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TABLE, FOOD, WAITER:
PREACHING THE EUCHARIST
TO TODAY'S POPULAR FOOD CULTURE

by
RICHARD W. VEVIA, JR.

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of
Luther Seminary
In Partial Fulfillment of
The Requirements for the Degree of
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

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ABSTRACT

Table, Food, Waiter: Preaching the Eucharist to Today's Popular Food Culture

by

Richard W. Vevia, Jr.

The centrality of the Eucharist to the Church cannot be underestimated. In the late 20th and early 21st centuries, decreased frequency of shared meals, a growing distrust of food, and a disregard for the obligations and responsibilities that accompany eating have resulted in a disconnection between the Eucharist and daily life. This thesis will demonstrate the *loci* method derived from Philip Melanchthon's *Loci Communes* as a tool for gathering scripture and non-scriptural sources around *loci* suggested by Catherine of Siena: Table, Food, and Waiter. The aim of this thesis is that it will aid preachers preparing sermons that address today's popular food culture.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Since Christians began to reflect upon and write about the Eucharist, there has been a connection between real food and the Real Presence. Irenaeus wrote in the second century, “He [Jesus] took that created thing, bread, and gave thanks, and said, ‘This is My body.’ And the cup likewise, which part of that creation to which we belong, He confessed to be His blood.”¹ Real food “from among the creation” for which Jesus was taught to give daily thanks using the words:

Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech haolam, hamotzi lechem min ha-aretz.
“We praise You, Eternal God, Sovereign of the universe,
who causes bread to come forth from the earth.”
Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech haolam, borei p'ri hagafen.
“We praise You, Eternal God, Sovereign of the universe,
who creates the fruit of the vine.”²

Unleavened bread from wheat. Wine from fermented grapes. Everyday food, nothing out of the ordinary, carries the weight of the divine Presence of Christ.

Food is powerful culturally and relationally. As described in a 2014 National Geographic photo article

Food is more than survival. With it we make friends, court lovers, and count our blessings. The sharing of food has always been part of the human story. From Qesem Cave near Tel Aviv comes evidence of ancient meals prepared at a

¹ Cleveland A. Coxe, *The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus*, ed. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, vol. 1, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers. Translations of the Writings of the Fathers Down to A. D. 325* (Grand Rapids, MI: WM. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996), 484.

² "Daily Blessings: For Foods," Union for Reform Judaism, <https://reformjudaism.org/practice/prayers-blessings/daily-blessings-foods>. (Accessed October 6, 2017)

300,000-year-old hearth, the oldest ever found, where diners gathered to eat together. Retrieved from the ashes of Vesuvius: a circular loaf of bread with scoring marks, baked to be divided. “To break bread together,” a phrase as old as the Bible, captures the power of a meal to forge relationships, bury anger, provoke laughter. Children make mud pies, have tea parties, trade snacks to make friends, and mimic the rituals of adults. They celebrate with sweets from the time of their first birthday, and the association of food with love will continue throughout life—and in some belief systems, into the afterlife.³

Sharing a meal distinguishes human beings from all other animals. Michael Pollan, author, journalist and professor, writes, “The shared meal elevates eating from a mechanical process of fueling the body to a ritual of family and community, from mere animal biology to an act of culture.”⁴ Church picnics, family dinners, potluck suppers, even popcorn shared at a movie add meaning and value to the simple act of fueling the body. I believe the preacher will find in the gathering and preparation of food and the eating and sharing of meals many of the ingredients for preaching to today’s food culture.

Questions

Do the gathering and preparation of food or the eating and sharing of meals require theological reflection? Some recent publications would raise a resounding “yes,” including L. Shannon Jung’s *Food for Life: The Spirituality and Ethics of Eating*,⁵ and *Sharing Food: Christian Practices for Enjoyment*,⁶ Daniel Sack’s *Whitebread*

³ Victoria Pope, “The Joy of Food,” *National Geographic*, December 2014, 39.

⁴ Michael Pollan, *In Defense of Food: An Eater’s Manifesto* (New York, NY: Penguin Press, 2008), 193.

⁵ L. Shannon Jung, *Food for Life: The Spirituality and Ethics of Eating* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2004).

⁶ *Sharing Food: Christian Practices for Enjoyment* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2006).

Protestants: Food and Religion in American Culture,⁷ and Norman Wirzba's *Food and Faith*.⁸ Michael Schut, author and former Economic and Environmental Affairs Officer for the Episcopal Church USA, identifies a broad range of potential areas of study when he lists "Celebration," "Communion," "Gratitude," "Healing Divisions," "Environmental Impacts," "Industrial Agriculture," "Political Activism," and "Hope" among the themes explored in his anthology, *Food and Faith: Justice, Joy and Daily Bread*.⁹

And for the sheer joy of it, there are the culinary writings of Father Robert Capon, beginning with *The Supper of the Lamb*¹⁰ in 1967, which are subversively theological in their witness to the goodness and joy of food.

Is the food served during the Lord's Supper at a worship service in the morning connected in any real way to the brunch we eat after church or the quick stop we make at the grocery store on the way home? Once again, we find in literature a resounding "yes." "Only when we recognize the rich network of connections between the Eucharist and our life in the world can the Eucharist be 'worldly' and our life 'Eucharistic,'"¹¹ Henri Nouwen writes, proceeding to reflect on the story of the disciples on their way to Emmaus (Luke 24:13–35). In his books *Dining in the Kingdom of God: The Origins of*

⁷ Daniel Sack, *Whitebread Protestants: Food and Religion in American Culture* (New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 2000).

⁸ Norman Wirzba, *Food and Faith: A Theology of Eating* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

⁹ Michael Schut, Diane Ackerman, and Earth Ministry (Seattle, WA). *Food & Faith: Justice, Joy and Daily Bread* (Denver, CO: Living the Good News, 2002), 14-18.

¹⁰ Robert Farrar Capon, *The Supper of the Lamb: A Culinary Reflection* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1967).

¹¹ Henri J.M. Nouwen, *With Burning Hearts: A Meditation on the Eucharistic Life* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2003), 12.

the Eucharist According to Luke,¹² and *The Breaking of the Bread: The Development of the Eucharist According to Acts*¹³ Eugene LaVerdiere sets out a strong biblical foundation. And in *The Breaking of the Bread* he substantiates the connection between the biblical accounts of the shared meals he writes about and the ordinary meals of everyday life when he recalls meeting with a group of Christians on San Chu'an Tao, an island off the southern coast of China

We met at James' house in an upper room filled with members of the community, young and old. We had tea and rice cakes together as they told their story, a gospel story as people surely told as they assembled in Jerusalem or Rome.

Today, the memory of that upper room on San Chu'an Tao is connected for me with a passage in the book of Acts describing the early church in Jerusalem: They devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles and to the communal life, to the breaking of the bread and to the prayers (Acts 2:42).¹⁴

An ordinary meal of tea and rice cakes revealed the face of the early church to LaVerdiere. Everyday food, the bread and wine, the community—young and old, all continue to carry the weight of divine memory and Presence.

The divine memory and Presence we receive in our worldly Eucharist and Eucharistic life are not static but call us, even propel us, into God's future. Sara Miles writes in *Take This Bread, A Radical Conversion*, about her first communion experience, which led her to start a food distribution ministry in the congregation

One early, cloudy morning when I was forty-six, I walked into a church, ate a piece of bread, took a sip of wine. A routine Sunday activity for tens of millions of Americans—except that up until that moment I'd led a thoroughly secular life, at

¹² Eugene LaVerdiere, *Dining in the Kingdom of God: The Origins of the Eucharist According to Luke* (Chicago, IL: Liturgy Training Publications, 1994).

¹³ *The Breaking of the Bread: The Development of the Eucharist According to the Acts of the Apostles* (Chicago, IL: Liturgy Training Publications, 1998).

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 2.

best indifferent to religion, more often appalled by its fundamentalist crusades. This was my first communion. It changed everything.

Eating Jesus, as I did that day to my great astonishment, led me against all my expectations to a faith I'd scorned and work I'd never imagined. The mysterious sacrament turned out to be not a symbolic wafer at all, but actual food—indeed, the bread of life. In that shocking moment of communion, filled with a deep desire to reach for and become part of a body, I realized what I'd been doing with my life all along was what I was meant to do: feed people.¹⁵

The mysterious sacrament was actual food, real food, eaten with others from a table and served. And it was Real Presence, as Tertullian wrote, “so that the soul too may fatten on God.”¹⁶

I believe the Eucharist must be preached in the context of the gathering and preparation of food and the eating and sharing of meals in such a way that the food served at the Lord's Table at a worship service in the morning connects in a real way to the brunch we eat after church, the quick stop we make at the grocery store on the way home, and our call to serve in the world.

Shared Meal and Foodways

For most Christians¹⁷ a shared meal called the Eucharist, Holy Communion, Lord's Supper, or Sacrament of the Altar, among other names, is at the center of our relationship with God. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America holds that, “At the table of our Lord Jesus Christ, God nurtures faith, forgives sin, and calls us to be

¹⁵ Sara Miles, *Take This Bread: A Radical Conversion* (New York, NY: Ballantine Books, 2007), xiii.

¹⁶ W. A. Jurgens, *The Faith of the Early Fathers: A Source-Book of Theological and Historical Passages from the Christian Writings of the Pre-Nicene and Nicene Eras* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1970), 149.

¹⁷ Exceptions would include Quakers and most congregations in the Salvation Army.

witnesses to the Gospel.”¹⁸ It is essentially physical; there is nothing abstract about the table, the food (bread and wine), and the people gathered to give and receive. Gordon Lathrop writes, “At root, Christianity is not just an idea. It is a specific meeting around food and drink.”¹⁹ The centrality of the Eucharist to the Church cannot be underestimated. *Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry*, published by members of the World Council of Churches in Lima in 1982, declares, “The very celebration of the Eucharist is an instance of the Church’s participation in God’s mission to the world.”²⁰

Problem

There is, however, a growing disconnection between the Eucharist and our life in the world. The Eucharist has been spiritualized, and therefore marginalized, to the extent that it is not seen as part of our material existence and so has little or nothing to do with living in the “real world.” In a 2013 column in *The Lutheran*, “Elements of the Lord’s Day: That Interesting Meal,” Peter Marty commented on this impoverishment

If you knew absolutely nothing about the Christian Faith and entered a service of worship this Sunday, one element of the service would almost certainly baffle you. The meal. What the bulletin in your hand labels the “Lord’s Supper,” “Holy Communion,” or the “Eucharistic Meal” is likely to appear to your eyes as nothing more than a strangely cultish something—or–other with very stingy portions.²¹

This is more than a liturgical problem. As L. Shannon Jung writes,

¹⁸ Evangelical Lutheran Church in America., *The Use of the Means of Grace: A Statement on the Practice of Word and Sacrament* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 1997), 36.

¹⁹ Gordon Lathrop, “On the Table-Servers: Ministry in the Assembly,” *Institute of Liturgical Studies Occasional Papers* 12 (2005): 84.

²⁰ Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches, *Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry*, Faith and Order Paper (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1982), 13.

²¹ Peter Marty, “That Interesting Meal,” *The Lutheran*, March 2013, 3.

The costs of this neglect are brought home when we consider the impression that is left by our manner of ‘celebrating’ Eucharist. The Lord’s Supper is, at base, quite material about eating and drinking, which of course had its origin in a supper hosted by Jesus. However, when food and eating are discounted, the meal becomes a matter, according to biblical scholar Marcus Barth, where it is “only individual salvation and personal satisfaction that is sought, communicated, and actually experienced . . . so much restricted to the soul or to a life after death, that little or no attention is paid to the body, to the present plight and needs of human society.”²²

If the Eucharist, central to the life of the Church, is no longer central to the life of the Christian then one possible consequence would be that the Church is no longer central to the life of the Christian.

Liturgists have addressed the disconnection between the Eucharistic meal and other meals by making changes to the liturgy and the worship environment. Increasing the frequency of Eucharistic celebration among Protestants and saying mass in the vernacular among Catholics, along with rearranging the chancel so that the celebrant faces the congregation, have probably been the most successful innovations. Others have not been as successful, as Father Anscar J. Chupungco describes

Wanting to make the Eucharist more relevant to our contemporary situation, someone seriously entertained the horrendous idea of “fast-food Eucharist,” open twenty-four hours a day so that the faithful could come at any time at their convenience. All they had to do was switch on the television for the Liturgy of the Word and afterward approach the altar for Communion. The idea was to make the liturgy conform to the situation of people on the move and the declining value of family meals. What I detect is the failure to regard the liturgy as a countercultural statement, as a Christian critique of modern conventions and systems that impair the foundations of human community and family life.²³

²² Jung, *Food for Life: The Spirituality and Ethics of Eating*, 39.

²³ Anscar J. Chupungco, *What, Then, Is Liturgy?: Musings and Memoir* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2010), 8.

Relevance demands not only creativity, but also an understanding of what is being changed. One example was the change made by the Second Vatican Council allowing communion under both forms:

In the aftermath of the Second Vatican Council's 1963 declaration *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, apostolic sees were allowed to offer communion to the faithful under both forms. It was, as Father Andrew D. Ciferni pointed out in numerous articles and talks, not only a theological shift, but also a change in food ways. And food ways, as Ciferni teaches, are among the most difficult of habits and customs to change.²⁴

Is there “a Eucharistic foodway” as Father Ciferni maintains? Is there more to learn about food and eating than what is set on the table? Perhaps attempts to make the Eucharist more appealing to the culture have actually limited its ability to reach the culture.

Every culture and subculture has its own food and foodways (also called food habits or food ways). Ethiopians have *injera* and *wat*. Video gamers have Doritos and Mountain Dew. And Texans have chili without beans. Food habits or foodways are generally defined by sociologists as “the ways in which humans use food, including how food is obtained and stored, how it is prepared, how it is served and to whom, and how it is consumed.”²⁵ The study of foodways touches a wide range of topics, from class, gender, and race, to economy, environment, geography, history and religion. Regarding religion, Harvey Graham asks in his essay, “Should students interested in religions be introduced to foodways rather than belief systems? Should researchers ask ‘what do you

²⁴ Melissa Musick, "Thanksgiving & Eucharist: Things Change, Things Stay the Same," <http://thecatholiccatalogue.com/thanksgiving-the-eucharist-things-change-things-stay-the-same/>. (Accessed October 20, 2017)

²⁵ Pamela Goyan Kittler and Kathryn Sucher, *Food and Culture in America: A Nutrition Handbook* (New York, NY: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1989), 3.

eat?’ rather than ‘what do you believe?’ on first embarking on fieldwork?”²⁶ When Anthelme Brillat-Savarin wrote in 1826, “Tell me what you eat and I will tell you what you are,”²⁷ he was ahead of his time.

Foodways also raise powerful questions about cultural appropriation and culinary justice. Michael W. Twitty, culinary historian and historical interpreter writes

We have come to this strange cultural moment where food is both tool and weapon. I am grateful for it. My entire life I knew, and many others knew, that our daily bread was itself a kind of scripture of our origins, a taste track of our lives. It is a lie that food is just fuel. It has always had layers of meaning, and humans for the most part despise meaningless food. In America, and especially the American South, ‘race’ endures alongside the sociopolitics of food; it is not a stretch to say that that race is both on and at the Southern table. But if it is on the table alone we have learned nothing; we continue to reduce each other to stereotypical essences.²⁸

Christians think of the Eucharist as a universal meal, rooted in one Lord, one baptism, one God and Father of us all, regardless of class, geography, or history. If the preacher believes this, then it is incumbent upon the preacher to be able to identify the Eucharistic foodway clearly and articulate it creatively.

The Task of the Preacher and the Purpose of This Thesis

According to David Lose, Senior Pastor at Mt. Olivet Lutheran Church in Minneapolis, among the primary tasks of the preacher is cultivating, modeling and teaching biblical imagination, “to invite people into the biblical story that they might see

²⁶ Graham Harvey, “Religion and Food, Religions as Foodways [Religião E Comida, Religião Como Regras Para Alimentação],” *REVER: Revista de Estudos da Religião* 15, no. 1 (2015): 81.

²⁷ J.A. Brillat-Savarin, *The Physiology of Taste: Or Meditations on Transcendental Gastronomy* (New York, NY: Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 2009), 15.

²⁸ Michael Twitty, *The Cooking Gene: A Journey through African-American Culinary History in the Old South* (New York, NY: Amistad, 2017), 403.

God and learn to recognize God in the world.”²⁹ In doing so, some images may need to be reimagined or discarded. Paul Galbreath criticizes our reliance on DaVinci’s “Last Supper” as the primary source of Eucharistic imagery

What is crucial is that leaders find ways to broaden the language, images, and portrayals of communion. When the Lord’s Supper is shrunk to pictures, sermons, and language that build solely on an imagined portrait of the upper room on Maundy Thursday, then it is little wonder that our celebrations of communion are often tepid. Only by recovering the richness of biblical allusions, early Christian imagery, and the diversity of Christian practice will we be able to reclaim the table’s central role in our worship and the close connection with other tables around which we gather to eat and drink.³⁰

Galbreath goes on to suggest that there are other Scriptural lenses beyond the Last Supper through which the preacher could consider the Eucharist, such as the breaking of bread in the home in Emmaus, or the feeding of the five thousand on a hillside.

Summary

The gathering and preparation of food and the eating and sharing of meals (foodways) are culturally significant and require theological reflection. The Eucharist as a shared meal, central to Christian life, involves a unique foodway with both cultural and countercultural significance. In order for a congregation to recognize the rich network of connections between the Eucharist and our life in the world, it is necessary that the preacher be fluent and imaginative in both the biblical stories and the role that eating and food play in people’s lives in the early 21st century. Then the Eucharist can be worldly

²⁹ David Lose, notes by author, Core One DMin in Biblical Preaching course, Luther Seminary, St. Paul, MN, June 7, 2012.

³⁰ Paul Galbreath, *Leading from the Table* (Herndon, VA: Alban Institute, 2008), 114.

and our lives Eucharistic. “Indeed, like the scroll that both Ezekiel and the elder John ate, the preacher should speak with nearly edible words.”³¹

³¹ Lathrop, 86.

CHAPTER 2

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In the late 20th and early 21st centuries, patterns of eating and drinking in the United States changed drastically. In today's food culture most people don't regularly eat together, many people don't trust food, and few see an obligation to serve others. These people are members of our congregations and visitors to our churches to whom we are called to preach about God's love in Jesus, including Jesus' love enacted in the Eucharist.

Most People Don't Regularly Eat Together

There are many studies that focus exclusively on the benefits to children and adolescents of frequent meal sharing. In these studies, a family meal is generally defined as "those occasions when food is eaten simultaneously in the same location by more than one family member."¹ Eating more often with their families improves children's academic and behavioral outcomes, diet quality, and lowers the potential for drug use. There are also many studies done for corporations whose goal is to increase the consumption of their product or service. For example, "CULTURE of FOOD 2015: New Appetites, New Routines" is a study by the Hartman Group that provides "a framework for understanding how consumers define premium quality and make decisions about

¹ Jennifer Bigger-Martin et al., "Come and Get It! A Discussion of Family Mealtime Literature and Factors Affecting Obesity Risk," *Advances in Nutrition* 5, no. 3: (Accessed November 03, 2017).

premium products, brands and experiences.”² (Note: The report is available for purchase for only \$15,000.)

While the conclusions of these studies may not be relevant to this thesis, the data they gather about eating, food, and meal sharing are useful. Together with print media, television, movies, and internet resources they reveal an empty table with no one sitting at it.

