



# From Dirt to Dessert

*Food as a Pathway to the Heavenly Banquet*

Catholic Social Teaching Ministry  
St. Philip Neri Church





**“So whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God.” (1 Cor 10:31)**

## **How does our food, forks and food practices glorify God?**

- **God, the Gardener** who has bestowed grace from dirt to dessert
- **Jesus, the Incarnation** and his ministry of touch and table fellowship
- **Hospitality as Justice** -- and a taste of the heavenly Banquet.





## **God, the Gardener**

**Creator God, You made us and all that is, calling creation good.  
Teach us again the nature of goodness.  
Cultivate this fruit of the Spirit in our lives,  
so that we may reflect your goodness and justice in the world.  
God of abundance, open our eyes that we might see your gifts in the fruit of the  
ground and the beloved ones around our tables.  
Let our plates be pleasing to you,  
our meals speak of your generosity as our creator and  
our days be filled with pleasure and joy in food and community  
that reflect your heart.  
Amen**

From Life Around the Table,  
Eating Together Faithfully,  
Online Resource  
<https://lifearoundthetable.org/etf/>  
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## **God, the Gardener**

A gift from Sr. Rose Marie Tresp, RSM  
Director of Justice for Sisters of Mercy

**Do not fear, O soil;  
be glad and rejoice,  
for the Lord has done great things!  
Do not fear, you animals of the field,  
for the pastures of the wilderness  
are green;  
the tree bears its fruit;  
the fig tree and vine give their  
full yield.**

**O children of Zion, be glad,  
and rejoice in the Lord your God,  
for he has given the early rain for  
your vindication;  
he has poured down for you  
abundant rain,  
the early and the later rain,  
as before.  
The threshing floors shall be  
full of grain;  
the vats shall overflow with  
wine and oil**

**Joel 2:21-24**





# Catholic Rural Life

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**Food Security  
& the Farm Bill**

A Catholic Approach

**"We come to know God's goodness in the language of the plants and animals and stars and kernels on an ear of corn"**

Tim Streiff, CRL Magazine (Summer 2022)

**Tim Streiff is the Program Manager for CRL's Thriving in Rural Ministry program and local chapters**

**Food is God's love  
made delicious**

Norman Wirzba, Food and Faith (2019)



**Dr. Normal Wirzba, a Canadian theologian and Gilbert T. Rowe Distinguished Professor of Christian Theology at Duke Divinity School, NC**







“...the universe is a communion of subjects rather than a collection of objects ...  
Existence itself is derived from and sustained by this intimacy of each being with every other being of the universe”

Brian Swimme and Thomas Berry,  
The Universe Story, 243





**We are both Gardener  
and Garden**

**Life Depends Upon  
Death...**

**Earth's Cadence of  
Reciprocity ... Feeding  
and Being Fed**




The Chef  
does everything  
but cook  
— that's what  
wives are for!



I'm giving my wife a  
**Kenwood** Chef

# A TIRED WOMAN MAKES A POOR WIFE



*How You Can Have Time for  
Home and for Husband, Too!*

How can you be a comfort to your husband and a help to your children, if you are tired out all the time? Too many women work so hard over their homes that they have no time for play. Then they wonder why their husbands seem restless, and their children are a burden instead of a joy.

Here's a suggestion that has been followed by millions of women; it makes their housework much easier, means nourishing, appetizing meals, and saves a good deal of money, too. Several times a week, serve Franco-American Spaghetti.

never seems to get tired of it. For the children's lunch give them this savory dish—with milk and fruit you have a complete meal that's on the table in a jiffy. For dinner use Franco-American as a side dish, or it is perfectly wonderful to make left-overs go further and taste better.

Franco-American is not like ordinary ready-cooked spaghetti. Franco-American is the kind with the extra good sauce—contains eleven savory ingredients. It usually costs only 10¢ a can, and that's less than a portion.





"In 1910, one in seven farmers were African-American and held titles to approximately 16-19 million acres of farmland. Over the next century, **98% of Black farmers were dispossessed** through discriminatory practices at the USDA and various federal farm programs. These farmers were often **denied loans and credit, lacked access to legal defense** against fraud, and experienced "outright acts of **violence and intimidation**" resulting in a **90% loss of Black-owned farmland in the US.**





**We don't pay the true costs for our food...**

Unaccounted costs are approximately \$100 billion ... child labor, unlivable wages and a lack of standard employment benefits such as healthcare and occupational health and safety





# Green Revolution

Mid 20th century

Thesis: To solve world hunger, increase production of food grains (especially wheat and rice).

This was done by introducing into developing countries new, **high-yielding varieties** that required large amounts of **chemical fertilizers and pesticides** to produce their high yields... Poor farmers, unable to afford the fertilizers and pesticides, had even lower yields with these grains than with the traditional crops (that were better suited to the ecosystems)



In this photo, taken in Duplin County, North Carolina in the days following Hurricane Florence, the flooding of a swine manure lagoon, outlined by a slight berm, can be observed.

