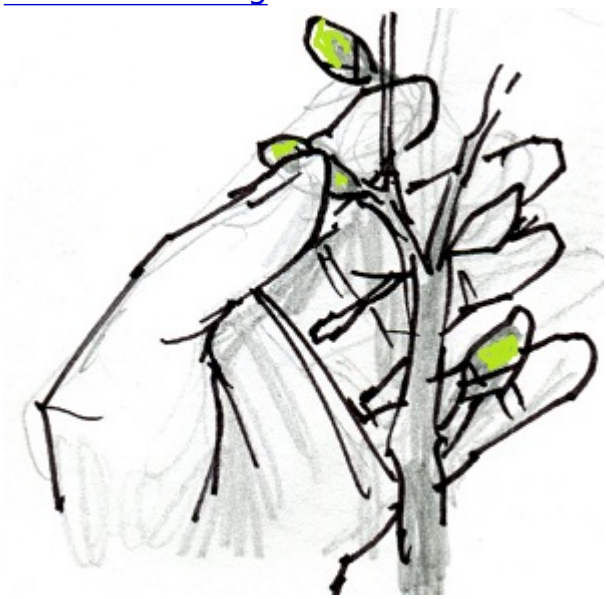
Spirituality
Pencil Preaching





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“When you see these things happening, know that the Kingdom of God is near” (Luke 21:31).

Daniel 7:2-14; Luke 21:29-33

When we consider the many threats to the environment being reported by scientists and by our own experience of altered weather patterns and natural disasters, one threat can easily escape our notice. This is the impact on our psychological health and spiritual balance from being cut off from nature.

Jesus’ preaching was filled with natural imagery tying spiritual truths to the seasons of the year, to the annual cycles of planting and harvesting, and to the rich diversity and beauty of birds, flowers and trees.

In today’ Gospel, Jesus points to the fig tree as a harbinger of the what was to come. Just as the fig tree sprouts buds as a sign of Spring, so the events surrounding Jesus’ life and ministry were signaling an urgency to respond to God’s invitation to conversion. If we detach ourselves from the countless lessons the natural world holds for us, caught up in the artificial structures and pace of modern living, we will miss the many poems and parables nature is constantly addressing to us.

We will reap what we sow. By their fruits you will know both good and bad trees. Death and decline precede rebirth and restoration. Nature is generous and abundant to everyone. Nature multiplies when nurtured. Wisdom knows how to read the signs of the times. There is a time for everything. Accept the seasons and cycles of life and you will be at peace.

For Jesus, all of creation is crying out in praise and gratitude to the Creator. We respond by being just and compassionate as the heavenly Father is just and merciful. The liturgical year blesses us by teaching us to live fully and with a long view, to accept and to let go, to end and begin again, not to be discouraged by the necessary changes and losses that come when one year dissolves into the past and the future overtakes us with new challenges.

For disciples, the Kingdom of God is always at hand, always near, day by day, calling us forward into the adventure of life itself, teaching us how to love freely and with confidence. The fig tree knows. God wants us to be like the fig tree.

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