"Don't forget the fig tree cursed by our Lord"

Make good use of your time. Don't forget the fig tree cursed by our Lord. And it was doing something: sprouting leaves. Like you... Don't tell me you have excuses. It availed the fig tree little, relates the Evangelist. that it was not the season for figs when our Lord came to it to look for them. And barren it remained for ever. (The Way, 354)

Let us go back to the Gospels and take a look at what St Matthew tells us in chapter twenty-one. He described how Jesus 'returning to the city was hungry. And seeing a fig tree by the wayside he went up to it' [1]. How wonderful, Lord, to see you hungry! To see you thirsty, too, by the well of Sichar![2]...

Lord, how well you make yourself understood! How lovable you are! You show us that you are just like us, in everything but sin, so that we can feel utterly sure that, together with you, we can conquer all our evil inclinations, all our faults. For neither weariness nor hunger matter, nor thirst, nor tears... since Christ also grew weary, knew hunger, was thirsty, and wept. What is important is that we struggle to

fulfill the will of our heavenly Father [3]....

He reached the fig tree 'and found nothing but leaves on it' [4]. How deplorable. Does the same thing happen to us? Is the sad fact that we are lacking in faith, in dynamism in our humility? Have we no sacrifices, no good works to show? Is our Christianity just a facade, with nothing real behind it? This would be terrible, because Jesus goes on to command, 'Let no fruit ever grow on you hereafter. Whereupon the fig tree withered away' [5]. This Gospel passage makes us feel sorry, yet at the same time encourages us to strengthen our faith, to live by faith, so that we may always be ready to yield fruit to Our Lord. (Friends of God, 201-202)

[1] Matt 21:18-19

[2] cf John 4:7

[3] cf John 4:34

[4] Matt 21:19

[5] *ibid*