

October 15, 2017
28th Sunday of Ordinary Time



VISIONS

We Share Food Together

Pancakes

Ice Cream

Hamburgers

Tacos

Popcorn

Soup

With whom did you last share these foods? Write their names in each pie piece.



by Luke O'Connor

The smells of roasted garlic, chicken, and baked sweet potatoes drift through the air. Mom has the water boiling; our first course will be pasta aglio olio, a dish she learned chatting online with an Italian cook in Amsterdam. Dad sits on the bench reading a medical journal, waiting until the last moment to whip up his famous salad. Maureen, our foreign exchange student from Kenya, is dicing parsley and garlic for the pasta. I add the pasta to the boiling water and stir the noodles as they cook. I think about checking on the roast chicken I had prepared earlier that day.

Embraced by the smells of the kitchen, I begin to realize why my parents invite people over for Sunday night dinner.

Just as on any other Sunday night, the people around our table will be a mix of old friends and new. Our next-door neighbor Barb and her good friends Robin and Bev will all be at the table as well as a couple

named Greg and Sheryl, whom my parents met at Mass this morning.

A few minutes after 6:30, the first guests arrive. It is the new couple. Our dog Angel greets them by jumping in the air and yelping for attention. I grab hold of her collar and stick out my other hand. “Hey, I’m Luke. It’s good to meet you.” My mom waves from the kitchen.

“Greg and Sheryl, come on in,” she says.

Angel greets the other guests as they arrive. In a few minutes we are all in the crowded kitchen, helping with the



Hey, I'm Luke.
It's good to meet you.

cooking. Squeezed between the kitchen counter and Robin, Sheryl asks, “What is Kenyan cooking like, Maureen?”

Maureen smiles. “We love to use spices like garam masala and cumin.”

“How is your play going, Barb?” Robin asks.

Everyone joins in the conversation. There is a feeling of closeness that isn’t just the physical space. By the time the pasta is ready, the house is filled with eight voices flowing together—the sound of a successful Sunday night.

We go into the dining room and sit down. Before we start to eat, we all hold hands. Mom begins, “Dear God, thank you for the gift of all of us being here together, and for this delicious food, and for Greg and Sheryl’s company.” With a chorus of Amens, the feast begins.

When everyone finishes their pasta, I quickly clear the plates and walk to the kitchen to get the roast chicken. I step through the swinging door back into the dining room and place the chicken on the table. As the candles flicker and the chatter of the company around me continues to fill the room with warmth, I sit back in my chair. Barb carves the roast chicken. Before we have a chance to get back into the meal, the front door swings open and in steps another guest.

“Hello, everyone,” says my older brother Daniel, who has just gotten off work. “What’s for

dinner?” Everyone makes room for another chair at the table. Daniel sits down to a steaming plate of chicken and sweet potatoes.

“How was work?” Robin asks. “Any sales?”

Between bites, Daniel talks about his job as a salesman at a furniture store.

When people have finished the second course and the centers of the yellow plates are visible again, I clear the table. As I set the dirty plates down on kitchen counters, I hear Mom asking, “Who wants coffee with dessert?” Everyone but Daniel wants coffee.

“How is your golf these days?” Dad asks Bev.

“Great,” Bev answers. “Do you play, Greg?” she asks.

“Not much since high school,” Greg says.

Mom sets coffee cups on the table and Bev goes to the kitchen to get the homemade strawberry-rhubarb pie she brought.

“How big a piece do you want, Luke?” Bev asks me, as she begins to slice.

“Pretty big,” I say with a grin.

Dessert doesn’t take long—it is that good—but the night is far from over. Dad slides back his chair to get his poetry book from a side table. “Did everyone remember to bring a poem to read?” he asks.



Who wants coffee with dessert?

How is your golf game these days?



I hoped you were joking.



Bev groans. “I hoped you were joking,” she says but pulls a folded piece of paper from her pocket. We all take turns reading, laughing, and commenting on each poem until the evening ends and everyone goes home.

I sometimes wonder why my parents invite friends to join us for dinner every Sunday night. I usually have homework, and sometimes I just want to hang out in my room watching videos or texting friends. But then as I feel the warmth of their presences around the table, the answer comes to me. Sharing a meal creates a connection.