A house, seen in white to the left of the swine barns through a patch of trees, is also flooded. There is potential for the contents of the swine lagoon wastes (and dead animals) to come into contact with residents exposed to floodwaters.



Photo source: Rick Dove, Waterkeeper Alliance.

# Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs)





Night Prayer  
by Michael Cook

# We have Forgotten Who and Whose We Are

For if we cannot savor  
food, then how can we  
savor, serve and tend  
each other, the land, or  
God?

Dan Castillo, PhD 2022 at  
<https://dornsife.usc.edu/iacs/the-image-of-god-the-gardener/>



## Remember Joel 2:21-24

Reconciliation means that we heal that which fractures our communities.

Our physical, social, and spiritual health is predicated on the health of our soil, child farmworkers, microbes, farmers of color, pollinators, cashiers, meat plant workers, and watersheds

What if the over 200 million Christians chose these paths to glorify God and love their many different neighbors? Would this not be good news?







## **Jesus, Incarnate**

**Incarnate God, you who became flesh to dwell among us  
Teach us what it means to be bodies living in a particular place.  
Move us to sink our roots deep into the soil, watersheds, and  
lives around us  
Form us into beloved places bearing witness to your great love**

**Amen**

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Food is common ground, a universe experience, and a spiritual encounter because food is a manifestation of God's love and Earth's ability to nourish and be nourished

Food is integral to our vocation as gardeners ... as Imago Dei



# Jesus, Incarnate



Sept 2020 Twitter Feed  
Pontifical Academy Life  
@PontAcadLife

**"An image that is worth a speech".**

a photo of Michelangelo's Pietà featuring a Black Jesus

"The head of the academy, Archbishop Vincenzo Paglia, explained that the photo was inspired by a 2015 statue by Italian sculptor Fabio Viale, created at the height of a European immigration crisis, which "portrayed a 22-year-old Nigerian who fled his country to avoid persecution due to his Christian faith."

<https://baptistnews.com/article/advent-race-and-the-intimacy-of-incarnation-why-we-must-see-beyond-a-white-baby-jesus/>