Breakfast

“Breakfast is the most important meal of the day, because it is the meal that gets the day started.”³ This was the theory espoused by Lenna Cooper in 1917 and promoted by J.H. Kellogg (perhaps not coincidentally the co-inventor of flaked cereal). In 1944 it became the marketing mantra of General Foods, the manufacturer of Grape Nuts. Lenna Cooper also maintained that breakfast, “should not be eaten hurriedly, and all the family, so far as possible, should partake of it together.”⁴ Sadly, her vision of families sitting down to a leisurely breakfast did not last even to the end of the 20th century. Advertisements in the mid-20th century show children sitting alone, or sometimes with a sibling, at breakfast with a prominently displayed bowl of cereal accompanied by a plate with buttered toast and a few pieces of fruit. Cereal was touted as “part of a complete breakfast” when in truth it was the gateway food for eating alone and in a hurry. It didn’t need to be cooked. It didn’t even need milk. Children could “make” their own breakfast.

² Hartman Group, "Culture of Food 2015: New Appetites, New Routines," The Hartman Group, Inc., <http://store.hartman-group.com/culture-of-food-2015-new-appetites-new-routines/>. (Accessed November 3, 2017)

³ Lenna Cooper, "August Breakfasts," *Good Health* 52 (1917): 389.

⁴ Ibid.

Or it could be put into a plastic sandwich bag and eaten in the car. A 2013 study for the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics found that “on average, adolescents reported having family breakfast meals 1.5 times in the past week.”⁵ Lenna Cooper would have been so disappointed.

Today weekday/workday breakfasts have moved out of the kitchen. Hurried morning schedules and the possibility of a hot breakfast have made the *en route* (on the road) fast food establishment the provider of the “most important meal of the day.” No time to sit down in the plastic dining area? There is almost always a convenient drive-through window to get your meal really on-the-go. Two examples from dozens of television commercials I reviewed for fast food breakfast are amusing, depressing, and informative

Company	Carl’s Jr.	Taco Bell
Last date aired	May 21, 2017	October 3, 2017
Length	30 seconds	30 seconds
Product	Breakfast Burger	Breakfast Wrap
Title	“All Day”	“Motherhood”
Tagline	“The Most Important Burger of the Day”	“When your morning is hell, just go to Taco Bell.”
Synopsis	In a nod to the classic advice that breakfast is the most important meal of the day, Carl's Jr. says its Breakfast Burger is the most important burger of the day. As dance music plays, the fast food chain highlights the cooking of some of the ingredients: bacon, eggs and hash browns.	Her son may still be very small, but he definitely just heard his mom swear after stepping on one of his toys. Taco Bell says that instead of having a nightmare about her son starting a life of crime after he starts swearing, this mother should go to Taco Bell to help wake her up and hopefully pay more attention to where

⁵ Nicole Larson, "Eating Breakfast and Dinner Together as a Family: Associations with Sociodemographic Characteristics and Implications for Diet Quality and Weight Status," *Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics* 113, no. 12 (2013). (Accessed November 10, 2017)

she's walking. The fast food chain says it can wrap up breakfast items like hash browns, eggs and bacon in its Breakfast Crunchwrap for when your morning is hell. Now, if only she could get that image of her baby in an orange jumpsuit, saying "Don't be snitchin'" out of her head. . .⁶

In most of these commercials (some were very abstract), if people were shown eating together it was to frame the product promoted as the answer to the dilemma of breakfast.

There were a few commercials depicting a family eating together. Pillsbury Company, which is a brand name used by General Mills and the J.M. Smucker Company, has a series of commercials under the theme, "Made at Home." One example

Company	Pillsbury
Last date aired	January 1, 2018
Length	15 seconds
Product	Biscuits
Title	Things We Made"
Tagline	"Made at Home."
Synopsis	This family believes what matters most is made at home. That's why they make sure to cook breakfast together in the mornings. Things may get messy, but in the end, quality time together and the resulting breakfast sandwich masterpieces make it all worth it. ⁷

⁶ ispot.tv, <https://www.ispot.tv/>. (Accessed November 10, 2017)

⁷ Ibid.

Children eating alone, single parents (mostly mothers), and young professionals executing a “grab and go” on their way to work (maybe even picking up a salad to eat at their desk for lunch) are the commercial spokespeople for breakfast in the 21st century.

There is another reality: children from food insecure⁸ homes. In San Diego County, “more than 1 in 5 children are estimated to live in households that cannot provide enough food at all times for an active, healthy life.”⁹ Because these children do not have the opportunity to eat at home, schools are providing meals at school, including breakfast. One such program is Breakfast in the Classroom where “students eat breakfast at their desks in their classrooms during the first 10–15 minutes of class while teachers conduct administrative activities or begin the day’s lessons.”¹⁰ While this may be discouraging news regarding families eating together in the morning, there is an interesting dynamic in students creating community in the classroom.

Lunch

Most people do not go home for lunch. Adults are working; children and youth are at school. And if they did, who would be home to make lunch? Even where there are two or more adults at the same address, it is likely that all of them are working during the day.

For students, the cafeteria or lunch room is a very fluid social environment. There are alliances, circles, cliques, sisterhoods, teams, tribes and “that kid nobody sits with.”

⁸ Food insecurity as defined by the USDA is a household-level economic and social condition of limited or uncertain access to adequate food. <https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/food-security-in-the-us/definitions-of-food-security/>. (Accessed November 24, 2017)

⁹ San Diego Hunger Coalition, “Hunger Free Kids,” San Diego Hunger Coalition, <https://www.sandiegohungercoalition.org/hunger-free-kids/>. (Accessed November 24, 2017)

¹⁰ Ibid.

An article titled “Let’s Do Lunch” begins with the assessment that, “all too often, the caring, cooperative, responsible, friendly behavior that is expected, practiced, and seen in the classroom breaks down when the children hit the lunchroom.”¹¹ Students may sit together, but they are not always sharing a meal.

Programs to provide students from food insecure homes with lunch have exacerbated social distinctions. Sarah Riggs Stapleton, assistant professor of science education at the University of Oregon writes

For the past several years, reports have surfaced about the “shaming” of students for outstanding school meal debts. These students, often from low-income families, are being publicly humiliated because they have unpaid debt in their school meal accounts. Policies that shame students can include stamping on children’s hands or arms, taking their food away and dumping it in the trash or giving them stigmatized cold, partial meals in lieu of the regular hot lunch.¹²

While programs are being developed to alleviate this problem there is still a lot of work to be done.

Schools also have enacted policies to restrict food sharing among students. For example, Thomas Jefferson Elementary School in Forest, Virginia, has a strict No Food Sharing Policy

No food sharing or trading during snack or lunch
No food on the bus
No food for birthday celebrations
Limited use of food for classroom celebrations and rewards¹³

¹¹ Responsive Classroom Newsletter, "Let’s Do Lunch!," Center for Responsive Schools, Inc. (Accessed November 26, 2017)

¹² Sarah Riggs Stapleton, "Kids Who Can’t Afford School Lunch Are Served Humiliation Instead," Fatherly, <https://www.fatherly.com/news/feed-kids-school-lunch-not-shame/>. (Accessed November 28, 2017)

¹³ Thomas Jefferson Elementary School, "No Food Share Policy," https://bedfordtjes.sharpschool.net/parents___students/no_food_share_policy. (Accessed January 10, 2018)

The rationale for the policy includes limiting potentially dangerous food allergens, enforcing parental food restrictions (no trading carrot sticks for Oreos anymore), preventing problems with sharing, and eliminating a source of trash. It also limits the bonding between students who never get a homemade sandwich and those who long for a Lunchable packaged lunch.

According to an article in The Huffington Post, “about half of the American [working] population eats lunch alone.” It goes on to say, “Sixty-two percent of professionals typically dine “al desko” with their faces and take-out meals illuminated by the blue glow of their computer monitors.”¹⁴ Lunch is seen by many as just another part of the workday, whether at their workplace or with a laptop computer and papers spread out on the table at a fast food restaurant. Some use lunch to catch up on personal email or update their Facebook page, while the healthier minded take a walk or work out (with their earbuds in their ears and personal playlists turned on). Still others get into their cars and earn a few dollars driving for Lyft or Uber.

Another option for the relationally hopeful is “It’s Just Lunch,” a dating service whose mission is stated as follows

At It's Just Lunch we take away the frustrations of dating and make it easy for you to meet people worth spending your time with. Our dating specialists and matchmakers handle everything in a personalized and efficient manner . . . from finding the right matches to making all the arrangements for the date. All you have to do is show up and enjoy meeting someone new.¹⁵

¹⁴ Kate Bratskier, "Eating at Your Desk Is Terrible for You and Your Work," The Huffington Post, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/eating-lunch-at-your-desk_us_56d0847fe4b0bf0dab31debd. (Accessed November 26, 2017)

¹⁵ "It's Just Lunch," www.facebook.com/pg/itsjustlunch/about/?ref=page_internal. (Accessed November 26, 2017)

There were extensive complaints about this service in San Diego.¹⁶ Even if it operated as intended, it's essentially provisional and lowers the bar as a meal eaten together.

Dinner

Consider the family dinner table. Work schedules and extracurricular activities often take precedence over the evening family meal, and even when families gather, members eat different things amid many distractions. According to a 2013 study by the Harvard School of Public Health for National Public Radio

Most children are in households where a parent says it is important that the family eats together, but for almost half (46%) this is difficult to do—largely because of work for the adults and extracurricular activities for the children. The busy schedule of American families appears to be cutting into family dinners together. Among the children whose families did not have dinner together the night prior to the poll, the top reason was that an adult was at work (50% of this group). Children's extracurricular activities (such as "participating in a team or club or taking music lessons") played a role for 27% of children who themselves had such activities and for 31% whose siblings did. In a little more than a tenth of cases (13%), the reason they did not have dinner together was that the child was with friends and for the same fraction (13%) a sibling was. In 17% of cases, an adult was at religious or community activities, and in a very small number of cases (3%) a child (14 years or older) was at work. In 17% of cases, the family had dinner in the same house but at least one family member ate in a different room.

The proportion of families who are eating together has not changed much in more than 20 years, but the family dinner itself may not be a shared meal around the kitchen table today. According to parents, nearly half of children are in families (48%) that ate together 6 or 7 nights out of the last week, while the rest did not. This figure has not changed much since 1990, when the proportion of households that had eaten together 6 or 7 nights in the last week was 54%. Thinking about a given night, 76% of children live in households where the family ate dinner together, but only 70% ate dinner together at home, and only 61% ate together at home around a table. Further, in only 55% of cases was the child at the table, sharing the same food.

¹⁶ Channel 10 News, "Ex-Employee: Dating Service Forced Questionable Matches," Channel 10 News, <https://www.10news.com/news/ex-employee-dating-service-forced-questionable-matches>. (Accessed November 26, 2017)

Even among those who ate together at home, many were distracted by TV, cell phones, laptops or iPods. While 70% of children live in households where the family ate dinner together at home, 24% had the TV on during dinner or someone used a cell phone, a lap top or an iPod during dinner. This means only 46% of children live in households where the family ate together without these distractions.¹⁷

Other studies suggest that the distractions are not important; it's simply being together that makes a difference.¹⁸

The eating habits of couples without children do not get a lot of attention from researchers. According to Rachel Tumin, a doctoral student in epidemiology at Ohio State University, "There are a lot of families that don't have children. And we've forgotten about them in this context of thinking about sharing food and time together and what that means."¹⁹ Tumin and her colleagues discovered, however, that "the frequency of family meals for adults living with no children was remarkably similar to that of adults living with at least one child in their household."²⁰

Even if researchers have forgotten about couples without children, popular blogs and websites haven't, especially when it comes to young couples. The Internet is filled with confessions and stories about couples who don't eat the same food or whose schedules don't mesh. Here are some typical answers to the question, "Do you two usually eat together?"

¹⁷ Robert J Blendon et al., "A Poll About Children and Weight: Crunch Time During the American Work and School Week - 3pm to Bed," (Boston, MA: Harvard School of Public Health, 2013), 5.

¹⁸ Tara Parker-Pope, "The Family Meal Is What Counts, TV On or Off," *The New York Times*, October 16, 2007. (Accessed January 6, 2018)

¹⁹ Justin Caba, "The Family Meal, but Smaller: Couples with and without Children Eat Together on a Consistent Basis," Newsweek Media Group, <http://www.medicaldaily.com/family-meal-smaller-couples-and-without-children-eat-together-consistent-basis-304010>. (Accessed January 6, 2018)

²⁰ Ibid.

We've talked about this, and honestly, we will eat together a couple nights a week, not every. Sometimes I plan on going to the gym at 630pm, which means I eat a snack, not dinner, before I go work out. He'll eat dinner, though, b/c he's not a 7pm work out kinda guy. Plus, now that I'm in grad school, I don't have time to set aside 30 minutes to eat. I cook dinner and then I eat it while I'm watching my lectures. We will probably have dinner together Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. Otherwise, I doubt we will—I have too much going on to sit down and eat dinner. Plus, we eat very different foods. Me, healthy, him, less so. I'm only supposed to have a protein and a veggie at dinner and he **must** have his carbs.

I'm trying to fit in work, school, and photography sessions. When he comes home from the Army...he has no job. So uh, he's gonna hafta deal or do some serious helping out! Now, if he makes dinner AND packs my lunch for me (with the things my nutritionist says i can eat, not whatever he throws together), I'd be able to spend time eating dinner with him. I dunno, i don't have time to sit and eat...i almost never do that myself!

My fiancé is a very picky and a not healthy eater. If I don't make him dinner, he ends up eating chicken nuggets and french fries every single night. The problem is—sometimes I end up making two separate dinners, a fiancé-friendly and reasonably healthy one, and that one for me that is quite similar but with vegetables and additions he doesn't like. It's exhausting, and makes it hard for me to diet because I just want to cook ONE fiancé-friendly meal. It's tough. We usually do eat dinner together, but we don't often sit at our dining room table.

Hardly ever. FI works nights and I get off at around 6 p.m. so unless he happens to be off that day, he's never home when I get home and eat.²¹

Young couples' lives are filled with so many personal activities: education, hobbies, jobs, and sports, and the chaotic schedules that connect these pursuits, that there seems to be little time for the practice of eating together. Or, as one young woman admitted on the same blog, "I was recently lamenting to a friend that I simply don't have time for a husband, haha."²²

²¹ Anonymous, "Do You Usually Eat Dinner with Your Significant Other?," Wedding Bee, <https://boards.weddingbee.com/topic/do-you-usually-eat-dinner-with-your-significant-other/>. (Accessed January 6, 2018)

²² Ibid.

Summary

“Gather round the table of the Lord,”²³ the Church sings, but to those who are used to eating breakfast on the run, having lunch at their desks, sitting down to dinner in shifts, or scattered throughout the house, or at a table with everyone looking at their smart phones, what does this mean? To preach the Eucharist to today’s food culture, it is necessary that the preacher be aware of the empty tables with no one sitting at them.

Many People Don’t Trust Food

Not only have patterns of eating changed, but food itself has become suspect. Alcohol intolerance, calorie counting, eating disorders, food allergies (specifically celiac disease)—there seems to be an endless list of concerns, conditions and questions surrounding the eating of food. David Sax, a Canadian journalist, addresses the question of diet humorously

“Eat more fiber, but be sure to eat less carbs. Drink three glasses of milk a day, so long as you avoid lactose and dairy. Beef is filled with much-needed iron and protein, but you should steer clear of red meat entirely. Eat fish, unless it (almost certainly) contains mercury. Margarine is the evolutionary replacement for butter, although it turns out that margarine should be avoided like the plague, so how about some more butter. The perfect food is acai, bananas, blueberries, bran, coconut water, flax seeds and goji berries, so be sure to eat as much of these as possible, as well as chocolate and red wine, too (but not too much of any of them . . . but enough that it will make a difference which is too much). Eat donuts and organ meats, and especially bacon and eggs for breakfast. Avoid white foods, brown foods, and anything that aggravates the blood, as it leads to disorders like masturbation and blindness. Eat whatever you want. But don’t finish it. And make sure it contains no gluten, because gluten is certain death.”²⁴

²³ James Theim, "Sons of God," (Chicago, IL: F.E.L. Publications, 1966).

²⁴ David Sax, *The Tastemakers: Why We're Crazy for Cupcakes but Fed up with Fondue: (Plus Baconomics, Superfoods, and Other Secrets from the World of Food Trends)* (New York, NY: PublicAffairs, 2014), 78.

Or put more simply by Terence McLaughlin, as the title of his book on dietary fads and fancies, *If You Like It, Don't Eat It*.²⁵

Some concerns about food, such as alcohol intolerance, wheat allergies, and eating disorders directly affect the consumption of the Eucharistic elements. Other concerns generate distrust toward food in general.

Addictions, Allergies, and Diseases

“We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable.”²⁶ This is the first step in the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous, and it sets the alcoholic on the way to recovery. Whereas alcohol may have been seen as a friend in the past, a temporary escape from their problems; a source of courage to do things they otherwise might not have done; a coping mechanism or means of relaxation;²⁷ now they see alcohol as an enemy which cannot be trusted. Now it must be avoided. For some even a tiny sip such as one receives at Holy Communion could prove their undoing. For years this meant that communicants “for medical or personal reasons” received only the host in congregations that used wine. Other congregations used only grape juice or offered it as an option. For Orthodox and Roman Catholics, as well as some Protestants, the use of only wine was, and is today, a matter of doctrinal correctness.

Food allergies include “milk, eggs, fish, crustacean shellfish, tree nuts, peanuts, wheat and soybean. These foods account for about 90% of all food allergies in the United

²⁵ Terence McLaughlin, *If You Like It, Don't Eat It: Dietary Fads and Fancies* (New York, NY: Universe Books, 1979).

²⁶ Bill Wilson, "The Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous," (New York, NY: Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc., 2016).

²⁷ DARA Drug and Alcohol Rehab Thailand, "Alcohol as a Friend," DARA Drug and Alcohol Rehab Thailand, <http://alcoholrehab.com/alcoholism/alcohol-as-a-friend/>. (Accessed December 1, 2017)

States.”²⁸ Because any of these allergens can be “hidden” in processed food, people with these allergies are especially cautious about what they eat.

One wheat allergy, celiac disease, is becoming more commonly diagnosed. It is described as “a multisystem disease in which the gastrointestinal tract is the major site of injury;”²⁹ it is a hereditary, often undiagnosed, autoimmune disorder

In an autoimmune disorder, the body attacks itself. In the case of celiac disease, the body damages or destroys the *villi*, the very components of the small intestine that enable us to absorb the nutrients we need to survive. And, much like a domino effect, the damage extends to other parts of the body as it progresses.³⁰

Gluten, which is found in barley, rye, and wheat, triggers attacks on the *villi* which will continue until gluten is removed from the diet. For people with gluten intolerance, even the smallest amounts of gluten can be damaging. Christy Thomas, a retired Methodist bishop, states this strongly, “For me, ingesting a product with gluten in it is the same as ingesting something with poison in it.”³¹ For the Orthodox as well as some Protestants the exclusive use of wheat in communion bread was and is today a matter of doctrinal correctness,³² and for Roman Catholics, it is a matter of canon law.³³

²⁸ Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources Food Allergy Research and Resource Program, “Allergenic Foods and Their Allergens: The Big-8,” University of Nebraska-Lincoln, www.webmd.com/allergies/food-triggers#1. (Accessed January 13, 2018)

²⁹ Peter H. R. Green and Rory Jones, *Celiac Disease: A Hidden Epidemic*, Revised and updated ed. (New York, NY: William Morrow, 2016).

³⁰ *Celiac Disease: A Hidden Epidemic*, Revised and updated ed. (New York, NY: William Morrow, 2016), 20.

³¹ Christy Thomas, “Seven Tips for Offering Gluten-Free Communion,” www.patheos.com/blogs/thoughtfulpastor/2014/04/14/seven-tips-for-offering-gluten-free-communion/. (Accessed January 13, 2018)

³² Communion bread is traditionally made of only three or four ingredients: wheat flour, salt, (yeast in the Orthodox tradition), and pure water.

³³ Canon 658 Stanislaus Woywod, *The New Canon Law: A Commentary and Summary of the New Code of Canon Law* (New York, NY: Joseph F. Wagner, 1918), 165.