Sunday dinner is a ritual, and through it I realize how important the small gifts of life are. In the end it isn’t about the roast chicken or the strawberry-rhubarb pie, but more about the people gathered around the table. When we sit down to that meal and join in conversation, the only thing that separates us is a few inches on either side of our chairs.

“TALK”

- 1 Why do Luke’s parents like company?
- 2 How does the family benefit from having many different guests?
- 3 What helps people feel more like family than guests?

SUNDAY GOSPEL

28th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Matthew 22:1-14

Parable of the Wedding Feast

Narrator: Once when Jesus was speaking to the chief priests and elders of the people, he used this parable.

Jesus: The reign of God is like a king who gave a wedding feast for his son. He sent servants to bring the invited guests to the wedding, but they refused to come. He sent his servants a second time to bring the guests to the wedding.

King: Tell them the dinner is prepared. My cattle have been killed. Come, the feast is ready!

Jesus: Some of the guests ignored the invitation. One guest went to his farm, another to his business. The rest of the guests insulted the king's servants and killed them. The king was so furious that he sent his army to destroy the murderers and burn their city. Then he sent his servants out to invite other guests.

King: The banquet is ready, but the invited guests were unfit to come. Go out into the streets and invite to the wedding anyone you meet.

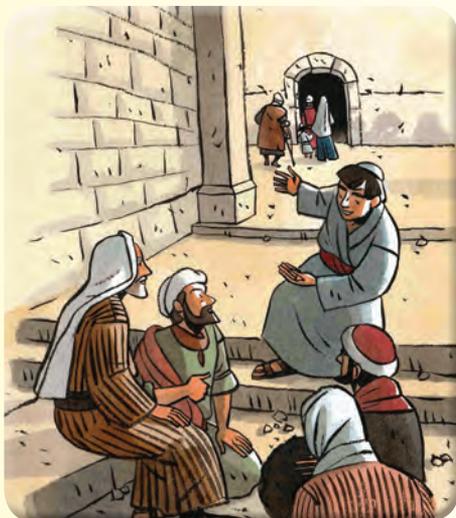
Jesus: The servants found guests to fill the wedding hall for the feast. When the king came to meet the guests, he saw a man who was not dressed properly for a wedding feast.

King: My friend, why did you come to the feast without a wedding garment?

Jesus: The man had nothing to say. The king had his servants throw the man out.

King: Tie him hand and foot and throw him out into the darkness to cry and grind his teeth.

Jesus: Many are invited, but few are chosen.



TALK

- 1 Which characters in the Gospel do you feel most like? Why?
- 2 Why does the king invite other guests when the first guests refuse to come to the wedding?
- 3 How is the king's table like the family in "The Table of Plenty"?



and DOCTRINE

Connecting GOSPEL

God Invites Everyone to the Feast

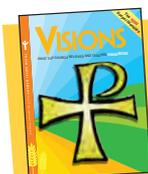
In Sunday's Gospel Jesus compares the reign of God to a king who invites people to a wedding feast for his son. When guests refuse to come, the king sends his servants out on the roads to invite anyone they can find to come to the feast. The king wants guests.

Like the king in the Gospel, Jesus invites all people to become his friends and gather together in joy and

celebration. Those who refuse the king's invitation are those who do not believe in Jesus. People must respond to Jesus to join in the wedding feast. They must put on wedding garments.

God invites all people to the feast. Each person must decide whether to go or not.

- 1 In what ways do we turn down invitations from God?
- 2 How can we say yes to God instead? How specifically can we change our daily habits so we can be more open to God?



Turn to the section on creation on page 8 in *What the Church Believes and Teaches* to discover how we share in God's truth, beauty and goodness. Then turn to page 7, God's Revelation to People. Trace the ways God shows his love to all people—through Jesus.

Jesus' Table Welcomes All People

The king who puts on a wedding feast for his son in the Gospel shows hospitality. The king doesn't throw the food in the dumpster when his invited guests refuse to come to his feast; instead he invites more guests. The king opens his feast and his table to anyone who will come.

Hospitality involves making places for others, making the stranger welcome, sharing ourselves and what we have. The king shows hospitality by inviting more guests.

Hospitality is a quality we show when we welcome a friend to our home and give him or her the place we usually sit. We show hospitality when we say hello to a new student in school and introduce him or her to our friends.

We show hospitality when we treat others the way we would want to be treated. **Christian hospitality** means welcoming people into our lives the way Jesus welcomed them.

