Transformation Begins at a Table: Lent 2024

The observance of Lent has always involved food-fasting and abstinence. The Sisters of Charity of New York and Saint Elizabeth decided to focus on footprint/food justice at their 2023 Assembly. Join us this Lent in a focus on a new relationship with food. Transformation begins at a table!

February

“Transformation begins at table. From there we savor and save the world. If Earth is to survive humanity, it will be because people have awareness at table.” Donna Schaper

**14 Ash Wednesday** Place a bowl of soil in your prayer space during Lent. Remember, Earth Creature, that you come from Earth and unto Earth you shall return.

**15 Nuns Against Gun Violence** invites us to fast during Lent against gun violence. Sign up for the fast here [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfFmZhyWBkqu6wRavHW6mitlzybxc2KqKzEAE3_1A7vc380JxBg/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfFmZhyWBkqu6wRavHW6mitlzybxc2KqKzEAE3_1A7vc380JxBg/viewform)

16 Try to make your Lenten meals sacred events with tablecloths, cloth napkins, flowers, and candles.

17 At Thich Nhat Hahn’s Plum Village monastery, each morsel of food is chewed thirty times.

**18 First Sunday of Lent** “The fight against hunger demands we overcome the cold logic of the market, which is greedily focused on mere economic profit and the reduction of food to a commodity, like many others, and strengthen the logic of solidarity.” Pope Francis

19 Each week of Lent, add one more organic product to your shopping cart.

20 Have a conversation with others about meal customs in your family/culture/religion. How have meals been formative of the person you are?

21 Be in a relationship of kinship with trees by using cloth napkins and towels; old tee shirts to wipe up spills.

22 Pray for the millions of fisher folk in the world whose livelihood is destroyed by warming oceans and ocean acidification.

23 Gaze at your bowl of Earth and recall that we are experiencing a “dark night of the soil.” Each year, an estimated 24 billion tons of fertile soil are lost due to erosion.

24 Visit a farmers’ market.

**25 Second Sunday of Lent** “Heaven is a banquet and life is a banquet, too, even with a crust, where there is companionship. We have all known the long loneliness and we have learned that the only solution is love and that love comes with community.” Dorothy Day

26 Pause before your meal and reflect – In this food the entire universe is supporting my existence.

27 Make an act of contrition today for the ways you have wasted food.

28 Plan a simple soup and bread supper with friends and watch a food related movie, e.g. Cowspiracy, Just Eat It: A Food Waste Story, Forks Over Knives.

29 Pray for farmers today.

March

1 Donate to a food pantry or soup kitchen.

2 Make your own the prayer of Dorothy Day in times of tension and difficulty, “Our Lady of Cana, send us some wine!”

**3 Third Sunday of Lent** “Don’t eat anything your great-grandmother wouldn’t recognize as food.” Michael Pollan

4 Consider buying food from a company like Misfits Market that sells food that is good to eat but not “pretty” enough for the supermarket [https://www.misfitsmarket.com/about-us](https://www.misfitsmarket.com/about-us)
5 “God’s kingdom is imagined as a table where there are places for everyone, everyone has a place of honor, and everyone gets enough.” Marianne Sawicki

6 Resolve this Lent to grow some of your own food, even if it’s just some herbs on windowsill pots.

7 “It is for your love alone that the poor will forgive the bread you give them.” St. Vincent de Paul

8 International Women’s Day - Thank a woman you know who is involved in the production or serving of food.

9 Eat at a restaurant of a culture different from your own.

10 Fourth Sunday of Lent
“In you really want to make a friend, go to someone’s house and eat with him...The people who give you their food give you their heart.” César Chávez

11 40% of food purchased in the US is thrown away. As you begin your week, look into your refrigerator and plans meals according to what you have, to avoid food waste.

12 Pray for justice for migrant workers today.

13 Form a group of peers or colleagues to investigate food waste in your school, workplace, neighborhood, parish.

14 “Jesus” paschal mystery, celebrated at the heart of Eucharist, is reflected today in Earth’s processes of dying and rising, whether it be devastating droughts and floods, poisoned rivers and polluted oceans, or regeneration, reforestation, and revitalization.” Mary McGann, RSCJ

15 Shop the peripheries of the supermarkets (where the fresh foods usually are) and avoid the center aisles (where processed foods usually are).

16 “We don’t want to EAT hot fudge sundaes as much as we want our lives to BE hot fudge sundaes. We want to come home to ourselves.” Geneen Roth

17 Fifth Sunday of Lent - Lent trumps St. Patrick’s Day this year but enjoy some Irish soda bread today nonetheless.

18 When planning your meals this week, plan to savor as many different types of vegetables as you can and as little red meat as you can.

19 Feast of St. Joseph and Spring Equinox. Take a walk and notice the signs of new growth in nature.

20 When you buy chocolates for your Easter basket, buy Fair Trade. Don’t let your pleasure be the source of misery for others. Best brands: Divine, Equal Exchange. Worst brands: Ferrero, Godiva.

21 Passover begins at sundown tomorrow. Plan to join a Seder meal with Jewish friends.

22 World Water Day-Drink a glass of water reverently. Eat in ways that reverence water. Pound for pound, meat has a much higher water footprint than vegetables, grains or beans.

23 A healthy plate of food will include a wide variety of colors.

24 Palm Sunday “If there is hunger anywhere in the world, then our celebration of the Eucharist is somehow incomplete everywhere in the world … In the Eucharist we receive Christ hungering in the world. He comes to us, not alone, but with the poor, the oppressed, the starving of the earth.” Pedro Arrupe, SJ

25 Enjoy the light of the full moon tonight and reflect that just as the moon’s gravitational pull causes tides to rise and fall, it also affects moisture in the soil. Seeds will absorb more water during the full Moon and the new Moon, when more moisture is pulled to the soil surface.

26 Plan to give a gift of food to the catechumens in your parish who will receive the sacraments at the Easter Vigil.

27 Think of Jesus in his prison cell and learn about the movement to bring better food to people imprisoned
https://impactjustice.org/innovation/food-in-prison/#report

28 Holy Thursday “It is in the Eucharist that all that has been created finds its greatest exaltation. Grace, which tends to manifest itself tangibly, found unsurpassable expression when God himself became man and gave himself as food for his creatures,” (Laudato Si’, 236).

29 Good Friday “I think nothing shows forth the Paschal Mystery quite like compost. It really is a tomb-like place, a container that holds endings and beginnings. And composting is a sacred work that echoes the Paschal Mystery.” Sr. Janet Gildea, SC

30 Holy Saturday Light a candle and renew your commitment to food practices that are healthy for you and healing for Earth.

31 Easter Sunday “First and last alike receive your reward; rich and poor, rejoice together! Sober and slothful, celebrate the day! You that have kept the fast, and you that have not, rejoice today for the Table is richly laden! Feast royally on it, the calf is a fatted one. Let no one go away hungry. Partake, all, of the cup of faith. Enjoy all the riches of God’s goodness!” Easter homily of St. John Chrysostom

Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth, Convent Station, NJ
Writer: Fr. Terrence Moran Layout: Donna Sartor