Eating disorders, including anorexia nervosa, binge eating disorder, and bulimia nervosa, are serious diseases still not well understood by doctors and researchers. People with these diseases are so preoccupied with food and weight issues that they find it hard to focus on other aspects of their lives. Even receiving the Eucharist can be a cause of concern, as one person posted on My Pro-ana (a website dedicated to the support or recovery of those suffering from eating disorders or body dysmorphic disorders),³⁴ “Do you ever wonder how many calories are in the host/bread and/or wine you receive at Communion?” Responses included

ugh i always wonder this and ive tried to look it up and found nothing. i feel like im going to hell. i always take the host anyway and dont count it, but its probably about 4 calories and i dont really take a sip of the wine but i was always taught that as long as it touches your lips than you recieved the eucharist.

I just count it as 25 calories all together.

I don't go there anymore, I used to though, I never had the wine though (except for my actual communion service). I've always wondered what was in the bread since, but never truly had to worry about it

I actually just thought about this today, but I honestly don't think you should count those calories, at least I don't, for me I believe faith is bigger than disease so somethings i have to do. At the very least it wont cause you to gain, that i'm sure of. Peace be with all of you.

I was just recently confirmed and freaking out about this as well! Apparently there's 1 calorie in the wafer (there's like nothing to it) and probably about 5–10 in the wine. I don't count the cals, though. It's the one single thing that goes into my mouth that I don't count.

Yeah, depending if I'm fasting or not, I'll just cross my arms and receice a blessing rather than the host

³⁴ Beautiful Aspirations, "A Question for Christian Anorexics Who Go to Church and Receive Communion," MyProana, www.myproana.com/index.php/topic/435837-a-question-for-christian-anorexics-who-go-to-church-and-receive-communion/. (Accessed January 13, 2018)

I'll keep it in my mouth, but never eat it. I take it out, once I'm sitting down again.³⁵

This distrust cannot be addressed by liturgical changes or substitution of elements. Like alcohol intolerance, food itself has become the enemy.

Additions and Subtractions

To make a simple chili you combine beef or turkey, chilis, garlic, tomatoes, water, and salt and pepper. You can also add beans if you live outside of Texas. Or you can buy a can of Hormel Chili, Turkey, No Beans made with

mechanically separated turkey, turkey broth, chili powder (chili peppers, flavoring), **corn flour, oatmeal, textured vegetable protein** (soy flour, caramel color), **tomatoes** (water, tomato paste), **sugar, salt, hydrolyzed corn, soy and wheat protein, flavoring, autolyzed yeast, modified cornstarch, spice, monosodium glutamate.**³⁶

Some of these words require definitions

Mechanically separated poultry [chicken, turkey] is a paste-like and batter-like poultry product produced by forcing bones with attached edible tissue through a sieve or similar device under high pressure to separate bone from the edible tissue.³⁷

Autolyzed yeast extract is a substance that results when yeast is broken down into its constituent components. It naturally contains free glutamic acid, or monosodium glutamate, and is often used as a less expensive substitute for MSG. As a natural component of autolyzed yeast extract, MSG does not have to be listed separately in the ingredients.³⁸

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Read from the label [emphasis on label].

³⁷ USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service, "Meat and Poultry Labeling Terms," ed. United States Department of Agriculture (Washington, D.C.: United States Department of Agriculture, 2011).

³⁸ Heidi Wiesenfelder, "What Is Autolyzed Yeast Extract?," Leaf Group Ltd, <https://www.livestrong.com/article/345981-foods-that-contain-yeast-extract/>. (Accessed November 12, 2017)

Depending on a person's level of food knowledge, even the definitions require definitions. Processed food is often loaded with ingredients that either do not occur naturally or do not occur naturally in the product we are purchasing. Some of these products are benign, like oatmeal in the processed chili above, while others are controversial like monosodium glutamate, also listed above. Science seems to be of little help in sorting this out. "Sooner or later," Michael Pollen writes in *In Defense of Food*, "everything solid we have been told about the links between our diet and our health seems to get blown away in the gust of the most recent study." He continues

In 2006 came news that a low-fat diet, long believed to protect against cancer, may do no such thing—this from the massive, federally funded Women's Health Initiative, which also failed to find a link between a low-fat diet and the risk of coronary heart disease ... In 2005 we learned that dietary fiber might not, as we have been told for years, help prevent colorectal cancers and heart disease. And then, in the fall of 2006, two prestigious studies on omega-3 fats at the same time came to strikingly different conclusions. While the Institute of Medicine at the National Academy of Sciences found little conclusive evidence that eating fish would do your heart much good (and might hurt your brain, because so much fish is contaminated with mercury), a Harvard study brought the hopeful piece of news that simply by eating a couple of servings of fish each week (or by downing enough fish oil tablets) you could cut your risk of dying from a heart attack by more than a third.³⁹

And it is not just additional ingredients, but also what is removed from food that raises questions. Roller-milling of grain, which replaced grinding by stone in the latter part of the 19th century, resulted in beautiful white flour, but removed most of its nutritional value. To compensate for this, millers began adding vitamins in the 1930s and folic acid in 1996. More recently, the refining process itself has been implicated in several chronic diseases such as diabetes.⁴⁰

³⁹ Pollan, 5.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 107-09.

“*Caveat comedenti*” one might say, “let the eater beware.” Many people have become wary of what has been added or subtracted from their food.

Fast Food and Slow Food

The last half of the 20th century saw many changes in patterns of eating and drinking in the United States. Shortages and rationing caused by World War II forced changes in many familiar recipes and limited the amount of food preservation that could be done at home. Moreover, “the problems of rationed foods, combined with the increased paychecks of defense work, encouraged more women—and families—to eat out.”⁴¹

The 50s saw the rise of self-service fast food restaurants: 1950–Dunkin’ Donuts; 1951–Jack in the Box; 1952–Church’s Fried Chicken and Kentucky Fried Chicken; 1953–Burger King; 1954–Shakey’s (pizza); 1955–McDonald’s and Mr. Donut; 1957–Gino’s (pizza); and 1958–Pizza Hut and Burger Chef.⁴²

Fast food has been blamed in recent years for the introduction of pathogens such as *E. coli*; the loss of small farms and ranches; the rampant epidemic of obesity; and the suppression of efforts to increase minimum wages. (Alarming to some, kiosks are replacing cashiers at Jack in the Box, McDonald’s, and other fast food restaurants, making minimum wage earners an endangered species.) Jim Hightower, author and farm activist, has written in his syndicated columns and in the book *Eat Your Heart Out*⁴³

⁴¹ Geraldine Schrepf, *Kitchen Culture: Fifty Years of Food Fads* (New York, NY: Pharos Books, 1991), 29.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 65.

⁴³ Jim Hightower, *Eat Your Heart Out: Food Profiteering in America* (New York, NY: Crown Publishers, 1975).

about the damage done by fast food to our food economy. More recently, Eric Schlosser, a correspondent for *The Atlantic*, wrote *Fast Food Nation*,⁴⁴ exposing the industry behind the convenient, inexpensive, and tasty food we eat.

If fast food is at one end of the pendulum swing, slow food is at the other. The 1986 formation of the *Arcigola* (loosely translated as “large gluttony”) group in Italy marked the beginning of the international movement called Slow Food.⁴⁵ That year, two events convinced founder, Carlo Petrini, “that Italy was at crisis point. One was the opening of a branch of McDonald's in Piazza di Spagna, in the heart of Rome. The other was the death of 19 people and the poisoning of hundreds of others by cheap wine cut with methanol.”⁴⁶

Slow Food Urban San Diego is a local chapter, or *convivium* (Italian for a feast or “living together” from con + vivo), of the national organization Slow Food USA and its parent organization Slow Food International. On their website, they define “slow food” as “an idea, a way of living and a way of eating... [part of] a global, grassroots movement with thousands of members around the world that links the pleasure of food with a commitment to community and the environment.”⁴⁷

Similarly, there are “foodies” who make a hobby of food, albeit a very serious hobby. They are sometimes divided into “Foodie Locavores, who may end up being

⁴⁴ Eric Schlosser, *Fast Food Nation: The Dark Side of the All-American Meal* (Boston, MA: Mariner Books, 2012).

⁴⁵ Wendy Parkins and Geoffrey Craig, *Slow Living* (New York, NY: Berg, 2006), 19.

⁴⁶ Peter Popham, “Carlo Petrini: The Slow Food Gourmet Who Started a Revolution,” Independent Digital News & Media, <http://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/food-and-drink/features/carlo-petrini-the-slow-food-gourmet-who-started-a-revolution-1837223.html>. (Accessed November 29, 2017)

⁴⁷ Slow Food Urban San Diego, “About Us,” Slow Food Urban San Diego, <http://www.slowfoodurbansandiego.org/about/>. (Accessed November 29, 2017)

covert environmental activists, and then there are the Fetish Foodies who can rave about *crudos* (Spanish for raw) with the passion of sports fans poring over box scores.”⁴⁸ And there are garden variety “locavores” who are interested in eating food that is locally produced, often defining local as within 100 miles. While less organized than the Slow Food Movement, they share an equal commitment to avoiding processed foods and supporting independent and local farms, orchards, and ranches.

Calorie Counting and Weight Watching

Dieting to lose weight started gaining in popularity in the 60s and 70s. There were various drinks and foods: Metrecal, Sego, and Carnation’s Slender (which was a rebranding of their Instant Breakfast). There were diet pills. There was the Stillman Diet, the Grapefruit Diet, the Israeli Army Diet, the Scarsdale Diet...⁴⁹ the list continues today with the Mediterranean Diet, the DASH Diet, the Keto Diet, and so on.

In addition to diet drugs and foods, there were programs to help dieters. Jenny Craig and Weight Watchers are two of the most popular and enduring commercial diet programs on the market today. And according to researchers they are the only two able to demonstrate that they effectively help people lose weight. “An analysis of peer-reviewed data conducted at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine found that of 11

⁴⁸ Deb Weinstein, "Know Your Foodie: Locavores Vs. Fetishists," The Atlantic Monthly Group, <https://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2011/02/know-your-foodie-locavores-vs-fetishists/342220/>. (Accessed November 29, 2017)

⁴⁹ Decades Staff, "12 Fad Diets and Weight Loss Trends from the '60s and '70s," Decades, <http://www.decades.com/lists/12-fad-diets-and-weight-loss-trends-from-the-60s-and-70s>. (Accessed December 3, 2017)

commercially available weight-loss programs, only Jenny Craig and Weight Watchers help people lose at least 8 to 15 pounds after one year.”⁵⁰

The problem is that dieting usually doesn’t keep weight off, according to a talk given by Sandra Aamodt, a neuroscientist and science writer, at TEDGlobal in 2013.⁵¹ And all that struggling with food can create an unhealthy, hence distrustful, relationship with eating and food.

Odd Relationships with Food

Some have taken to watching others eat online. *Mukbang* (Korean for “eating show”) ⁵² has become very popular and that popularity has crossed the Pacific Ocean. American *mukbang* videos are quite different from their Korean inspiration. Korean *mukbang* are most often broadcast live on platforms like Afreeca TV, while American videos are generally pre-recorded and uploaded to YouTube. Also noticeably different is the talking. In Korean broadcasts, the hosts are largely silent, which means that the focus is almost entirely on the actual act of eating. In the United States, though, *mukbang* more closely resembles dining with a friend that just happens to live inside your computer. “The process of a real Korean mukbang video is that you do not speak,” says Sprankles.

⁵⁰ Bara Vaida, "Are Jenny Craig and Weight Watchers Really the Best Weight-Loss Programs?," Everyday Health, <https://www.everydayhealth.com/news/are-jenny-craig-weight-watchers-really-best-weight-loss-programs/>. (Accessed December 3, 2017)

⁵¹ Sandra Aamodt, "Why Dieting Doesn't Usually Work," TEDGlobal https://www.ted.com/talks/sandra_aamodt_why_dieting_doesn_t_usually_work/transcript?emulatemode=2. (Accessed December 3, 2017)

⁵² Elise Hu, "Koreans Have an Insatiable Appetite for Watching Strangers Binge Eat," NPR, <https://help.npr.org/customer/en/portal/topics/827523-about-npr/articles>. (Accessed January 17, 2018)

“You just eat an abundance of food. I think we’ve Americanized it to where I’m talking about how I’m feeling that day or telling a story from my past.”⁵³

Summary

There are many reasons that people have grown to mistrust food. Some internal: alcohol intolerance, food allergies, and eating disorders. Some external: ingredients that are added or subtracted from food. Still other reasons come from food industry practices and concerns raised by popular movements. Deborah Cohen, an MD and senior scientist at the RAND Corporation, even promotes distrust with the “Distrust Diet” in her book, *A Big Fat Crisis : The Hidden Forces Behind the Obesity Epidemic—and How We Can End It*.⁵⁴ To preach the Eucharist to today’s food culture it is necessary that the preacher be aware of the real mistrust that has grown between eaters and what we eat.

Few See an Obligation to Serve Others

“Generation Me is the first generation raised to believe everybody should have high self-esteem,” according to Jean Twenge, a San Diego State associate professor of psychology. “We grew up with the phrases, ‘You can be anything you want to be. Believe in yourself. Never give up on your dreams.’ **We were raised to put ourselves first.**” [emphasis added]⁵⁵ I believe Twenge is right, although I wouldn’t limit the “put ourselves first” attitude to Generation Me. It belongs to all generations. Interestingly, when I searched the phrase “put ourselves first other's needs” on Google, the first 35 links were

⁵³ Ann McCarthy, "This Korean Food Phenomenon Is Changing the Internet," Vox Media, <https://www.eater.com/2017/4/19/15349568/mukbang-videos-korean-youtube>. (Accessed January 17, 2018)

⁵⁴ Deborah Cohen, *A Big Fat Crisis: The Hidden Forces Behind the Obesity Epidemic - and How We Can End It* (New York, NY: Nation Books, 2014).

⁵⁵ Jenifer Goodwin, "It's All About 'Me'," *San Diego Union-Tribune*, May 7, 2006; Nouwen.

to sites that reassuringly told me about, “The Healthy, Selfless Act of Putting Ourselves First”⁵⁶ or “Becoming Selfish: Why Putting Yourself First Is The Best Decision You'll Ever Make.”⁵⁷

There are members of every generation who put themselves first. And when they do help others they often expect a little gratitude, recognition, or at least a good feeling in return. “Spend a night at Interfaith Shelter, it will make you feel good,” one Social Ministry chairperson used to tell my congregation in San Diego. In the 2003 film *Pieces of April*, when April has asked for assistance from her neighbor, Wayne, with cooking a turkey for her family’s Thanksgiving dinner they have this exchange

Wayne: Do you know that good feeling that often comes from being helpful?

April Burns: Yes. . .

Wayne: I’m not having that feeling here. ⁵⁸

Wayne then handed her the half-cooked turkey, sans a drumstick he gave to his dog, and slammed the door in her face. (Not unlike the way some people respond to the ungrateful homeless.)

It Begins at Home

People who aren’t eating together are not likely to be cooking and serving food to other people, unless that is their job. The kitchen has become largely self-service. “The

⁵⁶ Exploring Your Mind, "The Healthy, Selfless Act of Putting Ourselves First," Exploring Your Mind, <https://exploringyourmind.com/healthy-selfless-putting-ourselves-first/>. (Accessed February 10, 2018)

⁵⁷ Meara Mosny, "Becoming Selfish: Why Putting Yourself First Is the Best Decision You'll Ever Make," Odyssey, <https://www.theodysseyonline.com/becoming-selfish-putting-yourself-first>. (Accessed February 10, 2018)

⁵⁸ Peter Hedges, "Pieces of April," (Beverly Hills, CA: United Artists, 2003).

pantry and kitchen serve as a sort of 24-hour commissary for all to access at will, save for the rare and special occasions during which all gather to eat collectively.”⁵⁹

Ecofeminist and theologian Teresa Marbut believes that when women moved out of the kitchen it took away one of their defining roles

. . . the industrialization of food and food systems has taken from women their sacred places as preparers and givers of food, life and sustenance. This is not to say that men do not have the ability to be connected in this way, it merely notes that the correlation of women to breakfast, lunch, and dinner has been expressed for centuries far more clearly than any other element of food and people.”⁶⁰

I note that with the exceptions of making the weekend breakfast and manning the backyard grill the role of preparers and givers of food has long been denied to most men in our culture.

It Extends to the World

Today’s food culture extends far beyond the table at which we eat. Something as simple as a shredded carrot in a salad requires people to plant it, harvest it, transport it, prep it, bag it, transport it again; slice it, toss it, plate it and set it in front of you with a smile. Then, assuming you leave a little carrot on your plate, people scrape the plate to be washed, take the ort to the bin out back, and transport the ort to the dump or the farm. All for a quarter cup of shredded carrot. What a crowd looking over your shoulder as you eat. And you thought you were eating alone! There’s more. Someone is standing out front with a cardboard sign, “Will Work for Food,” while someone else is digging through the bin out back, and someone in a tropical country has lost his subsistence farm (where he

⁵⁹ Bratskier.

⁶⁰ Teresa Marbut, *Spiritual Foodways: An Ecofeminist Perspective on Our Sacred Journey with Food* (Champaign, IL: Common Ground Publishing LLC, 2015), 191.

once raised his carrots) to plant the trees that produced the coffee beans for the coffee you had after your meal. By eating that carrot, you are connected with all these people and their families and their issues of documentation, employment, family leave, health care, housing and wages. Even the flavor of your soda can make a connection halfway around the world

Madagascar is the world's largest producer of vanilla in the world. In 2005, they produced over 40% of the world's supply. India was second, at 27%, followed by China at 14%. Mexico, the native country of the vanilla bean, only produced 3% of the world supply, the same amount as Turkey.

The Coca-Cola Corporation is the world's largest customer of natural vanilla extract. When New Coke was introduced in 1985, the economy of Madagascar crashed, and only recovered after New Coke flopped. This is because New Coke used vanillin, a less expensive synthetic substitute, and purchases of vanilla more than halved during this period. It's amazing how dependent an entire country can become on 1 company.⁶¹

Every meal carries connections and obligations.

Summary

Few see an obligation to serve others in the meals we eat. There are members of every generation who put themselves first, whether at home or in the world. There is a connection between the table at which we eat and a great cloud of others (witnesses?). To preach the Eucharist to today's food culture it is necessary that the preacher be ready to reveal the connections and obligations we have.

⁶¹ Andrew Heller, "The Power of Coke in Madagascar," TheMediaDude <http://themediadude.blogspot.com/2006/06/power-of-coke-in-madagascar.html>. (Accessed January 7, 2018)

Summary

In today's food culture most people don't regularly eat together; many people don't trust food; and few see an obligation to serve others arising out of their meals. These are the people who are members of our congregations and people outside our congregations to whom we are called to preach about the Eucharist. In order for a congregation to recognize the rich network of connections between the Eucharist and our life in the world, it is necessary that the preacher be aware of the empty tables at which so many people sit, the real mistrust that has grown between eaters and what we eat, and be ready to reveal the connections and responsibilities we have to those who are affected by how our food is planted, gathered, prepared, served, and disposed of. Then the Eucharist can be worldly and our lives Eucharistic.

CHAPTER 3

MELANCHTHON'S *LOCI COMMUNES*

Loci Communes (Latin for Common Topics or Commonplaces) by Philip Melanchthon was published in 1521 (and republished in 1535, 1543, and 1559). The first book of Protestant theology, it served the Reformation and subsequent generations as a hermeneutical handbook demonstrating, rather than outlining, Melanchthon's use of Scripture for proclamation. Luther praised it in his introduction to *The Bondage of the Will*: "Philip Melanchthon's invincible little book on *Loci Theologici* in my judgment is worthy not only of immortality but even of the Church's canon."¹ I will be using the first edition (1521), considered by many to be superior.

Aristotle

The method of *loci* was originally used in public speaking. Speakers working without notes needed a way to remember their points in correct order

The word "topos" (place, location) most probably is derived from an ancient method of memorizing a great number of items on a list by associating them with successive places, say the houses along a street, one is acquainted with. By recalling the houses along the street we can also remember the associated items.²

¹ Martin Luther, *The Bondage of the Will*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan and Helmut T. Lehmann, trans. Philip S. Watson and Benjamin Drewery, 55 vols., vol. 33, Luther's Works (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1972), 269.

