

THE FIG TREE

– By Lorelei Pepe

Many people have never eaten a fig or even seen one. They are not too common in Miami where I lived previously, but grew up in Brooklyn where we had one fig tree.

Figs are pretty ugly looking – usually dark purple or brownish on the outside but inside it is a soft, fleshy fruit, white and pinkish and I think very tasty. They remind me of some people I have met...tough on the outside but really a softie on the inside. My father was like that...a very austere, quiet man who kept pretty much to himself but he loved his garden and his fig tree! Perhaps more than he liked people.

Growing up in Brooklyn, New York we were very fortunate to live in a big old grey farmhouse with a wonderful wrap around porch and a side lot where my father grew all his flowers, roses, azalea bushes and in the back lots of fruit trees. But way in the back in a secluded corner was his one and only fig tree. It stood all alone, very unassuming and looked like nothing special to us kids. It did bloom heartily in summer and died in winter. But my father loved that fig tree. He looked after it daily and fertilized it and knew how to care for it. In the deep dark cold winters he was out there covering it with newspapers and wrapping it with rags. I guess because of his efforts we had lots of figs every summer and he even gave a few precious ones to our neighbors, but sparingly.

He worshipped this tree and it was bountiful for many years...when he passed on so did the tree...

In the Bible, (Luke 13:6-9)Jesus told the parable that a man planted a fig tree in his garden and came again and again to see if there was any fruit on it, but he was always disappointed. Finally, he said to his gardener that he had wasted 3 years waiting and watching and there was not one single fig. He told him to cut it down, as it was taking up space in the ground. The gardener told him to leave it alone and he would dig around it and fertilize it and then if it does not bear fruit he would cut it down.

I think this parable teaches us and reminds us about perseverance and patience. We need to be patient with not only with one another, but with non-Christian acquaintances as well. We are to nourish and help them grow in their faith too, even when rejected we can love and pray for them so they may flourish like the fig tree too!