Jesus eats with tax collectors and prostitutes, people who were considered outsiders and sinners. Jesus shows that his food and his friendship are for all people by eating with those whom many people would avoid.

Our Sunday Eucharist (Mass) is a meal that celebrates Jesus' food and friendship. The parish altar is a table, set with white cloths, candles, a chalice (cup), and plate. The altar stands in the front or center of the church, so that people can gather around it as families gather around dinner tables in homes.

The Eucharist began with Jesus and his followers gathering

together for a special meal of friendship and celebration. This meal happened the night before Jesus died. During the meal, Jesus changed the bread and wine into his Body and Blood.

Jesus asked his friends to remember him by breaking and sharing bread together and by sharing the cup of wine he poured for them. Bread broken for us and wine poured out for us are the signs of Jesus' love for us and for all people—his Body and Blood.

Like the king's feast in the parable, the Eucharist is a meal to which Jesus invites guests—all who will come. At Communion time each Sunday, we see friends, family, neighbors, and

strangers walk toward the altar table to receive the Body and Blood of Christ.

When Catholics gather for Mass, we experience ourselves as the one people of God who gather around Jesus' table.

The bread and wine also tell us who Jesus calls us to be. He calls us to become like him—to share our lives with others and to welcome people to our table.

Catholic **FAITH WORD**

CHRISTIAN HOSPITALITY
The ancient virtue of welcoming and including others—especially the stranger—with no questions asked and no strings attached.



Write the names of 10 people with whom you share Eucharist each week.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Who's Hungry in Our World?

The king in Sunday's Gospel tells his servants to invite everyone they meet to the wedding feast he has ready. This table, which is open to all guests, reminds us that every human person has the right to food. The bishops of the Second Vatican Council list food as one of the necessities for living a truly human life (*Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World* #26).

According to Food First, there is plenty of food available in the world. World food production has increased steadily over the past two decades. Farmers provide enough food worldwide to feed 1.5 times the earth's population.

But too much food gets eaten in wealthy countries and not enough gets to countries where food is scarce. An estimated 30 percent of the food produced each year is simply wasted. Often, wars and other conflicts make it impossible to get needed food to people who are starving.

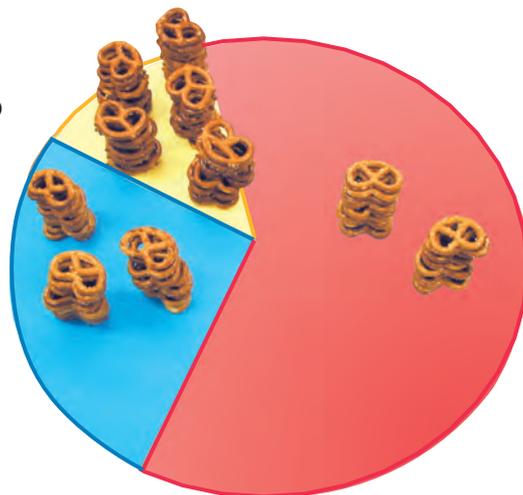
Use the following plan to help you explore with your class the problems of world food distribution.

Distribution Data

- 15 percent of your class will represent people from developed countries with incomes of \$7,000 or more per person per year. (The median U.S. income per person is \$30,240).
- 25 percent of your class will represent countries with incomes of \$699 to \$6,999 per person per year.
- 60 percent of your class will represent the Third World countries with annual incomes per person less than \$699.

Setting Up Groups

1. Your teacher will help you determine out how the above percentages would be represented in your class. For example, if there are 25 students in your class, 4, 6, and 15 students would make up the three groups. Make different-colored tickets for each



group, one for each member. Classmates draw from a hat or bowl to determine their group assignment.

2. Distribute 100 pretzels among your classmates as follows:

- **The 15 percent group will share 50 pretzels.**
- **The 25 percent group will share 30 pretzels.**
- **The 60 percent group will share 20 pretzels.**

3. While your class eats the pretzels, discuss the fact that this activity shows how food is really distributed throughout the world. Share your feelings about this distribution.

A table is where people meet to make decisions—in neighborhoods, nations, and the global community. Many people have no place at the table. Their voices and needs are dismissed.



A table is where people come together for food. For many there is not enough food, in some cases, no table at all.