² Christof Rapp, "Aristotle's Rhetoric," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta (Stanford, CA: Stanford University, 2010). (Accessed January 5, 2018)

Today we see this technique used in the same way by competitors in the World Memory Championships who memorize large amounts of information in relatively short amounts of time, and on screen in the BBC Masterpiece Theater series *Sherlock*, where in “The Hounds of Baskerville” and three other episodes Holmes uses his “mind palace” to access information pertinent to his investigations.³

Aristotle made use of this technique: “For just as in a person with a trained memory, a memory of things themselves is immediately caused by the mere mention of their *loci*, so these habits too will make a man readier in reasoning, because he has his premises classified before his mind’s eye, each under its number.”⁴ And more than a technique for memorization, in *The Topics*, Aristotle’s discourse on *dialectics*, *loci* were used as places from which one could dig out and construct material for argument. They were preparatory tools to public speaking (*rhetoric*) as described by University of Oregon professor Quirinus Breen

The subject–matter of discourse is explored and put to order by dialectic. This is done by that part of dialectic known as *topica*; that is by means of *topoi* or *loci* a subject matter is dug out and arranged. The dialectical topic or *locus* does no more than find—is *therefore* called dialectical *inventio*—that is, it produces and arranges only the bare matter of things to be discoursed on.⁵

A *locus* produces and arranges things to be discoursed on. David Russell, professor at Iowa State University of Science and Technology, offers these examples, among others, to his students in his Rhetorical Theory class

³ Paul McGuigan, “The Hounds of Baskerville,” in *Sherlock*, ed. Mark Gatiss and Steven Moffat (London: BBC One, 2012). (Accessed January 5, 2018)

⁴ Aristotle, *Topics*, trans. W.A. Pickard (London: Aeterna Press, 2015), 147-48.

⁵ Quirinus Breen, “The Terms ‘Loci Communes’ and ‘Loci’ in Melanchthon,” *Church History* 16, no. 4 (1947): 199.

- Definition (i.e. “What do I mean by X? By X I mean...”)
- Comparison (i.e. “X is like... because...”)
- Relationship (i.e. “X is... because...”)
- Circumstances (i.e. “If it is possible to [example], it is possible to do X.”)
- Testimony (i.e. “According to [name], a leading expert on X...”)⁶

So if one wanted to discuss chili recipes, one might begin with the *locus*, Definition.

“What do I mean by ‘chili’ as a recipe? By chili, I mean a dish with beef, chilis, and beans.” In Texas, where beans are anathema, one would have to go no further to start an argument. Or using the *locus*, Comparison, “Lutefisk is like fish jello because of the way it looks.” This may or may not be arguable, and one might want to choose a locus other than Comparison to begin their discourse.

Melanchthon

Melanchthon, like other classically trained humanists of his time, would have learned the *loci* method for public speaking. In 1518 he was appointed as the first Professor of Greek at Wittenberg University, and after attending the Leipzig Disputation of 1519 with Luther and Carlstadt, the following year he joined the Theology Faculty. To prepare for teaching Romans, he began to sort and collect the theology of Paul, applying the *loci* method to the Scriptures. However, rather than using *loci* as a method to produce and arrange material for discourse, he used it to accumulate material already settled in his mind. For Melanchthon, writes Christian Preus

⁶ David Russell, "Aristotle's Common Topics of Invention (Adapted)," Iowa State University of Science and Technology, <http://www.public.iastate.edu/~drrussel/www548/aristcomtopics.html>. (Accessed January 5, 2018)

The subject matter of theology is already present in Scripture. The job of the theologian is to learn the common topics of Scripture, the doctrinal veins of Scripture, so that he may be driven further into Scripture to confirm what Scripture expresses clearly elsewhere. Whereas Scholastic theology argued technical theological points using logical syllogisms and complex dialectic, Melanchthon sees his job as showing what the clear Scriptures simply say. He does this rhetorically, that is, by gathering together several key subjects or topics that Scripture treats in abundance.⁷

Student notes from these lectures in 1519 and 1520 produced several publications which annoyed Melanchthon no end. In his introduction to *Loci Communes* (1521) he wrote

When we [Melanchthon and Dr. Tileman Plettener] were preparing to teach Paul's Epistle to the Romans last year, we methodically arranged its various contents under the most common theological topics. This study was meant only to give a very rough treatment of the subject and proofs of Paul's argument to the students whom I was teaching privately (*privatim*). But someone—I don't know who—published it. Whoever did publish it showed more zeal than sense. Of course, I wrote in such a way that it is difficult to understand what I mean without constant reference to Paul's epistle. Now I cannot take back the little book since it is all but officially published, and so I thought it would be best to rework and revise it. For many places required more precise arguments and much of it needed revision.⁸

In his reworking of “the little book” Melanchthon identified 23 topics of theology, but only dealt with 10 topics: Sin; Law; The Gospel; Grace; Justification and Faith; The Distinction between the Old and New Testament and the Abrogation of the Law; Signs; Love; Magistrates; and Scandal. In his analysis of *Loci Communes*, an English theologian, Anthony C. Reed, writes, “The *Loci* are by no means a systematic theology, and much is omitted. Only the main points of contention are raised; otherwise traditional

⁷ Philipp Melanchthon and Christian Preus, *Commonplaces: Loci Communes 1521* (Saint Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 2014), 9-10.

⁸ Ibid., 19-20.

Western orthodoxy is assumed.”⁹ Melanchthon himself saw the *loci* as a tool for preachers and theologians

But we treat everything sparingly and briefly, because we are making an index rather than a commentary. For we are merely compiling a catalogue of topics that the reader should consult as he makes his way through divine Scripture, and we are teaching with only a few words the foundations of all Christian doctrine.¹⁰

This makes Melanchthon’s method well suited for the purpose of this thesis: to construct a “mind pantry” for preaching the Eucharist to today’s food culture.

Catherine of Siena

For the purpose of this thesis I have identified three *loci* for preaching the Eucharist: Table, Food, and Waiter. They are taken from the prayer “Your Greatness Is Everywhere” by Catherine of Siena, a third order Dominican and Scholastic philosopher and theologian. She lived in the 14th century and was named a Doctor of the Church, together with Teresa of Avila, in 1970 by Pope Paul VI. The excerpt follows

And I shall clothe myself in your eternal will,
and by this light I shall come to know
that you, eternal Trinity,
are table
and food
and waiter for us.

You, eternal Father, are the table
that offers us as food
the Lamb, your only–begotten Son.

He is the most exquisite of foods for us,
both in his teaching,
which nourishes us in your will,
and in the sacrament

⁹ Anthony C. Reed, "Melanchthon 1521 Loci Communes: The First Protestant Apology," http://churchsociety.org/churchman/archive_page/churchman_vol_085_1971/. (Accessed January 6, 2018)

¹⁰ Melanchthon and Preus, 20.

that we receive in holy communion,
which feeds and strengthens us
while we are pilgrim travelers in this life.

And the Holy Spirit
is indeed a waiter for us,
for the Spirit serves us this teaching
by enlightening our mind's eye with it
and inspiring us to follow it.

And the Spirit serves us charity for our neighbors
and hunger to have as our food.¹¹

Ironically for my thesis, Catherine became so repulsed by food that she could not eat anything and for years lived on the Holy Eucharist alone. Perhaps I should have chosen saints with better appetites, such as Teresa of Avila who, when she was criticized for eating well, said, "There's a time for partridge and a time for penance."¹² Or Brigid of Ireland, who legend states followed Christ's example of turning water into wine, by "supplying eighteen churches with beer from one barrel, and turned water into milk that cured a woman with leprosy. The sick and the poor thronged around her."¹³ Small wonder.

Summary

As previously stated, in order for a congregation to recognize the rich network of connections between the Eucharist and our life in the world, it is necessary that the preacher be fluent and imaginative in both the biblical stories and the role that eating and

¹¹ Catherine and Mary O'Driscoll, *Catherine of Siena—Passion for the Truth, Compassion for Humanity: Selected Spiritual Writings* (New Rochelle, NY: New City Press, 1993), 73-74.

¹² Bert Ghezzi, *Mystics & Miracles: True Stories of Lives Touched by God* (Chicago: Loyola Press, 2002), 125.

¹³ Bernard Bangle, *Butler's Lives of the Saints: Concise, Modernized Edition* (Brewster, MA: Paraclete Press, 2005), 25.

food play in people's lives in the early 21st century. This thesis will use Melanchthon's *loci* method to collect items from Scripture and non-scriptural sources, worldly and Eucharistic, using as *loci* categories suggested by a prayer of Catherine of Siena: Table, Food, and Waiter. It will not be exhaustive, but like Melanchthon, "we treat everything sparingly and briefly, because we are making an index rather than a commentary. For we are merely compiling a catalogue of topics that the reader should consult."¹⁴

¹⁴ Melanchthon and Preus, 20.

CHAPTER 4

COMMONPLACES FOR EUCHARIST I

For the preacher who wants to preach the Eucharist, finding commonplaces begins in the meals of the Old and New Testaments, festive and ordinary, in particular the Passover and the Lord's Supper, which are the foundation for our celebration of the Eucharist today. "Throughout the history of God's people, their relationship with Him and their relationship with one another have been shaped by shared meals."¹ Our first parents sinned sharing "the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden" (Genesis 3:1–7), and at the end of time the blessed will be invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb (Revelation 19:6–9).

In the Old Testament, covenants were confirmed with sacrifices and followed by meals (e.g. Genesis 26:28, 31:22–55 and Exodus 24:3–11). There were ordinary meals such as Boaz offered Ruth (Ruth 2:13–15) and as Elisha ate with the Shunammite woman and her family (2 Kings 4:7–9). There were also extraordinary meals such as the eating of the manna in the wilderness (Exodus 16) and the meal eaten by Elijah and the widow of Zarephath (1 Kings 17:8–16).

¹ Tim Archer to The Kitchen of Half-Baked Thoughts, 2008, <http://www.timothyarcher.com/kitchen/the-table-of-the-lord-old-testament-meals/w>. (Accessed April 15, 2013)

Robert J. Karris proposes that in Luke's Gospel "Jesus is either going to a meal, at a meal, or coming from a meal. . ."² In Luke's Gospel we see Jesus sharing ten meals. These meals were shared meals, and in many of them Jesus was criticized for who he shared them with: prostitutes, sinners, tax collectors and other unclean undesirables. It appeared he didn't care with whom he ate, but in fact, Jesus cared very much.

In the Acts of the Apostles "breaking of the bread" appears 3 times (Acts 2:42, 2:46, 20:7). Jesus introduced the "Lord's Supper" as part of a meal with his disciples (1 Corinthians 11:23–26), and the Christians in Acts continued to celebrate Eucharist with a fellowship meal (Acts 2:42, 2:26, 20:7). "There is no separating the gesture "breaking bread," from the family or community meal that followed it. 'Breaking bread,' which included a blessing prayer, gave the communal meal its religious significance."³ In Acts, Peter eats with Gentiles after receiving a vision: "The Spirit told me to go with them and not to make a distinction between them and us" (Acts 10:1–11:18).

These meals are not described in any detail, although articles and books have been written using other sources to describe what might have been their menus, preparation, and practice.⁴ The significance of these meals is Jesus' participation

The meals which Jesus is recorded as sharing during his earthly ministry proclaim and enact the nearness of the Kingdom, of which the feeding of the multitudes is a sign. In his last meal, the fellowship of the Kingdom was connected with the

² R. J. Karris, *Eating Your Way through Luke's Gospel*, (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2006), 12.

³ Eugene LaVerdiere, *The Breaking of the Bread: The Development of the Eucharist According to the Acts of the Apostles*, (Chicago, IL: Liturgy Training Publications, 1998), 17.

⁴ See for example D. E. Neel and J. A. Pugh, *The Food and Feasts of Jesus: Inside the World of First Century Food, with Menus and Recipes*, (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2012).

imminence of Jesus' suffering. After his resurrection, the Lord made his presence known to his disciples in the breaking of the bread.⁵

The following are excerpted from my commonplace books. I chose to include them here to demonstrate looking for connections and to use in the sermon outlines in Chapter 6. Other examples may be found in Appendix A. This is an abbreviated mind pantry, with the shelves (*loci*) labeled: Table, Food, and Waiter.

Locus: Table

Old Testament

The word for table in Hebrew is שֻׁלְחָן (*shulcan*). It occurs 73 times, predominately in describing the Table of Showbread and secondarily as an important fixture in a royal house. The Tabernacle contained one table, the Table of Showbread. Its construction is described in Exodus 25:23-30; 40:22.

When they enter the gates of the inner court, they shall wear linen vestments; they shall have nothing of wool on them, while they minister at the gates of the inner court, and within. They shall have linen turbans on their heads, and linen undergarments on their loins; they shall not bind themselves with anything that causes sweat (Ezekiel 44:17, 18).

Descriptions of duties that included the table(s)

You shall bring in the table, and arrange its setting; and you shall bring in the lampstand, and set up its lamps (Exodus 40:4).

Their responsibility was to be the ark, the table, the lampstand, the altars, the vessels of the sanctuary with which the priests minister, and the screen—all the service pertaining to these (Numbers 3:31).

Over the table of the bread of the Presence they shall spread a blue cloth, and put on it the plates, the dishes for incense, the bowls, and the flagons for the drink-offering; the regular bread also shall be on it (Numbers 4:7).

But the Levitical priests, the descendants of Zadok, who kept the charge of my sanctuary when the people of Israel went astray from me, shall come near to me to

⁵ Churches, 8.

minister to me; and they shall attend me to offer me the fat and the blood, says the LORD God. It is they who shall enter my sanctuary, it is they who shall approach my table, to minister to me, and they shall keep my charge (Ezekiel 44:15, 16).

When Solomon built his temple, there is no specific description, only to say that he had 10 tables made (2 Chronicles 4:8).

They offer to the LORD every morning and every evening burnt-offerings and fragrant incense, set out the rows of bread on the table of pure gold, and care for the golden lampstand so that its lamps may burn every evening; for we keep the charge of the LORD our God, but you have abandoned him (2 Chronicles 13:11).

Then they went inside to King Hezekiah and said, ‘We have cleansed all the house of the LORD, the altar of burnt-offering and all its utensils, and the table for the rows of bread and all its utensils. All the utensils that King Ahaz repudiated during his reign when he was faithless, we have made ready and sanctified; see, they are in front of the altar of the LORD’ (2 Chronicles 29:18, 19).

I call upon you, O LORD; come quickly to me;
 give ear to my voice when I call to you.
 Let my prayer be counted as incense before you,
 and the lifting up of my hands as an evening sacrifice (Psalms 141:2).

New Testament

The word for table in Greek is *τράπεζα* (*trapeza*).

A woman came to Him with an alabaster vial of very costly perfume, and she poured it on His head as He **reclined at the table**. (Matthew 26:7) KJV
 a woman came to him with an alabaster jar of very costly ointment, and she poured it on his head as he **sat at the table**. (Matthew 26:7) NRSV

While He was in Bethany at the home of Simon the leper, and **reclining at the table**, there came a woman with an alabaster vial of very costly perfume of pure nard; and she broke the vial and poured it over His head. (Mark 14:3) KJV
 While he was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he **sat at the table**, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very costly ointment of nard, and she broke open the jar and poured the ointment on his head (Mark 14:3). NRSV

"For who is greater, the one who **reclines at the table** or the one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at the table? But I am among you as the one who serves" (Luke 22:27).

Non-scriptural Sources

“My mother has a dining room table that no one has seen for 20 years, though it sits right in the middle of her dining room.”⁶ Greg Levoy

“No argument here: it takes work to make the table a place of grace. Who plans the meals, shops, tend to the garden? Who cooks, with all that implies of preparation? Who sets and clears the table? Who scrubs the pots and sweeps the floor? If we want the table to be a place of togetherness, the sharing has to start long before the meal and continue long after.”⁷ Elizabeth Hoffman Reed

“Welcome Table”

I'm gonna sit at the welcome table
I'm gonna sit at the welcome table one of these days, hallelujah
I'm gonna sit at the welcome table
Sit at the welcome table one of these days, one of these days

I'm gonna feast on milk and honey
Oh yes, I'm gonna feast on milk and honey one of these days, hallelujah
I'm gonna feast on milk and honey
Feast on milk and honey one of these days, one of these days⁸ McComb Freedom School

“Welcome Table”

I'm gonna sit at the Woolworth counter,
I'm gonna sit at the Woolworth counter one of these days, Hallelujah!
I'm gonna sit at the Woolworth counter,
I'm gonna sit at the Woolworth counter one of these days.⁹ (Civil rights verses)

“The Table”

I will feast at the table of the Lord
I will feast at the table of the Lord
I won't hunger anymore
At His table
Come all you weary
Come and find

⁶ Greg Levoy, "The Lesson of the Dining Room Table," *Christian Science Monitor Weekly*, August 4 2014, 45.

⁷ Elizabeth Hoffman Reed, *Gathering at the Table* (Chicago, IL: Liturgy Training Publications, 1999), 15.

⁸ McComb Freedom School, "I'm Gonna Sit at the Welcome Table," <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xryl42Lzxcg>. (Accessed February 15, 2018)

⁹ Ibid.

His yoke is easy
 His burden light
 He is able, He will restore
 At the table of the Lord
 There is peace at the table of the Lord
 There is peace at the table of the Lord
 And I won't worry anymore
 At His table¹⁰ Chris Tomlin, Ed Cash, Wayne Jolley

COME TO THE TABLE – a traveling exhibit curated by Sandra Bowden and Cameron Anderson, CIVA's Executive Director.

Description: Holy Trinity Square Come to the Table, features thirty-four selected works from historical pieces by Albrecht Durer, to modernist work by Jasper Johns and Sadao Watanabe, to fresh contemporary pieces created by CIVA artists. This work, executed in a variety of media, celebrates both the rich community gathered at the Table of Fellowship and the privilege of meeting with God at his Table of Communion. The table is a rich biblical metaphor seen in passages such as Abraham entertaining angels, the Christ's Last Supper with his disciples, the great Marriage Feast of the Lamb at the end of time. Indeed, the promise of Revelation 19 is that human history will culminate around a table where the people of God are all present. God's Table is a place of welcome, justice, abundance, and worship.¹¹

What is crucial is that leaders find ways to broaden the language, images, and portrayals of communion. When the Lord's Supper is shrunk to pictures, sermons, and language that build solely on an imagined portrait of the upper room on Maundy Thursday, then it is little wonder that our celebrations of communion are often tepid. Only by recovering the richness of biblical allusions, early Christian imagery, and the diversity of Christian practice will we be able to reclaim the table's central role in our worship and the close connection with other tables around which we gather to eat and drink."¹²

The altar, the holy table, should be the most noble, the most beautifully designed and constructed table the community can provide.¹³ Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy

¹⁰ Chris Tomlin, "The Table," in *Love Ran Red* (Atlanta, GA: sixstepsrecords, 2014).

¹¹ Sandra Bowden and Cameron Anderson, "Come to the Table," *Christians in Visual Arts*, <http://civa.org/exhibits/traveling-exhibits/come-to-the-table/>. (Accessed February 15, 2018)

¹² Paul Galbreath, *Leading from the Table*, (Herndon, VA: Alban Institute, 2008), 114.

¹³ Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy, *Environment and Art in Catholic Worship* (National Conference of Bishops, 1978), 37.

Looking for Connections

“The Table is a rich biblical metaphor,”¹⁴ and gathering these quotes and lyrics left me excited. I wanted to pull things off the shelf and mix them up.