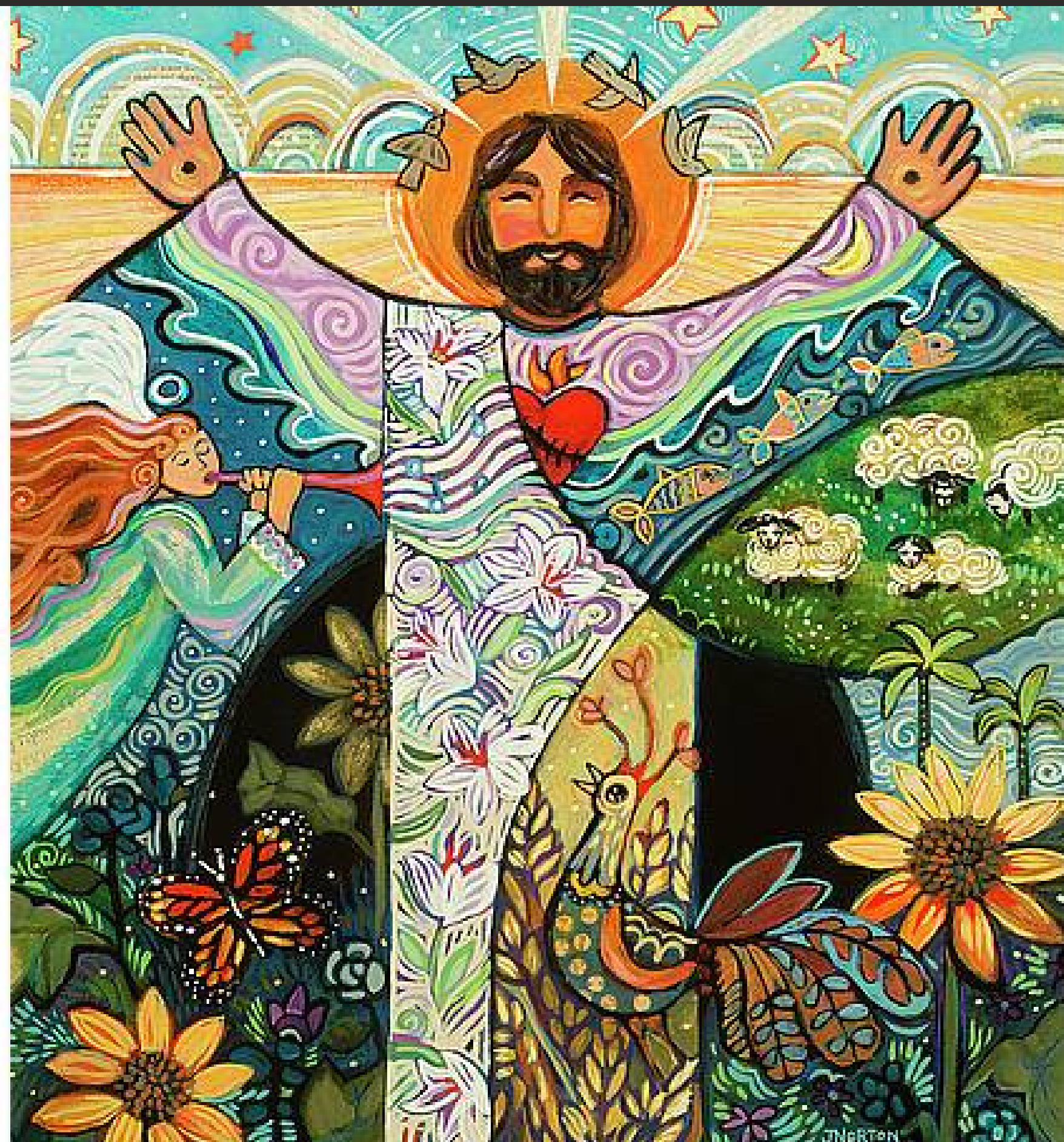
# Jesus, Incarnate

“Our call to discipleship may well be a call to remember our kinship with the fertile earth...soil is more like a relative than a resource; it is to be respected, not just used.”

Dr. Ellen Davis

Incarnational wisdom is a deep knowledge of our places, food, and eating practices that opens our eyes to the injustices embedded in our food systems and the ways we eat.

"All Creation Sings His Praise" By Jen Norton  
Prints Available online





Every day when we eat  
faithfully we are  
expanding the grace  
offered at the table of the  
Eucharist into ordinary  
and necessary moments  
of our lives and  
embodying the charism  
of the early church who  
shared a meal in each  
other's homes,  
sang, danced, and  
recited Scripture --  
all of these acts told the  
story of God's desire for  
all to enjoy  
abundant life







## Food justice entails three things:

- All people having access to food that is fresh, healthy, affordable, and culturally appropriate
- Everyone in the food system and supply chain are compensated fairly and have safe working and living conditions
- Food is produced or tended (animals) or caught (fish) and used in sustainable ways that promote the flourishing of Earth



A close-up photograph of two silver forks against a black background. Each fork is holding a portion of spaghetti, which is coiled around the tines. The spaghetti strands are thin and yellowish, with some sauce visible. The forks are positioned horizontally, with the spaghetti strands connecting them. The lighting highlights the metallic sheen of the forks and the texture of the pasta.

**Hospitality as Justice;  
Justice as Hospitality**

Food Justice, good food is the promise of the Divine Banquet and the spiritual power of our forks is the ability to offer a taste of this divine banquet in the here and now -- around the many tables of our lives





**Racism ...Discrimination...Death...Obesity...Food Apartheid...Diabetes...  
Lower Life Expectancy...Pregnancy related mortality**





**Air and Water Pollution...Racism ...Discrimination...Methane...  
Climate Change...Wastefulness**





**Gift Economy... Relational not Transactional...Purchasing Power...Leverage gifts for good food...  
Gardens, Kitchens, and Tables as Centers of Civic & Spiritual Engagement...**





**TEN THOUSAND VILLAGES**

# 2019 FAIR TRADE CHRISTMAS MARKET

AT ST. ANDREW'S UNITED CHURCH

**SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 23 FROM 10 AM TO 4 PM**

Men and women around the world have a simple dream—to earn an honest living, to provide for their children and to be gainfully employed in a job that brings dignity and joy. Ten Thousand Villages, the oldest and largest Fair Trade non-profit organization in North America, partners with thousands of talented artisans around the world in healthy business relationships. And they're presenting a Fair Trade Christmas Market at St. Andrew's United Church.

**JOIN US ON NOVEMBER 23** and make a positive difference by purchasing Fair Trade handcrafted gifts, decorations and products for the Christmas season.

**St. Andrew's United Church**  
1044 St. George's Avenue in North Vancouver, BC V7L 3H6 • 604-985-0408  
events@st-andrews-united.ca • www.st-andrews-united.ca

**Eat Closer to Earth... Become a Locavore... CSA Supporter... Church land for Gardens...  
Make Farmers Markets Accessible (SNAP/EBT)... Host Fair Trade Markets**





**Move from Charity to Justice Models of Service...Deeply Listen to the Spirit Moving...Leverage Your Gifts in Your Sphere of Influence to Cultivate Good Food and Table Fellowship**



A top-down view of a garden with various herbs in pots, a trowel, a fork, and a ball of twine. The background is dark soil. The herbs include rosemary, succulents, basil, and mint. A trowel with a wooden handle is in the center, and a fork is on the left. A ball of twine is on the right.

## Divine Banquet

**Generous God, because you give us yourself, we have all we need -- from dirt to dessert. You multiply our bread and our fish, and tell us to come follow you. You form us into communities of Jesus, the Incarnate, and promise us we will never hunger and thirst.**

**Yet, we confess that we have squandered your gifts; we have failed to be good stewards of your bounty. While we indulge and waste, others go hungry. Teach us again your economy of enough. Feed us with your grace and Spirit, so that we might feast together with our neighbors, recreating even just a taste of the divine banquet in our midst one table and one fork at a time**

**Amen**

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**Thank You for Listening**

# **Questions, Comments, Ideas?**



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