A Catholic Framework for Economic Life



Feeding the hungry is one of the corporal works of mercy. Pope Francis hosted a pizza meal for 1,500 people who are homeless.

To set a table of plenty with enough food for all requires four legs.

GOVERNMENT

is a means for citizens to work for the common good, provide for people who are poor, stop discrimination, and give all people an equal chance.

CHURCH AND COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

help families make good choices, stop discrimination, build community, confront injustice, and demand that public officials are accountable.

BUSINESSES

help our economy grow, but must also contribute to the common good and reflect our values and priorities.

FAMILIES AND INDIVIDUALS

have a responsibility to respect the dignity of others and to work to secure not only their own rights but also the rights of others. Families can raise children with an ethic of service and passion for justice.

1 How has a government program helped people you know have enough to eat?

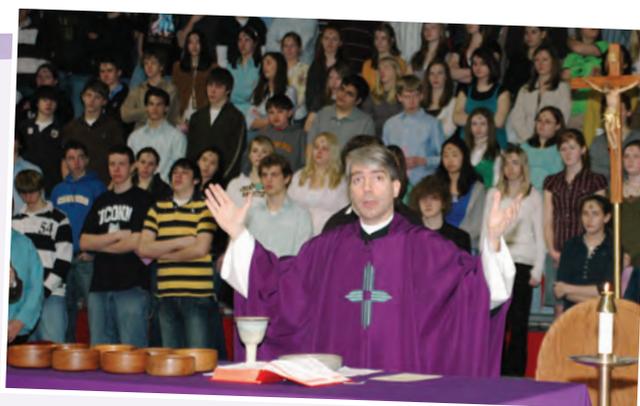
2 What does your school do to help students who may be hungry? How do you learn about who is hungry in the world?

3 What do the stores where you shop and the companies where your parents work do to end hunger?

4 What does your family do to end hunger?

When we gather as Catholics to worship, we gather around a table to celebrate Eucharist. ...It is Christ's sacrificial meal that nourishes us so that we can go forth and live the Gospel as his disciples. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* insists, "Eucharist commits us to the poor. To receive in truth the Body and Blood of Christ given up for us, we must recognize Christ in the poorest" (CCC, 1397).

—U.S. Bishops, *A Place at the Table*, 2002



A Simple Meal Students Respond to Pope Francis's Call For Mercy

Pope Francis wants all Catholics to pay attention to each other—whether it's a lonely kid at school or a homeless person on a sidewalk. When we fail to notice others, the pope says, we commit the sin of indifference. Instead, we are called to show mercy.

“To not see hunger, disease, exploited persons, this is a grave sin,” said Pope Francis. “It’s also a modern sin, a sin of today.”

It was in this spirit that the young people at Our Lady of Queen of Martyrs Catholic Church in Sarasota, Florida, participated in a special service project. Twice a week, an average of 100 people attend a support-group meeting at the parish center. The people in the group prefer to remain anonymous and, for the most part, they are.

Kathy Tortolano and Maryellen Wilson-Smith direct religious



education at the parish. They encouraged the students at the parish to reach out and offer support and encouragement by sharing a meal.

More than 30 students and their families met to assemble meals to be served at the group’s meetings that week. From preschoolers to high schoolers, each student had a job. The youngest decorated paper lunch bags with markers and foam stickers. Older kids made sandwiches, and also filled the bags with chips, candy, and water provided by local Knights of Columbus members.



With My Family and Friends



Pray

Thank you, Lord, for sending us an invitation to be a part of your family and to come to your celebration every Sunday!



Think

Why do I get excited about parties but sometimes forget that the best celebration is with God on Sunday?



Act

Look up the Sunday readings and read them before you get to church. See if you find new meanings when you hear the readings again at Mass.

Volunteers had enough supplies to fill 250 bags, so they shared the extra meals with a local charity that serves people who are homeless. Some of the older students shared their feelings after the event:

- I feel happy and excited. It reminds me of helping at a soup kitchen with my family. **—Julia**
- It feels really nice knowing I can help someone I don't know. **—Lydia**
- It made me appreciate more what we have. **—Alexandra**
- People receiving this food will know that someone cares. **—Shaymus**
- It's a great feeling to be more involved with the community and church, to feed the hungry and pray for them as God wants us to. **—Dana**

➤ For **free** at-home activities, visit [@](http://gospelweeklies.com/seasonal)