- The duties of the priests mixed up with “it takes work to make the table a place of grace.”¹⁵
- Was the “blue cloth” in Numbers 4:7 the reason why the altar guild at Church of the King used a blue cloth to cover the vessels on the credence table?
- The “blood and the fat” (Ezekiel 44:15, 16) were the worthless parts. Why do these belong to God? Do they make the best smoke?
- Leviticus 4 describes the sacrifice to the Lord: “the priest shall turn it into smoke on the altar” (Leviticus 4: 10, 19, 24, 31, 35). Pair with Psalm 141:2?
- Why translate ἀνάκειμαι as “sit” rather than “recline?”
- Greg Levoy’s mother’s dining room table, and Chris Tomlin’s table, stirred with the Bishop’s holy table. The images are compelling.
- “The Welcome Table” has to be heard to be appreciated.
- Thinking about Ezekiel 44:17, 18, perhaps I should have a word with the ushers about the thermostat?

Locus: Food

Old Testament

Then the priest shall turn these into smoke on the altar as a food-offering by fire to the LORD. If your offering is a goat, you shall bring it before the LORD and

¹⁴ Bowden and Anderson.

¹⁵ Reed, 15.

lay your hand on its head; it shall be slaughtered before the tent of meeting; and the sons of Aaron shall dash its blood against all sides of the altar. You shall present as your offering from it, as an offering by fire to the LORD, the fat that covers the entrails, and all the fat that is around the entrails; the two kidneys with the fat that is on them at the loins, and the appendage of the liver, which you shall remove with the kidneys. Then the priest shall turn these into smoke on the altar as a food-offering by fire for a pleasing odor (Leviticus 4: 10, 19, 24, 31, 35)

All fat is the LORD's (Leviticus 3:11–16).

And when ye shall come into the land, and shall have planted all manner of trees for food, then ye shall count the fruit thereof as **uncircumcised**: three years shall it be as **uncircumcised** unto you: it shall not be eaten of (Leviticus 19:23). KJV
When you come into the land and plant all kinds of trees for food, then you shall regard their fruit as **forbidden**; for three years it shall be **forbidden** to you; it must not be eaten (Leviticus 19:23). NRSV

Who provides for the raven its prey,
when its young ones cry to God,
and wander about for lack of food (Job 38:41)?

Who executes justice for the oppressed;
who gives food to the hungry (Psalms 146:7).

He gives to the animals their food,
and to the young ravens when they cry (Psalms 147:9).

The field of the poor may yield much food,
but it is swept away through injustice (Proverbs 13:23).

A poor man that oppresseth the poor is like a sweeping rain which leaveth no food (Proverbs 28:3). KJV

A ruler who oppresses the poor is a beating rain that leaves no food (Proverbs 28:3). NRSV

Remove far from me falsehood and lying;
give me neither poverty nor riches;
feed me with the food that I need (Proverbs 30:8).

She is like the ships of the merchant,
she brings her food from far away (Proverbs 31:14).

The remainder of the length alongside the holy portion shall be ten thousand cubits to the east, and ten thousand to the west, and it shall be alongside the holy portion. Its produce shall be food for the workers of the city (Ezekiel 48:18).

New Testament

There are several words in Greek for food. One is βρῶμα (*bróma*). Another is τροφή (*trofî*).

He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness (2 Corinthians 9:10).

What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but do not have works? Can faith save you? If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, and one of you says to them, ‘Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill’, and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that? So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead (James 2:14–17).

Non-scriptural Sources

My earliest culinary exposure was to simple, largely processed foods. A child of the ‘50s and ‘60s, I was raised on Minute Rice, Campbell’s soups, Velveeta cheese, and frozen vegetables—the miracle convenience foods of the era. We ate red meat about five nights a week; on the other two we ate chicken or fish. “Salad” meant iceberg lettuce, hothouse tomatoes, and mayonnaise. Cucumbers were sometimes included, but that was already edging toward the exotic.¹⁶ Molly Katzen

“You’ve never told me how you started to cook,” Susan said. “You have never said why you like it.”

“I like to make things,” I said, “I’ve spent a lot of time alone, and I have learned to treat myself as if I were a family. I give myself dinner at night. I give myself breakfast in the morning. I like the process of deciding what to eat and putting it together and seeing how it works, and I like to experiment, and I like to eat. There’s nothing lonelier than some guy alone in the kitchen eating Chinese food out of a carton.”¹⁷ Robert Parker

Eucharistic Bread

1 cup warm water
1 package (tbsp.) yeast
dash salt

¹⁶ Mollie Katzen and Moosewood Restaurant, *The Moosewood Cookbook* (Berkeley, CA: Ten Speed Press, 1992), vi.

¹⁷ Robert B. Parker, *Pastime* (New York, NY: Putnam, 1991), 218.

2 cups unbleached white flour

Beat with a fork: 1 cup warm water, 1 package (tbsp) yeast and a dash of salt. When yeast is dissolved, add 2 cups flour. Knead on a flour-covered board about 5 minutes. Let rise until doubled in a covered, greased bowl (about 30 minutes). Punch down and knead once more. Shape into 7 or 8 balls; flatten each with rolling pin. If desired, imprint a large cross with the back of a knife. Let rise 30 minutes.

Bake 25–30 minutes in an oven preheated to 400 degrees.

To keep crust soft, cover with a cloth after bringing loaves from the oven. May be frozen for future use.¹⁸ Jay Rochelle

It was with his death and his presence among them at table they came to believe this word: ‘I am among you as one who serves’¹⁹ (Luke 22:27b). Gordon Lathrop

O Lord, refresh our sensibilities. Give us this day our daily taste. Restore to us soups that spoons will not sink in, and sauces which are never the same twice. Raise up among us stews with more gravy than we have bread to blot it with, and casseroles that put starch and substance in our limp modernity. Take away our fear of fat and make us glad of the oil which ran upon Aaron's beard. Give us pasta with a hundred fillings, and rice in a thousand variations. Above all, give us grace to live as true men—to fast till we come to a refreshed sense of what we have and then to dine gratefully on all that comes to hand. Drive far from us, O Most Bountiful, all creatures of air and darkness; cast out the demons that possess us; deliver us from the fear of calories and the bondage of nutrition; and set us free once more in our own land, where we shall serve Thee as Thou hast blessed us – with the dew of heaven, the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine. Amen.²⁰ Father Robert Capon

Looking for Connections

Some of the pleasures of keeping commonplaces are the accompanying associations. My wife, Tracy, and I enjoyed meeting Mollie Katzen who signed my copy of *The Moosewood Cookbook*. Robert Parker's fictional detective, Spenser, likes to cook and Parker's novels are my go-to mindless reading. Jay Rochelle and I (he will have

¹⁸ Personal correspondence

¹⁹ Lathrop, 80.

²⁰ Capon, 27.

forgotten me long ago) met at a conference where he passed on his recipe for Eucharistic bread.

- Consider the translation “as uncircumcised” versus “forbidden” (Leviticus 19:23).
- Who feeds the young ravens (Job 38:4)? The Lord provides (Psalm 147:19).
- The difference in the translations of Proverbs 28:3 between the KJV the NRSV caught my eye. How does one move from “poor man” to “ruler?”
- What about the wife who “brings her food from far away.” (Proverbs 31:14) How would that preach to locavores?
- Proverbs 30:8 would be a good addition to a Lenten message. “The field of the poor may yield much food, but it is swept away through injustice.”
- Proverbs 13:23 for a sermon on colonization and corporate practices. Also Ezekiel 48:18, Psalm 146:7 and James 2:14–17.
- Father Capon’s prayer for the next potluck.

Locus: Waiter (Servant)

Old Testament

In the Old Testament, the Hebrew word for servant is עֶבֶד (*ebed*).

Abraham: And that very night the LORD appeared to him and said, ‘I am the God of your father Abraham; do not be afraid, for I am with you and will bless you and make your offspring numerous for my servant Abraham’s sake’ (Genesis 26:24).

Joshua: After these things Joshua son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died, being one hundred and ten years old (Genesis 32:4).

Ruth: He said, ‘Who are you?’ And she answered, ‘I am Ruth, your servant; spread your cloak over your servant, for you are next-of-kin’ (Ruth 3:9).

Hannah: She made this vow: ‘O LORD of hosts, if only you will look on the misery of your servant, and remember me, and not forget your servant, but will

give to your servant a male child, then I will set him before you as a nazirite until the day of his death. He shall drink neither wine nor intoxicants, and no razor shall touch his head' (1 Samuel 1:11).

Samuel: Therefore Eli said to Samuel, 'Go, lie down; and if he calls you, you shall say, "Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening." ' So Samuel went and lay down in his place. (1 Samuel 3:9).

Jesse: Saul said to him, 'Whose son are you, young man?' And David answered, 'I am the son of your servant Jesse the Bethlehemite' (1 Samuel 17:58).

Uriah the Hittite: Who killed Abimelech son of Jerubbaal? Did not a woman throw an upper millstone on him from the wall, so that he died at Thebez? Why did you go so near the wall?" then you shall say, "Your servant Uriah the Hittite is dead too" (2 Samuel 11:21).

Isaiah: Then the LORD said, 'Just as my servant Isaiah has walked naked and barefoot for three years as a sign and a portent against Egypt and Ethiopia" (Isaiah 20:3).

Daniel: Now therefore, O our God, listen to the prayer of your servant and to his supplication, and for your own sake, LORD, let your face shine upon your desolated sanctuary (Daniel 9:17).

Ben-Hadad of Aram: So they tied sackcloth around their waists, put ropes on their heads, went to the king of Israel, and said, 'Your servant Ben-hadad says, "Please let me live." ' And he said, 'Is he still alive? He is my brother.' (1 Kings 20:32).

Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon: I am going to send for all the tribes of the north, says the LORD, even for King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, my servant, and I will bring them against this land and its inhabitants, and against all these nations around; I will utterly destroy them, and make them an object of horror and of hissing, and an everlasting disgrace (Jeremiah 25:9).

Moses is designated as a servant about forty times and David is designated as a servant more than fifty times.²¹

²¹ Walter A. Elwell, "Servant, Service," Baker Books,
<https://www.biblestudytools.com/dictionaries/bakers-evangelical-dictionary/servant-service.html>.
 (Accessed February 1, 2018)

New Testament

In the New Testament, the Greek word translated as servant or slave is either διάκονος (*diakonos*) or δοῦλος (*doulos*).

Moses: the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb:
 ‘Great and amazing are your deeds,
 LORD God the Almighty!
 Just and true are your ways,
 King of the nations’ (Revelation 15:3)!

Prophets: but in the days when the seventh angel is to blow his trumpet, the mystery of God will be fulfilled, as he announced to his servants the prophets (Revelation 10:7).

Christ: ‘For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many’ (Mark 10:45). And ‘I am among you as one who serves’ (Luke 22:27b).

Paul: Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the sake of the faith of God’s elect and the knowledge of the truth that is in accordance with godliness (Titus 1:1). And Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God (Romans 1:1). And Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the bishops and deacons (Philippians 1:1).

James: James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes in the Dispersion: Greetings (James 1:1).

When Jesus entered Peter’s house, he saw his mother-in-law lying in bed with a fever; he touched her hand, and the fever left her, and she got up and began to serve him (Matthew 8:15).

There they gave a dinner for him. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those at the table with him (John 12:2).

I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father (John 15:15).

Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received. Whoever speaks must do so as one speaking the very words of God; whoever serves must do so with the strength that God supplies, so that God may be glorified in all things through Jesus Christ. To him belong the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen (1 Peter 4:10–11).

Non-scriptural Sources

We are the Corinthians, guilty of failing to discern the body of Christ when we eat and drink, neither perceiving the hunger of those around us nor sharing our provisions. Our culpability is especially scandalous when the hungry include so many baptized brothers and sisters in Christ. To eat the Lord's Supper without commitment to feed the hungry is to eat and drink judgment upon ourselves.²²

Craig Nesson

In our society, it's acceptable to cut food at the table for small children. If you or your meal partner still requires the food to be cut up but would be embarrassed by this assistance, why not do the cutting in the kitchen before presenting it at the table? If you're dining out, make the request of the server when you order. An adult with dignity can manage a sliced chicken breast or a deboned and sliced pork chop.²³ Karin Melberg Schwier and Erin Schwier Stewart

You are aware by now, if I have written clearly, that I use the term "spreading the welcome table" to mean extending God's love and justice, reflected in the Eucharist, into the world, with special concern for particular histories and groups of people. Another way to explain the term is through a question: What does it mean for Christians to live eucharistically in the world in a way that reflects the mind of Christ?²⁴ William K. McElvaney

Looking for Connections

A preacher could pair any two or more servants of the Old and New Testaments and serve them up as friends of Jesus (John 15:15).

- Elizabeth Hoffman Reed, "Who plans the meals, shops, tend to the garden? Who cooks, with all that implies of preparation? Who sets and clears the table? Who scrubs the pots and sweeps the floor?" blended with Matthew 8:15 and John 12:2

²² Craig L. Nesson, *Give Us This Day: A Lutheran Proposal for Ending World Hunger*, Lutheran Voices (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 2003), 61.

²³ Karin Melberg Schwier and Erin Schwier Stewart, *Breaking Bread, Nourishing Connections: People with and without Disabilities Together at Mealtimes* (Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes, 2005), 25.

²⁴ William K. McElvaney, *Eating and Drinking at the Welcome Table: The Holy Supper for All People* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 1998), 80.

- Karin Melberg Schwier and Erin Schwier Stewart write about people with and without disabilities together at mealtime. How would that pair with Mark 10:45?
- Obviously, Craig Nesson's comment with I Corinthians.
- McElvaney's question, "What does it mean for Christians to live eucharistically in the world in a way that reflects the mind of Christ?" combined with "whoever serves must do so with the strength that God supplies, so that God may be glorified in all things through Jesus Christ." (1 Peter 4:11a).

Making the Connections

Using a mind pantry is like opening the door(s) of a cabinet or the refrigerator in your kitchen. If you have a recipe (a sermon outline you have started) you can find something to butter it up²⁵ (there is no substitute for butter in French cooking) or spice it up. If you're adventurous, or you don't know what to have for dinner (no idea what you're going to say on World Hunger Sunday) you can rummage around and discover something to put together. The mind pantry is where you keep that illustration you just read, but can't force into the sermon you are writing today with any integrity. There also may be a few stories about your kids (like habanero peppers, use sparingly) or a few about your spouse (like ghost peppers, use only with a signed release).

Summary

For the preacher who wants a congregation to recognize the rich network of connections between the Eucharist and our life in the world, identifying commonplaces begins in the meals of the Old and New Testaments, festive and ordinary. Then the

²⁵ A sign by the entrance to my kitchen reads "If you're afraid of butter, use cream. Julia Child"

preacher collects from non-scriptural sources, both worldly and Eucharistic. These quotations, sayings, even recipes as we will discover, can be organized around three loci, Table, Food, and Waiter. Once they are organized they are available as stock, entrée, or garnish for the preaching task.

CHAPTER 5

COMMONPLACES FOR EUCHARIST II

To preach the Eucharist to today's food culture it is necessary that the preacher be

- fluent and imaginative in both the biblical stories and the role that eating and food play in people's lives in the early 21st century.
- aware of the empty tables at which so many people sit.
- aware of the real mistrust that has grown between eaters and what we eat.
- ready to reveal the connections and obligations we have.

This work has begun by gathering a few Scripture and non-scriptural sources into a mind pantry from which the preacher is able to gather the ingredients either to prepare a sermon or flavor one. This work is ongoing. There are ingredients still to be added and others to be replaced when they become outdated.

The pantry, however, is not filled with sourced ingredients. There are two other important aliments that need to be laid in: the preacher and the congregation.

The Preacher

When I began teaching first communion classes I used to ask the students to draw a seating chart of their family dinner table. In the chart I drew, my family gathered in the dining room. I sat at the end of the table, my wife to my right, my eldest child to my left, and on around the table clockwise in order of birth. (My childhood table was arranged in a similar fashion, but the table was in the kitchen and there was only one parent.) In the

beginning, my students' charts were similar to mine, more often with one parent as the years passed. But there came a day when most of my students couldn't complete a chart. Most of them didn't sit with their families. Two or three didn't have a table where they ate any meals. My experience clearly was not their experience.

The preacher needs to place her or his relationship with eating and food into the mind pantry. These are the ingredients that personalize the *loci* and for that matter the preacher. The *loci* are no longer the books that have been read, the sermons that have been heard, or the movies that have been seen. They are the tables that have been sat around, the foods that have been eaten (or not eaten), and the people who have served or been served. These are the ingredients that let the preacher share a meal with her or his congregation, rather than be the celebrity chef. It makes the sermon a *convivium*, a "living together." This does not deny that the preacher has some gift and skill to bring to the table. Rather, it acknowledges that the preacher is an equal member of the community whose members all bring different gifts and skills and whose experiences or stories are of equal value to the community.

An example would be the most recent first communion class I led. While I did not call it such at the time, I took my seating chart from my Table *loci* as a conversation starter with the class. The I asked them what dinner was like at their house. The result was much different than had I just assumed that everyone sat together with their families around the dinner table as I did. Listening to the students share their stories that night led us to a better experience for their first communion at the Lord's Table.

Filling a mind pantry is not something that can be done on Saturday night while we are looking at the text we are preaching on the next morning. Rather it needs to be a

part of a disciplined practice over a period of time. After all, we have a lot of meals we need to digest.

The Ignatian Examen

One way to review our relationship with eating and food is to use a form of the Ignatian examen. This is a gentle, yet powerful, reflective technique that was practiced daily by St. Ignatius. I have adapted it as follows

- 1) Begin by acknowledging the presence of God.
- 2) Recall a food or a meal with gratitude.
- 3) Recognize a “consolation” and a “desolation” from that food or meal.
- 4) Choose a “desolation” to pray into.
- 5) Conclude by looking with hope for a new tomorrow.

Chris Heuertz, author, and contemplative activist, explains “consolation” and “desolation”

A consolation is an experience that causes you to feel fully alive, at peace, joyful, happy, comforted, whole, connected, your best self, etc. and could be understood as an experience in which you feel close to God.

A desolation is an experience that causes you to feel drained of energy, frustrated, irritated, angry, sad, sorrowful, alone, isolated, unaccepted, fragmented, less than your best self, etc. and could be understood as an experience in which you feel far away from God.

The tricky thing about desolation is that even though it is an uncomfortable and sometimes distressing experience and we may feel as if God is far away, God is still very near. So the gift is praying with the desolation, telling God about your experience and asking for God’s grace in the experience. (It is also good to give God thanks for the consolation experiences.) God shows up in desolations AND consolations. It’s just that it’s easier to “experience” God in consolations and we often move away from God in desolations.¹

As an example of practicing this discipline, I might

¹ Chris Heuertz, "Examen," Gravity, a Center for Contemplative Activism, <https://gravitycenter.com/practice/examen/>. (Accessed February 8, 2018)

- 1) Thank God for being with me as I begin this reflection.
- 2) Recall the reception at Tracy and my wedding 15 years ago. Since it was a second marriage for both of us we didn't need any material items, but wanting as many people as possible to attend, we had a potluck reception. It was incredible; people brought everything from peanut butter and jelly sandwiches to octopus in coconut milk, *injera* (an Ethiopian flatbread made with *tef*, an Ethiopian grain) and *wat* (spicy, Ethiopian stew) to the coffee donated by the local Starbucks we patronized. It was a foretaste of the feast which is to come.
- 3) One consolation, and there were many, was the generosity of our friends. Many of the dishes were family recipes, extending our celebration in time and space. A desolation was that I was "too busy" to write everyone thank you notes and so failed to express to all the gratitude I felt. I am embarrassed when I think about it even 15 years later. Continuing in this reflection, I would ask myself, 'what other times have I been unmindful of other's generosity?'
- 4) Ask God to forgive my neglect and help me to express my appreciation more concretely in the future. Also, look for ways to recall that day with people who were there, expressing my appreciation for their contribution to the celebration. And thank God again for family and good friends and the many times we gather around a table.
- 5) Conclude by thinking about the chance I have today to thank the Hailus for the dinner party they hosted last Friday.

