
to being planted out with love, nurtured in love
to grow tall, strong, wide and deep
in loving ourselves and loving each other,
growing into the fullness of the Grand Fig Tree,
restless to break out of you and me?

It is the heart that persists with us and urges us to pray –

I am a potted fig tree in Your Hands.

Shake me

Release me

Loosen me up

Plant me out with love.

Pray a blessing over me. Amen

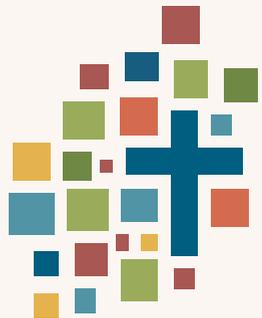
Noel Davis, 'The Fig Tree' in *Heart Coming Home*, 18

For Plenary Council 2020-2021

Come, Holy Spirit of Pentecost.

Come, Holy Spirit of the great South Land.
O God, bless and unite all your people in Australia.
Lead your Church into a hope-filled future,
that we may live the joy of the Gospel,
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
bread for the journey from age to age. Amen.

(From the Plenary Council 2020 Prayer)



THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF SANDHURST

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Acknowledgements: Archbishop Mark Coleridge; Pope Francis, '*The Joy of the Gospel*' 277; *Sensus Fidei in the Life of the Church*, International Theological Commission 2014, 71; Pope Francis, '*The Joy of Love*,' 224; Noel Davis, *Heart Coming Home*, Narooma NSW: Lifeflow Education, 2017.