I have other reflections to write into my commonplace book. Some are joyful—Tracy and I making chili and cornbread for our eldest son's wedding rehearsal dinner; some painful—my uncontrolled Type-2 diabetes; some just quotidian—throwing together dinner from the "left hand side of the refrigerator" on a weeknight. Each reflection is an ingredient to my story, and only when I know my story can I make my confession of faith.

The preacher also needs to confront any unhealthy relationship with eating and food. In my summer of Clinical Pastoral Education, my cohort and I learned that a chaplain could not confront or console a person about an illness or an issue that they themselves had not dealt with. For example, if the chaplain had an unacknowledged fear of surgery, that chaplain would be of little use to a patient going into surgery. So, if the

preacher has alcohol intolerance, celiac disease, or an eating disorder, this needs to be addressed by the preacher.

Also, the preacher needs to be honest about lifestyle choices made for ethical or health reasons. How does the preacher's decision to be a vegetarian or a vegan or eat kosher flavor the sermon, and does the preacher have a bias or hidden agenda that might taint the sermon.

The hope is that the preacher will be welcomed into the community as an equal member with her or his particular gifts. And, while the preacher is understood as an equal member of the community, it does not deny the particular task of the preacher which in some way separates her or him from the congregation as other spiritual gifts or vocations set others apart. Lucy Rose Atkinson, Associate Professor of Preaching and Worship at Columbia Theological Seminary is concerned about that separation between the preacher and the congregation. She writes

Even those scholars who image the preacher and congregation as standing together continue to describe preaching as though the preacher had an idea, gospel message, or experience to communicate or transfer to the congregation. If the preacher's task is to teach, persuade, or change the congregation, the preacher and the congregation stand apart from each other. Thus the preacher and the congregation remain separate, even while community and shared life are affirmed.²

David Lose in his book, *Confessing Jesus Christ*, disagrees

Rose truncates confession by emphasizing only its role to articulate the faith here and now, missing or denying its sibling role to summarize the "essentials" of the Christian tradition. Such a view of preaching takes the hearer seriously only at the cost of the tradition in which the hearer stands and ends up privileging a noncoercive sermonic form over a recognizably Christian content; thereby sacrificing preaching's function to proclaim a living word that may address them

² Lucy Atkinson Rose, *Sharing the Word: Preaching in the Roundtable Church* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997), 90.

directly... Rather than *do* things confession [of the faith] in Rose's hands merely describes the preacher's own experience, tentatively proposing – rather than asserting or declaring – possibilities for the hearers to consider. This not only runs contrary to the text itself, which is constantly making assertions, but it substitutes secondary theological reflection for primary proclamation.³

I have long held that a Pauline understanding of gifts means that each person and their vocation are equal and unique. The pastor, physician, and plumber each have their vocation. And the preacher's unique vocation is to preach.

The Congregation

Once the preacher has a grasp of her or his relationship with eating and food, there is the matter of knowing how the congregation relates to eating and food. While we may have been encouraged by the statistically enlightened to consult census information and demographic studies to know who's in the pew, the truth is that even if they were home when the data gatherers knocked at their doors, many of the important questions about birthday cake, do they use beans in their chili, and who's coming to Thanksgiving this year are never asked.

Our congregations have as many stories as members, and as many foodways as households. All the problems of today's food culture that create distance from the Eucharist are the problems of the people who sit in the chairs or pews in front of us when we stand up to speak. We need to ask and listen.

It doesn't need to start with hard questions. Instead of asking, "Where do you work?" Bishop Craig Satterlee routinely asks the people he meets, "What's your favorite

³ David J. Lose, *Confessing Jesus Christ: Preaching in a Postmodern World* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2003), 133.

place to go for breakfast?”⁴ I have asked the youth group, “What’s the strangest food you have ever eaten?” Or to the folks sitting around drinking coffee after service, “How did your family celebrate Christmas (Easter, Thanksgiving...)?” Asking and listening to our hearers’ stories demonstrates an empathy that is as important as our exegetical skills in the hearts of many of our hearers. Fred Craddock, preacher and professor of blessed memory, writes

... it should be evident how indispensable to preaching . . . is the pastoral involvement in the life of the congregation. When the pastor writes a sermon, an empathetic imagination sees again those concrete experiences with his people which called upon all his resources, drove him to the Bible and back again, and even now hang as vivid pictures in his mind. When a pastor preaches, he doesn’t sell patent medicine; he writes prescriptions. Others may hurl epithets at the “wealthy” but the pastor knows a lonely and guilt-ridden man confused by the Bible’s debate with itself over prosperity: Is prosperity a sign of God’s favor or disfavor? Others may display knowledge of “poverty programs” but the pastor knows what a bitter thing it is to be somebody’s Christmas project. He sees a boy resisting his mother’s insistence that he wear the nice sweater that came in the charity basket. He can see the boy wear it until out of Mother’s sight, but not at school out of fear that he may meet the original owner on the playground. There are conditions worse than being cold. Others may discuss “the problem of geriatrics” but the pastor has just come from the local rest home and he still sees worn checkerboards, faded bouquets, large print King James Bibles, stainless steel trays, and dim eyes staring at an empty parking lot reserved for visitors. Others may analyze “the trouble with the youth today” but the pastor sees a fuzzy-lipped boy, awkward, noisy, wishing he were absent, not a man, not a child, pre-occupied with ideas that contradict his fourteen years’ severe judgment against girls.⁵

Clint Schneklath posits that “Most Christians or churches do have a latent or unspoken theology of food. Witness the potluck, or the traditions maintained in churches across the country of bake sales, food pantries, *lefse* (Norwegian flatbread) fests, *lutefisk*

⁴ Craig Satterlee, notes by author, Preaching and Stewardship: Proclaiming God’s Invitation to Grow elective in Biblical Preaching course, Luther Seminary, St. Paul, MN, June 2013.

⁵ Fred B. Craddock, *As One without Authority*, Rev. and with new sermons. ed. (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2001), 67.

(Scandinavian fish that has been stored in lye) dinners, barbecues, pancake breakfasts, world hunger appeal Sundays.”⁶ Chili cook-offs, pastoral conversations, and potluck suppers are all opportunities to connect with our hearers. Their experiences and unspoken theologies of food as individuals and as a congregation, prepared with scripture, and seasoned from our pantry are the makings of a fine sermonic meal.

Summary

In order for a congregation to recognize the rich network of connections between the Eucharist and our life in the world, it is essential that the preacher understands her or his relationship with eating and food. Listening to the stories of the congregation about their eating and food history is equally important. Then the Eucharist can be worldly and our lives Eucharistic.

⁶ Clint Schnekloth, "Eating Theology," *Journal of Lutheran Ethics* 6, no. 4 (2006): 3.

CHAPTER 6

COMMONPLACE BOOK TO PREACHING

Commonplace Books

Once the preacher has gathered resources, explored her or his personal relationship with eating and food, and heard the congregation's stories, what is to be done with all this information? How can the preacher organize it in such a way that is ready to be *mise en place* (French for everything in place) for the sermon? There is the commonplace book.

Melanchthon was not the only theologian to write a commonplace book. Martin Chemnitz and Johann Gerhard, recognized by some as the two greatest theologians of the Lutheran Church after Luther, both wrote books titled *Loci Theologici*. Others have used commonplace books to collect their thoughts with great success. Author and entrepreneur Ryan Holiday lists several

Marcus Aurelius kept one—which more or less became the *Meditations*. Petrarch kept one. Montaigne, who invented the essay, kept a handwritten compilation of sayings, maxims and quotations from literature and history that he felt were important. His earliest essays were little more than compilations of these thoughts. Thomas Jefferson kept one. Napoleon kept one. H.L. Mencken, who did so much for the English language, as his biographer put it, “methodically filled notebooks with incidents, recording scraps of dialog and slang” and favorite bits from newspaper columns he liked. Bill Gates keeps one.¹

¹ Ryan Holiday, "How and Why to Keep a “Commonplace Book”, " Thought Catalog.com, <https://thoughtcatalog.com/ryan-holiday/2013/08/how-and-why-to-keep-a-commonplace-book/>. (Accessed February 15, 2018)

So what is a commonplace book? If we had eidetic memories, then we could keep all this information about eating and food and world hunger in our heads using the *loci* method like world memory champion, Boris Nikoli Konrad. However, for those of us who have trouble remembering a shopping list (and even if we have one, still have to call our spouses at least once), a physical way of collecting and organizing information is a great help. Ryan Holiday, who is probably responsible for the renaissance of the commonplace book in the last 5 years, defines a commonplace book as the place “where you store all the most important information and ideas that you come across every day, particularly when you are reading.”² I remember pastors years ago talking about their file cabinets that were filled with ideas for future sermons. Truth is, far more pastors pointed to stacks of books, magazines, and papers filled with ideas to be filed. I found my commonplace books easier to manage because I had to be more selective. (I can only write so long.)

Holiday sees these benefits of keeping a commonplace book

- It is a great tool for becoming more motivated to learn things. It keeps you on the lookout for interesting things.
- It helps you to assimilate information more easily by keeping things in order through categorization. This saves you a ton of time in the long-term.
- It helps you synthesize the information you have assimilated on a variety of topics. This brings about new, creative, ideas through the unique combination of mixing the information from different areas of knowledge.
- It improves your creativity and works as a powerful exercise for giving clarity to your thought process.

Holiday goes on to offer suggestions which I have condensed

- Read widely. Read about anything and everything and be open to seeing what you didn’t expect to be there—that’s how you find the best stuff.

² Ibid.

- Mark down what sticks out at you as you read—passages, words, anecdotes, stories, info.
- It doesn't have to just be material from books. Movies, speeches, videos, conversations work too. Whatever. Anything good.
- Don't worry about organization . . . at least at first.
- Don't let it pile up. You have to stay on top of it.
- It doesn't have to be just other people's writing. It's your book. Use it how you want.
- Look at other people's commonplace books. It's like someone is separating the wheat from the chaff for you. Try a Google Books search for "Commonplace Book"—there is great stuff there.
- Use them! Look, my commonplace book is easily justified. I write and speak about things for a living. I need this resource. But so do you.³

Holiday is right; there are dozens of commonplace books written by notables and not so notables for neophytes to look at, many written for amused writers. However, when I looked for books on how to keep a commonplace book, I found only one: *A New Method of Making Common-Place-Books*⁴ by John Locke published in 1706 and unavailable for purchase. That said, the business community has many apps and websites to help the new commonplace book keeper at the touch of a screen.⁵

Using the Commonplace Book

Commonplace books engage preaching in three ways. The first instance is when the preaching text mentions food or a meal. For example, Isaiah 5:1–7; 11:1–5, “The Song of the Unfruitful Vineyard” mentions grapes or in Mark 2:13–17, Jesus calls Levi and later eats at his house. The second instance is when the preaching text uses a food as

³ Ibid.

⁴ There is a facsimile available on https://archive.org/details/gu_newmethodmaki00lock.

⁵ See <https://www.startgainingmomentum.com/how-to-keep-a-commonplace/>; <https://medium.dianakimball.com/a-decent-digital-commonplace-book-system-1894e8328298>; <https://blog.evernote.com/blog/2016/03/04/taking-note-how-to-create-commonplace-with-evernote/>.

the main illustration, such as the mustard seed and the yeast in Luke 13:18-21, or when a meal is the text as it is with “The First Passover” in Exodus 12 and or “Feeding of the 5000” in John 6. Finally, there are occasions in the liturgical year, such as Maundy Thursday or Corpus Christi when no matter what the preaching text is, the Eucharist is a part or in the center of the celebration. Examples of how commonplace books are used follow.

A Sermon with a Mention

Isaiah 5:1–7, “The Song of the Unfruitful Vineyard,” is the preaching text from the Revised Common Lectionary for the 10th Sunday after Pentecost in Year C. It is also included in the Narrative Lectionary for the 11th Sunday in Year 2—Mark, adding 11:1–5. It begins

Let me sing for my beloved
 my love—song concerning his vineyard:
 My beloved had a vineyard
 on a very fertile hill.
 He dug it and cleared it of stones,
 and planted it with choice vines;
 he built a watch-tower in the midst of it,
 and hewed out a wine vat in it;
 he expected it to yield grapes,
 but it yielded wild grapes (Isaiah 5:1,2).

It is unlikely that this text will yield a sermon on the Eucharist. However, there is a food, grapes, mentioned. While focusing on grapes may seem a digression, anything the preacher says about grapes serves the larger purpose of generating contemporary connections to food culture that make the food in Scripture more accessible and real to the congregation. (I will add Isaiah 5:1, 2 as an entry my Food commonplace book

because there may be an interesting connection to wine, and thereby the Eucharist, in the future.

Opening my Food commonplace book, I find an anecdote from my childhood, about a wild grape vine in my maternal grandmother's backyard. It produced pathetic small fruit, mostly seed. My grandmother called them, "slipguts," because that's about all they were good for, to slip down your gut. Because I have a native (wild) grape vine in my backyard (and I am a biologist by education and training), I added a little more information such as the scientific name, *Vitis californica*, and the fact that some wild grapes are poisonous. (Note: In another part of the country, this anecdote might not work. Minnesota wild grapes, *Vitis riparia* or River Grape, are prized by foragers and used in making jelly, juice, syrup, and wine.)⁶

The text begins with the Lord's palpable disappointment with the grapes that have grown wild despite the Lord's hard work. So I might begin this way

Grace to you and peace.

=> Among the things that my maternal grandmother and I shared in our lives were the grapevines grown outside our back doors. To be honest, other than placing them in the ground and occasionally watering them, neither one of us did much more than keep them pruned off our respective porches and complain about the quality of the grapes. My grandmother called the grapes, "slipguts," because that's about all they were good for with their large seeds and skinny fruit. You put one in your mouth and they slipped down your gut. But what did we expect for our poor planning and lack of care?

In contrast, the Lord planted a vineyard on a very fertile hill. The soil was turned over and cleared of stones. Choice vines planted, no doubt in long straight rows. And expecting a good harvest, a watchtower was built to protect the vineyard and a wine vat prepared for the harvest. And what did the Lord get for all his hard work? Slipguts. Possibly poisonous. And completely unfit for consumption. It is no wonder that the Lord took the vineyard to court.

I. THE LORD PUT HIS CASE BEFORE THE INHABITANTS OF JERUSALEM AND THE PEOPLE OF JUDAH

- And so on. . .

For this sermon the anecdote about my and my grandmother's "vineyards" are an appetizer, a taste that complements, but does not overwhelm, the preaching text.

A Sermon on a Text

In the Revised Common Lectionary, John 6:1-21 is the appointed Gospel for the Tenth Sunday after Pentecost in Year B. It does not appear in the Narrative Lectionary. It includes both "Feeding the Five Thousand" (John 6:1-14) and "Jesus Walks on the Water" (John 6:16-21) with verse 15 serving to transition between the two sections.

After this Jesus went to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, also called the Sea of Tiberias. A large crowd kept following him, because they saw the signs that he was doing for the sick. Jesus went up the mountain and sat down there with his disciples. Now the Passover, the festival of the Jews, was near. When he looked up and saw a large crowd coming towards him, Jesus said to Philip, 'Where are we to buy bread for these people to eat?' He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he was going to do. Philip answered him, 'Six months' wages would not buy enough bread for each of them to get a little.' One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to him, 'There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish. But what are they among so many people?' Jesus said, 'Make the people sit down.' Now there was a great deal of grass in the place; so they sat down, about five thousand in all. Then Jesus took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated; so also the fish, as much as they wanted. When they were satisfied, he told his disciples, 'Gather up the fragments left over, so that nothing may be lost.' So they gathered them up, and from the fragments of the five barley loaves, left by those who had eaten, they filled twelve baskets. When the people saw the sign that he had done, they began to say, 'This is indeed the prophet who is to come into the world' (John 6:1-14).

The remainder of Chapter 6 is read over the following four Sundays and the whole is known as the Bread of Life Discourse.

Preaching this text as a standalone reading and not as the introduction to the Bread of Life Discourse, I find among the items in my Food commonplace book an

interesting and less traditional approach which I would be willing to try on a summer Sunday morning. The following sermon, presented in outline form, is an attempt to use anecdotes and quotations from my Food commonplace books to add depth and spice to the sermon. References are in brackets. Referenced artwork would appear in the bulletin.

Grace to you and peace.

=> In 1983, I visited the Church of the Multiplication of the Loaves and Fish, located at Tabgha, on the Sea of Galilee. There is a 5th century mosaic found on the floor in front of the altar that depicts two fish flanking a basket containing four loaves of bread. The missing fifth loaf is said to be the bread on the altar for the Eucharist representing Jesus, the Bread of Life. [artwork and personal account]

Thirty years later, as I toured the Catacombs of Callixtus outside of Rome, I stood in front of a 3rd century fresco that depicts the loaves and fish with a significant twist: there are five loaves in the basket on top of a single fish. [artwork and personal account] This lends itself to a parallel interpretation to the mosaic at Tabgha, that the missing fish represents Jesus.

Bread and fish. Jesus is bread and fish.

I. THE LARGE CROWD THAT CAME TOWARD JESUS WAS FROM THE TOWNS AND VILLAGES AROUND THE SEA OF GALILEE

- Doubtless many were fishermen or part of the local fishing economy.
- And among the disciples, at least Peter, Andrew, James, and John were fisherman.
- These were people for whom fish and bread were their meat and potatoes.
 - Sardines and Tilapia wrapped in fig or grape leaves and grilled on the coals when fresh, or dried and salted for later consumption.
 [Neel and Pugh, *The Food and Feasts of Jesus*]

II. SEEING THAT THE CROWD APPROACHING HIM WAS HUNGRY, JESUS ASKED HIS DISCIPLES WHERE THEY WOULD GET FOOD TO FEED THEM, AND THE DISCIPLES SAW ONLY THEIR LIMITED RESOURCES

- Philip: Six month's wages (eight month's wages in the NIV) wouldn't buy a taste.
- Andrew: Here's a boy with his lunch, 5 barley loaves and two salted fish.
 - Honest inventory? A joke? "Let's be realistic, Pastor Jesus."
- Did they forget the wedding at Cana? How do you forget 120-180 gallons of wine? (I know.) [modernnotion.com]

- Whatever! Jesus knew what He was going to do. He took the task out of their hands and into His hands.

III. JESUS SAW ABUNDANT RESOURCES IN THE BOY'S OFFERING AND HE GAVE THANKS FOR THEM AND HE DISTRIBUTED THEM TO THE CROWD

- He distributed the bread and fish. To the whole crowd. His hands to their hands.
- “Is that enough for you and your family? Would you like another roll, maybe a fish? I have plenty. And I can always make more.”
- Some in the crowd may have eaten at home. Others left their house too quickly and didn't have time (or a mother) to pack a lunch. Some may have come a distance. (The Sea of Galilee is 33 miles around.) And for others, it may have been a long time since their stomachs were full.
- All were satisfied. And there were 12 baskets of leftover barley rolls. (I guess they ate all the fish.)

IV. DID THE DISCIPLES REMEMBER THIS DAY?

- When Jesus tells them a few days later, “I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly” (John 10:10b).
- Or after the Resurrection, when Peter and the others with him caught (again?) an abundant catch of fish and returning to shore, found Jesus making breakfast, grilled fish and bread, which He gave to them. His hands to their hands.

V. THE EARLY CHURCH REMEMBERED THIS DAY

- Yes. It had great significance for them.
- The catacombs used a fish to symbolize Christ and there are many representations of the miracle of the loaves and fish in frescoes on the walls.
- Particularly, there is a second century fresco, *Fractio Panis* (“Breaking Bread”), in the Santa Priscilla catacombs that is possibly the most ancient representation of the Eucharist. It has bread and fish on the table.
- Of the multiple references to the multiplication of the loaves and fish in the catacombs, Sandra Sweeny Silver writes, “This is a necropolis where your “last words” were really important. Why did they consider the miracle of the loaves and fishes their signature remembrance?”
[earlychurchhistory.org]

VI. AND WILL WE REMEMBER THIS DAY?

- When we are called to an overwhelming task and we see only our limited resources. Will we remember this day?
- When we are presented with an overwhelming burden and we see only our limited resources. Will we remember this day?
- Will we remember that Jesus came so that like the crowd and the disciples and the Church through the centuries, we too might have abundance?

- That with the words, “Body of Christ, given for you,” Jesus says to us, “Here is My hand to your hand.”

=> Karoline Lewis writes, “abundant life can be as simple as the basic necessities to sustain life.” When Jesus fed the large and hungry crowd with bread and fish, He manifested the words He was yet to speak, “I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly” (John 10:10b).

He offers that abundant life to you.

When you come to the table in a few minutes, be prepared to answer a question I will paraphrase from the individual absolution that many of you received on Maundy Thursday or in private confession: “Do you believe that the bread I place in your hand comes from the hand of Jesus? If so, answer, ‘Yes.’” And I will say, “The Body of Christ given for you.” In Jesus’ Name, Amen.

In this text it is critically important that the congregation see the crowd needing and receiving real food from the hand of Jesus. Karoline Lewis, theologian and author, writes

Jesus as the Bread of Life cannot be understood as merely metaphor, but rather as a literal revelation of who Jesus is and what abundant life entails. Bread, an essential component of daily life in the ancient world, is what Jesus is. This promise hinges on John’s central theological claim of the incarnation. If the incarnation is only euphemistic imagination, then it defies its own logic. To stake an entire theology and Christology on God becoming human requires that at every turn the incarnation is completely present. As a result, Jesus as the Bread of Life, first and foremost, before rendering its interpretation through the lens of the Old Testament or eucharistic liturgical practices, must be grounded in bread as a necessity for sustenance as a human being. Anything less could very well undermine what is at stake in the contention that the Word became flesh.⁷

While shying away from referring to Jesus as “Fish of Life” or the “Word made fish” (I cannot believe I even wrote that), I believe that fish in this text deserves and needs to be seen as “a necessity for sustenance as a human being.”⁸ In doing, so we show this meal as being a real meal, apart from any liturgical or theological interpretation. Thus seen, and

⁷ Karoline M. Lewis, *John: Fortress Biblical Preaching Commentaries*, Fortress Biblical Preaching Commentaries (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2014), 84.

⁸ Ibid.

this still needs to be developed, a bridge is built so that the Eucharist is connected to real food, and the bread doesn't stay on the altar, but takes its place with the fish on the table, carrying the weight of the divine Presence of Christ.

A Sermon on an Occasion

The preaching text appointed for Maundy Thursday in the Narrative Lectionary

Year 4—John is John 19:23-30, a portion of the crucifixion narrative which does not appear in the Revised Common Lectionary

When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and divided them into four parts, one for each soldier. They also took his tunic; now the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from the top. So they said to one another, 'Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see who will get it.' This was to fulfill what the scripture says,

‘They divided my clothes among themselves,
and for my clothing they cast lots.’

And that is what the soldiers did.

Meanwhile, standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, 'Woman, here is your son.' Then he said to the disciple, 'Here is your mother.' And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.

After this, when Jesus knew that all was now finished, he said (in order to fulfill the scripture), 'I am thirsty.' A jar full of sour wine was standing there. So they put a sponge full of the wine on a branch of hyssop and held it to his mouth. When Jesus had received the wine, he said, 'It is finished.' Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit (John 19:23-30).

The text is somewhat at odds with the occasion which focuses on the washing of the disciples' feet as an expression of Jesus' command to them to "love one another" (John 13:34) and Jesus' institution of the Lord's Supper, "Do this in remembrance of me" (Luke 22:19). The following sermon, presented in outline form, is an attempt to place the

liturgical actions in the light of the preaching text, again using anecdotes and quotations from my Food and Waiter commonplace books. References are in brackets.

Grace to you and peace.

=> When was the last time you served a meal? A church potluck? A family meal. A few friends for a barbeque or a formal dinner party? Was it a duty or a joy or a combination of both or neither? When was the last time you were served a meal? And I don't mean you were #27 at Rubio's. Were you a duty or a joy? And did you see yourself in a line of servers and served from farm to table to field and beyond?

I. REAL MEALS TAKE REAL WORK

- “No argument here: it takes work to make the table a place of grace. Who plans the meals, shops, tends to the garden? Who cooks, with all that implies of preparation? Who sets and clears the table? Who scrubs the pots and sweeps the floor? If we want the table to be a place of togetherness, the sharing has to start long before the meal and continue long after.” [Reed, *Gathering at the Table*]
- And perhaps longer before and longer after than we might think
- Before the shopping there is planting, harvesting, transporting, preparing, bagging/canning/freezing, transporting again.
- After the pots are scrubbed and the floors are swept, the recycle and the refuse are transported, etc.
- AND there is the man standing at the corner with a cardboard sign; the woman going through the bins on recycle/trash day; the farmer whose subsistence crops were replaced with coffee plants.
- A meal connects you with all these people and their families and their issues of documentation, employment, family leave, health care, housing and wages.

II. THE REAL MEAL JESUS SHARED WITH HIS DISCIPLES THE NIGHT BEFORE HE DIED TOOK WORK

- Da Vinci, while creating one of the world's most recognizable paintings, did a disservice to the Lord's Supper [Galbreath, *Leading from the Table*] by depicting a barely recognizable meal, #FakeMeal.
- Marcos Zapata, Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, Cusco did a better job, albeit with cuy (guinea pig—*tref*) as one of the entrees [personal entry]
- To see the real meal in these “traditional” depictions of the Lord's Supper, we would have to see the farm over the hills or the kitchen to the right or the street.
- Or as portrayed by Hanna-Cheriyen Varghese of Selangor, Malaysia, who includes almost a dozen people preparing and serving the meal in her rendering of “The Last Supper.”

III. JESUS' WORK WAS TO BE BOTH HOST AND SERVANT

- As host Jesus made the invitation and initiated the preparations (Luke 22:7-13).
- As servant, Jesus washed the feet of His disciples

IV. BY SERVING, JESUS DEFINED HIS RELATIONSHIP W/THE DISCIPLES AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP W/EACH OTHER AND THE WORLD

- "I am among you as the one who serves" (Luke 22:27b).
- "You also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have set you an example" (John 13:14b-15).

V. JESUS' SERVICE AT THE MEAL FLOWED INTO HIS SERVICE ON THE CROSS

- "It was with his death and his presence among them at table they came to believe this word: 'I am among you as one who serves'" [Lathrop, *On the Table-Servers*]
- Service at the meal and service on the cross are inseparable

VI. WE GATHER FOR THIS REAL MEAL AT JESUS' INVITATION

- (portions may be small, but work went before & after)
- It is by His invitation and He initiated the preparations

VII. WE ARE SERVED JESUS BY JESUS

- Catherine of Sienna tells us, "[Jesus] is the most exquisite of foods for us, both in his teaching, which nourishes us in your will, and in the sacrament that we receive in holy communion, which feeds and strengthens us while we are pilgrim travelers in this life." [Catherine and Mary O'Driscoll, *Catherine of Siena-- Passion for the Truth, Compassion for Humanity*]

VIII. THIS MEAL FLOWS INTO OUR SERVICE TO EACH OTHER AND TO THE WORLD

- At Mekanisa Church, EECMY, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia we fed each other the bread & wine [personal entry]
- At fellowship, we also fed each other *gursha* (a piece of *injera* rolled around some *wat* or *kitfo* that is put into another's mouth).
 - interestingly, there is a story connected with the practice, that says, "if we don't feed each other, we will all go hungry" [Kloman, "Gursha: Hands Across the Table"]
- With the dismissal (Go in peace. Serve the Lord.) we take up our cross and follow Jesus
- Thus, we are connected to Jesus, to each other, and to the world

=> While I was sitting in a Starbucks writing this sermon, a man came in off the street and rather apologetically asked the barista for some hot water for the Cup a

Soup he brought with him. He looked to be homeless and was making no other purchase. The barista responded, “Sir, I am here to serve you.” I saw Jesus.

In Jesus name, Amen.

Concluding Thought

Remember there is no right and wrong way to do this. Commonplace books and how they are used are unique to each individual preacher. What works for me might not work for you. Experiment.

Summary

Commonplace books can be a powerful tool for the preacher in sermon preparation. In them the preacher can explore the rich network of connections between the Eucharist and our life in the world. Then the preacher can proclaim a worldly Eucharist to Eucharistic lives.

CHAPTER 7

REFLECTIONS

“At root, Christianity is not just an idea. It is a specific meeting around food and drink.”¹ This was the line that grabbed me when I heard Gordon Lathrop speak at the 2005 Institute of Liturgical Studies at Valparaiso University. This led me to my thesis proposal

My goal is that this thesis will provide a way of preaching the meal stories of the Bible, especially the Lord’s Supper that will connect with the daily lives of those listening, not just in Lutheran churches but in other denominations where the Eucharist is celebrated—and in this way the thesis will be of value to the church at large.

However, I did not end at the place I thought I would. My heartfelt concern for the Eucharist which I shared in the introduction was overwhelmed by the problems I explored in the second chapter. Setting out to write a feast, I began to hope for a meal with a goat to celebrate with my friends.

When asked about my thesis by colleagues and friends, I struggled to articulate my vision beyond my concerns and the problems I found. I read a lot, but clearly didn’t know what to do with all these ingredients I had laid out on the counter. I am a short-order cook. I serve up a pretty good Sunday breakfast burrito sermon. But beyond a six week sermon series or a stewardship campaign I had never given much thought to a larger vision for preaching.

¹ Lathrop, 84.

I serve three congregations, small, smaller, and smallest. St John's Evangelical Lutheran Church and Preschool is suburban, mostly white, mixed ages. Our service is in English only. Calvary Evangelical Lutheran Church is urban, about equal older white and younger African, mostly from Uganda. Our services are in English and English/Swahili. The Welcome Church at Wells Park is outdoors in a park, mostly upper middle aged and white. Our service is in English. They each have different foodways, both daily and eucharistically.

Richard Rehfeldt told our cohort to think of our theses in this way, "You've seen what's out there. This is what I'm going to add." (I wrote this down in my most recent general commonplace book.) Since the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod was the only denomination I found promoting the practice of keeping commonplace books² I decided that in addition to using the *loci* in my own preaching ministry, perhaps I could reintroduce the *loci* method to my colleagues in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and other denominations.

I'm not sure where I first came across Melancthon's *Loci Communes*. Over the years I have kept a series of disorganized and dog-eared commonplace books. They are filled with clippings, lists, recipes, and quotations that caught my eye. My best friend Andrew calls me an "acquisitor," though not in the business sense. Thus the *loci* method is perfect for me.

I read *Loci Communes* completely through after I started the DMin program at Luther Seminary. I was intrigued that the habit of keeping a commonplace book could be a useful tool for preaching. Until now, I had compared it to one of those cabinets of

² See "Loci Communes, A Theologian's Best Friend: How to Make the Theological Tool of Your Dreams" by Rev. Dr. Benjamin T. Mayes. <http://media.ctsfw.edu/Text/ViewDetails/3575>.

curiosities so popular in the early Renaissance. Lots of interesting items mostly uncategorized.

Rereading Lathrop's "Table-Servers" lecture I came across his reference to, "...that expression of Catherine of Siena—God is our Table, our Food, and our Waiter."³ Finding her prayer, I thought this is a good place to start. Melancthon dealt with 26 *loci*, ending up with 10. This short-order cook could handle three *loci*: Table, Food, and Waiter.

So I began three new commonplace books and started collecting scripture verses or sections that included the *loci* titles. Verses with different words will be added as time passes. Non-scriptural quotations were added next. Many of these are included in the thesis as illustrations. In my commonplace books I add artwork and use many more colors. I draw diagrams to try to connect things and underline things. My books are messy. Having realized that Ignatius' examen could be useful, I started including some short exercises.

Driving my studies was the disconnection I saw between the Eucharist and our life in the world to the extent that few people think of the Eucharist as real food. Ironically, it is the people with eating disorders, who want to know how many calories are in the host, who see the Eucharist as real food. I remember as a child finding one of those white communion wafers impressed with the cross and thinking it was a thin piece of Styrofoam. And it was a nine-year old attending worship for the first time, "Why," she whispered to her mother during the Eucharistic prayer, "do they call it a meal?" So my

³ Lathrop, 83.

commonplaces will have to include descriptions of the Eucharist as being real food and/or connected with real food.

“Only when we recognize the rich network of connections between the Eucharist and our life in the world can the Eucharist be ‘worldly’ and our life ‘Eucharistic,’”⁴ Henri Nouwen writes. In this thesis I have affirmed the centrality of the Eucharist in the life of the Church and explored its disconnection with our life in the world. Philip Melancthon’s commonplaces and Catherine of Siena’s prayer provide a method and *loci* to discover and rediscover the rich network of connections between the Eucharist and our life in the world. It is my hope that in this thesis preachers will find, as I have found, a tool that they can use in preaching the Eucharist to today’s popular food culture. It is a journey such as the disciples took on the road to Emmaus, ending in a meal that opened their eyes to the Resurrected Christ. A meal that sustained them and will sustain us until the day we stand on the mountain where, “the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wines, of rich food filled with marrow, of well-aged wines strained clear” (Isaiah 25:6). And blessed will be those “who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb” (Revelation 19:9). On that day there will be no more allergies or addictions or calories or eating disorders or economic inequalities, or anything else in all of creation to separate us from the abundant love of God because we all will be healed. We will be seated with joy at the marriage feast of the Lamb.

Richard W. Vevia, Jr
29 April 2018
Commemoration of Catherine of Siena, theologian, 1380

⁴ Nouwen, 12.

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APPENDIX

Locus: Table

Old Testament

You shall make a table of acacia wood, two cubits long, one cubit wide, and a cubit and a half high.¹ You shall overlay it with pure gold, and make a molding of gold round it. You shall make round it a rim a handbreadth wide, and a molding of gold round the rim. You shall make for it four rings of gold, and fasten the rings to the four corners at its four legs. The rings that hold the poles used for carrying the table shall be close to the rim. You shall make the poles of acacia wood, and overlay them with gold, and the table shall be carried with these. You shall make its plates and dishes for incense, and its flagons and bowls with which to pour drink-offerings; you shall make them of pure gold. And you shall set the bread of the Presence on the table before me always (Exodus 25:23–30).

The Table of Showbread was placed opposite the lampstand (Exodus 26:35) on the north side of the Tabernacle. It held 12 loaves of bread, the Bread of the Presence, representing the 12 tribes of Israel. The twelve loaves remained on the table for a week; and on Sabbath the priests would remove it and eat it in the Holy Place, then put fresh bread on the table. Only priests could eat the bread, and it could only be eaten in the Holy Place (Leviticus 24:5-9).

In Ezekiel's vision of the New Temple, he saw tables

And in the vestibule of the gate were two tables on either side, on which the burnt-offering and the sin-offering and the guilt-offering were to be slaughtered. On the outside of the vestibule at the entrance of the north gate were two tables; and on the other side of the vestibule of the gate were two tables. Four tables were on the inside, and four tables on the outside of the side of the gate, eight tables, on which the sacrifices were to be slaughtered. There were also four tables of hewn stone for the burnt-offering, a cubit and a half long, and one cubit and a half wide, and one cubit high, on which the instruments were to be laid with which the burnt-offerings and the sacrifices were slaughtered. There were pegs, one handbreadth long, fastened all-round the inside. And on the tables the flesh of the offering was to be laid (Ezekiel 40:39–43).

In front of the holy place was something resembling an altar of wood, three cubits high, two cubits long, and two cubits wide; its corners, its base, and its walls were of wood. He said to me, 'This is the table that stands before the LORD' (Ezekiel 41:22).

¹ 3 feet by 1.5 feet and 2 feet, 3 inches high

The first time the word, table, is used in the Old Testament is in Genesis when Joseph's brothers came to the Egyptians for food and they were served from his table, a great honor.

They served him [Joseph] by himself, and them by themselves, and the Egyptians who ate with him by themselves, because the Egyptians could not eat with the Hebrews, for that is an abomination to the Egyptians. When they were seated before him, the firstborn according to his birthright and the youngest according to his youth, the men looked at one another in amazement. Portions were taken to them from Joseph's table, but Benjamin's portion was five times as much as any of theirs. So they drank and were merry with him (Genesis 43:32–34).

Eating at or from the chief table was a sign of honor (and forgiveness?).

You and your sons and your servants shall till the land for him, and shall bring in the produce, so that your master's grandson may have food to eat; but your master's grandson Mephibosheth shall always eat at my table.' Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants. Then Ziba said to the king, 'According to all that my lord the king commands his servant, so your servant will do.' Mephibosheth ate at David's table, like one of the king's sons (2 Samuel 9:10, 11).

[David to Solomon before his death] Deal loyally, however, with the sons of Barzillai the Gileadite, and let them be among those who eat at your table; for with such loyalty they met me when I fled from your brother Absalom (1 Kings 2:7).

In the thirty–seventh year of the exile of King Jehoiachin of Judah, in the twelfth month, on the twenty–seventh day of the month, King Evil–merodach of Babylon, in the year that he began to reign, released King Jehoiachin of Judah from prison. He spoke kindly to him, and gave him a seat above the other seats of the kings who were with him in Babylon. ²So Jehoiachin put aside his prison clothes. Every day of his life he dined regularly in the king's presence (2 Kings 25:27–29; Jeremiah 52:32–33).

(Solomon had guys) Those officials supplied provisions for King Solomon and for all who came to King Solomon's table, each one in his month; they let nothing be lacking (1 Kings 4:27).

When the queen of Sheba had observed all the wisdom of Solomon, the house that he had built, the food of his table, the seating of his officials, and the attendance of his servants, their clothing, his valets, and his burnt–offerings that he offered at the house of the LORD, there was no more spirit in her (1 Kings 10:4–5 and 2 Chronicles 9:3–4).

Adoni-bezek said, ‘Seventy kings with their thumbs and big toes cut off used to pick up scraps under my table; as I have done, so God has paid me back.’ They brought him to Jerusalem, and he died there (Judges 1:7).

Jonathan rose from the table in fierce anger and ate no food on the second day of the month, for he was grieved for David, and because his father had disgraced him (1 Samuel 20:34).

The two kings, their minds bent on evil, shall sit at one table and exchange lies. But it shall not succeed, for there remains an end at the time appointed (Daniel 11:27).

A son honors his father, and servants their master. If then I am a father, where is the honor due to me? And if I am a master, where is the respect due to me? says the LORD of hosts to you, O priests, who despise my name. You say, ‘How have we despised your name?’ By offering polluted food on my altar. And you say, ‘How have we polluted it?’ By thinking that the LORD’s table may be despised. When you offer blind animals in sacrifice, is that not wrong? And when you offer those that are lame or sick, is that not wrong? Try presenting that to your governor; will he be pleased with you or show you favor? says the LORD of hosts. And now implore the favor of God, that he may be gracious to us. The fault is yours. Will he show favor to any of you? says the LORD of hosts. O that someone among you would shut the temple doors, so that you would not kindle fire on my altar in vain! I have no pleasure in you, says the LORD of hosts, and I will not accept an offering from your hands. For from the rising of the sun to its setting my name is great among the nations, and in every place incense is offered to my name, and a pure offering; for my name is great among the nations, says the LORD of hosts. But you profane it when you say that the LORD’s table is polluted, and the food for it may be despised. ‘What a weariness this is’, you say, and you sniff at me, says the LORD of hosts. You bring what has been taken by violence or is lame or sick, and this you bring as your offering! Shall I accept that from your hand? says the LORD. Cursed be the cheat who has a male in the flock and vows to give it, and yet sacrifices to the LORD what is blemished; for I am a great King, says the LORD of hosts, and my name is revered among the nations (Malachi 1:6–14).

(ominous music in the background) When Ahab saw Elijah, Ahab said to him, ‘Is it you, you troubler of Israel?’ He answered, ‘I have not troubled Israel; but you have, and your father’s house, because you have forsaken the commandments of the LORD and followed the Baals. Now therefore have all Israel assemble for me at Mount Carmel, with the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal and the four hundred prophets of Asherah, who eat at Jezebel’s table’ (1 Kings 18:17–19).

Let their table be a trap for them,
a snare for their allies.
Let their eyes be darkened so that they cannot see,

and make their loins tremble continually.
 Pour out your indignation upon them,
 and let your burning anger overtake them (Psalm 69:22–24).

For them you bathed yourself, painted your eyes, and decked yourself with ornaments; you sat on a stately couch, with a table spread before it on which you had placed my incense and my oil. The sound of a raucous multitude was around her, with many of the rabble brought in drunken from the wilderness; and they put bracelets on the arms of the women, and beautiful crowns upon their heads (Ezekiel 23:40b–42).

But you who forsake the LORD,
 who forget my holy mountain,
 who set a table for Fortune
 and fill cups of mixed wine for Destiny,
 I will destine you to the sword,
 and all of you shall bow down to the slaughter;
 because, when I called, you did not answer,
 when I spoke, you did not listen,
 but you did what was evil in my sight,
 and chose what I did not delight in (Isaiah 65:11,12).

Let us make a small roof chamber with walls, and put there for him [Elisha] a bed, a table, a chair, and a lamp, so that he can stay there whenever he comes to us' (2 Kings 4:10).

[The LORD] delivers the afflicted by their affliction,
 and opens their ear by adversity.
 He also allured you out of distress
 into a broad place where there was no constraint,
 and what was set on your table was full of fatness (Job 36:15, 16).

You prepare a table before me
 in the presence of my enemies;
 you anoint my head with oil;
 my cup overflows (Psalm 23:5).
 They spoke against God, saying,
 'Can God spread a table in the wilderness (Psalm 78:19)?

Indeed, I devoted myself to the work on this wall, and acquired no land; and all my servants were gathered there for the work. Moreover, there were at my table one hundred and fifty people, Jews and officials, besides those who came to us from the nations around us. Now that which was prepared for one day was one ox and six choice sheep; also fowls were prepared for me, and every ten days skins of wine in abundance; yet with all this I did not demand the food allowance of the

governor, because of the heavy burden of labor on the people. Remember for my good, O my God, all that I have done for this people (Nehemiah 5:16–19).

New Testament

She said, ‘Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters’ table’ (Matthew 15:27).

But she answered him, ‘Sir, even the dogs under the table eat the children’s crumbs’ (Mark 7:28).

Then Jesus entered the temple and drove out all who were selling and buying in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold doves (Matthew 21:12).

Then they came to Jerusalem. And he entered the temple and began to drive out those who were selling and those who were buying in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold doves (Mark 11:15).

In the temple he found people selling cattle, sheep, and doves, and the money-changers seated at their tables. Making a whip of cords, he drove all of them out of the temple, both the sheep and the cattle. He also poured out the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables (John 2:14–15).

The triclinium was named after the three couches typically found in the dining rooms of upper-class Romans. The *lectus*, or couch, was an all-purpose piece of furniture. Usually made of wood with bronze adornments, the open bottom was crisscrossed with leather straps, which supported stuffed cushions. Different sizes and shapes of lecti were used for sleeping, conversing, and dining. A chair with a back (cathedra), for example, was considered suitable only for women or old men. Dining couches were fairly wide, for each couch held three diners, who reclined on their left side resting on large cushions while slaves served them multi-course meals.²

(Recline or sit? The rest of the Gospel texts will be from the King James Version)

Now when evening came, Jesus was **reclining at the table** with the twelve disciples (Matthew 26:20–21).

While they were eating, Jesus took some bread, and after a blessing, He broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is My body" (Matthew 26:26–27).

While they were eating, He took some bread, and after a blessing He broke it, and gave it to them, and said, "Take it; this is My body" (Mark 14:22–23).

² Barbara F. McManus, "The Triclinium," <http://www.vroma.org/~bmcmanus/triclinium.html>. (Accessed February 15, 2018)

When He had **reclined at the table** with them, He took the bread and blessed it, and breaking it, He began giving it to them (Luke 24:30).

As they were **reclining at the table** and eating, Jesus said, "Truly I say to you that one of you will betray Me—one who is eating with Me" (Mark 14:18). "But behold, the hand of the one betraying Me is with Mine on the table" (Luke 22:21).

Now one of the Pharisees was requesting Him to dine with him, and He entered the Pharisee's house and **reclined at the table** (Luke 7:36).

Now when He had spoken, a Pharisee asked Him to have lunch with him; and He went in, and **reclined at the table** (Luke 11:37).

"Blessed are those slaves whom the master will find on the alert when he comes; truly I say to you, that he will gird himself to serve, and have them **recline at the table**, and will come up and wait on them" (Luke 12:37).

And He began speaking a parable to the invited guests when He noticed how they had been picking out the places of honor at the table, saying to them, (Luke 14:7) When one of those who were **reclining at the table** with Him heard this, he said to Him, "Blessed is everyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God" Luke 14:15).

and longing to be fed with the crumbs which were falling from the rich man's table; besides, even the dogs were coming and licking his sores (Luke 16:21).

So they made Him a supper there, and Martha was serving; but Lazarus was one of those **reclining at the table** with Him (John 12:2)

And the twelve called together the whole community of the disciples and said, 'It is not right that we should neglect the word of God in order to wait at tables" Acts 6:2).

You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons (1 Corinthians 10:21).

For a tent was constructed, the first one, in which were the lampstand, the table, and the bread of the Presence; this is called the Holy Place (Hebrews 9:2).

Non-scriptural Sources

"To the Table"

Hear the voice of love that's calling
There's a chair that waits for you
And a Friend who understands

Everything you're going through

But you keep standing at a distance
In the shadow of your shame
There's a light of hope that's shining
Won't you come and take your place
And bring it all to the table

There's nothing He ain't seen before
For all your fear, all your sorrow and your sadness
There's a Savior and He calls
Bring it all to the table³ Jonathan Smith, Zach Williams, and Tony Wood

Locus: Food

Old Testament

Out of the ground the LORD God made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 2:9).

So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate (Genesis 3:6).

Also take with you every kind of food that is eaten, and store it up; and it shall serve as food for you and for them (Genesis 6:21).

For the LORD your God is God of gods and LORD of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who is not partial and takes no bribe, who executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and who loves the strangers, providing them with food and clothing. You shall also love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt (Deuteronomy 10:17, 18).

Let them gather all the food of these good years that are coming, and lay up grain under the authority of Pharaoh for food in the cities, and let them keep it (Genesis 41:35).

³ Zack Williams, Tony Wood, and Jonathan Smith, "To the Table," in *Chain Breaker* (Franklin, Tennessee: Provident, 2016).

That food shall be a reserve for the land against the seven years of famine that are to befall the land of Egypt, so that the land may not perish through the famine' (Genesis 41:36).

He gathered up all the food of the seven years when there was plenty in the land of Egypt, and stored up food in the cities; he stored up in every city the food from the fields around it (Genesis 41:48).

When Joseph saw his brothers, he recognized them, but he treated them like strangers and spoke harshly to them. 'Where do you come from?' he said. They said, 'From the land of Canaan, to buy food' (Genesis 42:7).

If he takes another wife to himself, he shall not diminish the food, clothing, or marital rights of the first wife (Exodus 21:10).

When the sun sets he shall be clean; and afterwards he may eat of the sacred donations, for they are his food (Leviticus 22:7).

Now Saul committed a very rash act on that day. He had laid an oath on the troops, saying, 'Cursed be anyone who eats food before it is evening and I have been avenged on my enemies.' So none of the troops tasted food. All the troops came upon a honeycomb; and there was honey on the ground. When the troops came upon the honeycomb, the honey was dripping out; but they did not put their hands to their mouths, for they feared the oath. But Jonathan had not heard his father charge the troops with the oath; so he extended the staff that was in his hand, and dipped the tip of it in the honeycomb, and put his hand to his mouth; and his eyes brightened. Then one of the soldiers said, 'Your father strictly charged the troops with an oath, saying, "Cursed be anyone who eats food this day." And so the troops are faint.' Then Jonathan said, 'My father has troubled the land; see how my eyes have brightened because I tasted a little of this honey. How much better if today the troops had eaten freely of the spoil taken from their enemies; for now the slaughter among the Philistines has not been great.'

After they had struck down the Philistines that day from Michmash to Aijalon, the troops were very faint; so the troops flew upon the spoil, and took sheep and oxen and calves, and slaughtered them on the ground; and the troops ate them with the blood. Then it was reported to Saul, 'Look, the troops are sinning against the LORD by eating with the blood.' And he said, 'You have dealt treacherously; roll a large stone before me here.' Saul said, 'Disperse yourselves among the troops, and say to them, "Let all bring their oxen or their sheep, and slaughter them here, and eat; and do not sin against the LORD by eating with the blood." ' So all of the troops brought their oxen with them that night, and slaughtered them there. And Saul built an altar to the LORD; it was the first altar that he built to the LORD (1 Samuel 14:24–35).

You and your sons and your servants shall till the land for him, and shall bring in the produce, so that your master's grandson may have food to eat; but your master's grandson Mephibosheth shall always eat at my table.' Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants. Then Ziba said to the king, 'According to all that my lord the king commands his servant, so your servant will do.' Mephibosheth ate at David's table, like one of the king's sons (2 Samuel 9:10, 11).

My servants shall bring it [timber] down to the sea from the Lebanon; I will make it into rafts to go by sea to the place you indicate. I will have them broken up there for you to take away. And you shall meet my needs by providing food for my household.' So Hiram supplied Solomon's every need for timber of cedar and cypress. Solomon in turn gave Hiram twenty thousand cors of wheat as food for his household, and twenty cors of fine oil. Solomon gave this to Hiram year by year (1 Kings 5:9–11).

Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food (Job 23:12).

Like wild asses in the desert
they go out to their toil,
scavenging in the waste-land
food for their young (Job 24:5).

For the mountains yield food for it
where all the wild animals play (Job 40:20).

Mortals ate of the bread of angels;
he sent them food in abundance (Psalms 78:25).

You cause the grass to grow for the cattle,
and plants for people to use,
to bring forth food from the earth (Psalms 104:14).

Who gives food to all flesh,
for his steadfast love endures forever (Psalms 136:25).

Go to the ant, you lazybones;
consider its ways, and be wise.
Without having any chief
or officer or ruler,
it prepares its food in summer,
and gathers its sustenance in harvest (Proverbs 6:6–8).

There will be enough goats' milk for your food,
for the food of your household
and nourishment for your servant-girls (Proverbs 27:27).

(KJV: “the maintenance for thy maidens.”)

New Testament

‘Friends, why are you doing this? We are mortals just like you, and we bring you good news, that you should turn from these worthless things to the living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that is in them. In past generations he allowed all the nations to follow their own ways; yet he has not left himself without a witness in doing good—giving you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, and filling you with food and your hearts with joy’ (Acts 14:15–17).

Of course, there is great gain in godliness combined with contentment; for we brought nothing into the world, so that we can take nothing out of it; but if we have food and clothing, we will be content with these. But those who want to be rich fall into temptation and are trapped by many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, and in their eagerness to be rich some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pains (1 Timothy 6:6–10).

Non-scriptural Sources

Our (bread bakers) task is to bake the bread used in the celebrations of the Eucharist. This duty, like the Eucharist itself, is not reserved for priests, ministers and religious, but can be done by you and me – ordinary Christians. Baking altar bread is a ministry, and like all ministries, it can’t be done without prayer, love, and attention to detail.⁴ Tony Begonja

We need bread, bread, bread for the world,
bread, bread, bread for the world,
bread, bread, bread for the world today⁵ Larry Olson and Karol Baer

Eating demonstrates that we cannot live alone. Growing food reminds us that we do not create life. Food connects us to the memberships of creation and to God.⁶ Norman Wirzba

⁴ Tony Begonja, *Eucharistic Bread-Baking as Ministry* (San Jose, CA: Resource Publications, 1991), 3.

⁵ Larry Olson and Karol Baer, "We Need Bread for the World," in *Banquet of Praise* (Beresford, SD: Dakota Road Music, 1989).

⁶ Norman Wirzba, *Food and Faith: a Theology of Eating*, (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 34.

The bread used for the Eucharist has no taste, so that we are not distracted by the physical sense, but contemplate instead the sweet savour of the Gospel.”⁷ Gene Evans

Bread is an absolutely indispensable part of life, while wine provides that ‘extra,’ a certain exuberance. Together, they signify the whole of life in its depth and breadth.”⁸ Sister Photina Rech,

Does one create memory from food, or does food create memory? Both are the case for me. I am indistinguishable from family, food, and culture.⁹ Denise Chávez

Locus: Waiter (Servant)

Old Testament

Moses is designated as a servant about forty times and David is designated as a servant more than fifty times.¹⁰

Servant Songs from Isaiah

Here is my servant, whom I uphold,
 my chosen, in whom my soul delights;
 I have put my spirit upon him;
 he will bring forth justice to the nations.
 He will not cry or lift up his voice,
 or make it heard in the street;
 a bruised reed he will not break,
 and a dimly burning wick he will not quench;
 he will faithfully bring forth justice.
 He will not grow faint or be crushed
 until he has established justice in the earth;
 and the coastlands wait for his teaching.

Thus says God, the LORD,
 who created the heavens and stretched them out,

⁷ Ibid., 13.

⁸ Photina Rech, *Wine and Bread*, (Chicago, IL: Liturgy Training Publications, 1998), 29.

⁹ Denise Chávez, *A Taco Testimony: Meditations on Family, Food and Culture* (Tucson, AZ: Rio Nuevo Publishers, 2006), 158.

¹⁰ Elwell. (Accessed February 1, 2018)

who spread out the earth and what comes from it,
 who gives breath to the people upon it
 and spirit to those who walk in it:
 I am the LORD, I have called you in righteousness,
 I have taken you by the hand and kept you;
 I have given you as a covenant to the people,
 a light to the nations,
 to open the eyes that are blind,
 to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon,
 from the prison those who sit in darkness.
 I am the LORD, that is my name;
 my glory I give to no other,
 nor my praise to idols.
 See, the former things have come to pass,
 and new things I now declare;
 before they spring forth,
 I tell you of them (Isaiah 42:1–9).

Listen to me, O coastlands,
 pay attention, you peoples from far away!
 The LORD called me before I was born,
 while I was in my mother's womb he named me.
 He made my mouth like a sharp sword,
 in the shadow of his hand he hid me;
 he made me a polished arrow,
 in his quiver he hid me away.
 And he said to me, 'You are my servant,
 Israel, in whom I will be glorified.'
 But I said, 'I have labored in vain,
 I have spent my strength for nothing and vanity;
 yet surely my cause is with the LORD,
 and my reward with my God.'

And now the LORD says,
 who formed me in the womb to be his servant,
 to bring Jacob back to him,
 and that Israel might be gathered to him,
 for I am honored in the sight of the LORD,
 and my God has become my strength—
 he says,
 'It is too light a thing that you should be my servant
 to raise up the tribes of Jacob
 and to restore the survivors of Israel;
 I will give you as a light to the nations,
 that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth.'

Thus says the LORD,
 the Redeemer of Israel and his Holy One,
 to one deeply despised, abhorred by the nations,
 the slave of rulers,
 ‘Kings shall see and stand up,
 princes, and they shall prostrate themselves,
 because of the LORD, who is faithful,
 the Holy One of Israel, who has chosen you.’

Thus says the LORD:
 In a time of favour I have answered you,
 on a day of salvation I have helped you;
 I have kept you and given you
 as a covenant to the people,
 to establish the land,
 to apportion the desolate heritages;
 saying to the prisoners, ‘Come out’,
 to those who are in darkness, ‘Show yourselves.’
 They shall feed along the ways,
 on all the bare heights shall be their pasture;
 they shall not hunger or thirst,
 neither scorching wind nor sun shall strike them down,
 for he who has pity on them will lead them,
 and by springs of water will guide them.
 And I will turn all my mountains into a road,
 and my highways shall be raised up.
 Lo, these shall come from far away,
 and lo, these from the north and from the west,
 and these from the land of Syene.

Sing for joy, O heavens, and exult, O earth;
 break forth, O mountains, into singing!
 For the LORD has comforted his people,
 and will have compassion on his suffering ones (Isaiah 49:1–13).

The LORD God has given me
 the tongue of a teacher,
 that I may know how to sustain
 the weary with a word.
 Morning by morning he awakens—
 awakens my ear
 to listen as those who are taught.
 The LORD God has opened my ear,
 and I was not rebellious,
 I did not turn backwards.
 I gave my back to those who struck me,

and my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard;
 I did not hide my face
 from insult and spitting.

The LORD God helps me;
 therefore I have not been disgraced;
 therefore I have set my face like flint,
 and I know that I shall not be put to shame;
 he who vindicates me is near.
 Who will contend with me?
 Let us stand up together.
 Who are my adversaries?
 Let them confront me.
 It is the LORD God who helps me;
 who will declare me guilty?
 All of them will wear out like a garment;
 the moth will eat them up.

Who among you fears the LORD
 and obeys the voice of his servant,
 who walks in darkness
 and has no light,
 yet trusts in the name of the LORD
 and relies upon his God?
 But all of you are kindlers of fire,
 lighters of firebrands.
 Walk in the flame of your fire,
 and among the brands that you have kindled!
 This is what you shall have from my hand:
 you shall lie down in torment (Isaiah 50:4–11).

See, my servant shall prosper;
 he shall be exalted and lifted up,
 and shall be very high.
 Just as there were many who were astonished at him
 —so marred was his appearance, beyond human semblance,
 and his form beyond that of mortals—
 so he shall startle many nations;
 kings shall shut their mouths because of him;
 for that which had not been told them they shall see,
 and that which they had not heard they shall contemplate.

Who has believed what we have heard?
 And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?
 For he grew up before him like a young plant,
 and like a root out of dry ground;

he had no form or majesty that we should look at him,
 nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.
 He was despised and rejected by others;
 a man of suffering and acquainted with infirmity;
 and as one from whom others hide their faces
 he was despised, and we held him of no account.

Surely he has borne our infirmities
 and carried our diseases;
 yet we accounted him stricken,
 struck down by God, and afflicted.
 But he was wounded for our transgressions,
 crushed for our iniquities;
 upon him was the punishment that made us whole,
 and by his bruises we are healed.
 All we like sheep have gone astray;
 we have all turned to our own way,
 and the LORD has laid on him
 the iniquity of us all.

He was oppressed, and he was afflicted,
 yet he did not open his mouth;
 like a lamb that is led to the slaughter,
 and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent,
 so he did not open his mouth.
 By a perversion of justice he was taken away.
 Who could have imagined his future?
 For he was cut off from the land of the living,
 stricken for the transgression of my people.
 They made his grave with the wicked
 and his tomb with the rich,
 although he had done no violence,
 and there was no deceit in his mouth.

Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him with pain.
 When you make his life an offering for sin,
 he shall see his offspring, and shall prolong his days;
 through him the will of the LORD shall prosper.
 Out of his anguish he shall see light;
 he shall find satisfaction through his knowledge.
 The righteous one, my servant, shall make many righteous,
 and he shall bear their iniquities.
 Therefore I will allot him a portion with the great,
 and he shall divide the spoil with the strong;
 because he poured out himself to death,
 and was numbered with the transgressors;

yet he bore the sin of many,
and made intercession for the transgressors (Isaiah 52:13—53:12).

New Testament

But thanks be to God that you, having once been slaves of sin, have become obedient from the heart to the form of teaching to which you were entrusted, and that you, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness (Romans 6:17–18).

But Jesus called them [disciples] to him and said, ‘You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. It will not be so among you; but whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be your slave; just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many’ (Matthew 20:25–28).

Now, brothers and sisters, you know that members of the household of Stephanas were the first converts in Achaia, and they have devoted themselves to the service of the saints (1 Corinthians 16:15).

And let them first be tested; then, if they prove themselves blameless, let them serve as deacons (1 Timothy 3:10).

Non-scriptural Sources

October 16 is World Food Day.