

Food and Drink and 'SACRED'

Man's general understanding of 'Food and Drink' is to enjoy the pleasure of eating three square meals a day and do no work (idiom). When we live to Eat and Drink we will certainly be sated with food and remain idle. Perhaps the better choice is to Eat and Drink in order to live. The example of a full bowl of rice and an empty glass illustrates man's wish to have comfort and attain success; but literally, if we eat rice and no longer drink and keep our glasses empty, we will have to choose death or offer our lives to others for a higher purpose.

In paradise, there were animals and plants and seafood galore, made by God for man to eat for the nourishment of our bodies. We have been fed by the Father Almighty with everything pure and good since the beginning of our world. Because of original sin, God pronounced judgement. He said to Adam: "Because of what you have done, the ground will be under a curse. You will have to work hard all your life to make it produce enough food for you. It will produce weeds and thorns, and you will have to eat wild plants. You will have to work hard and sweat to make the soil produce anything, until you go back to the soil from which you were formed. You were made from soil, and you will become soil again". (Genesis 3 17:19). Now our earthly fathers, who we respect and wait for their return after a hard day's work, we dine together as a family with warmth and love because our fathers have toiled hard so that we may have food to eat.

Our mothers continue to look after or cook themselves so that food will not be raw when served on the table. Instead methods of frying with oil, boiling with water, blanching, stewing, steaming, roasting, baking, etc, are used. In essence, in creating the pyramid of healthy eating and drinking, intermittent fasting of 8 hrs of food and 16 hrs of no food and drinks are followed by many in today's daily consumption practices.

Ouyang Xiu (1007-1072) was a Chinese poet, historian and statesman of the Song dynasty who reintroduced the simple "ancient style" in Chinese. Living in the countryside, he often wrote about the beauty of nature and the pleasures of drinking wine. He called himself ("Old Drunkard"). "Old Drunkard Pavilion" has become one of the most celebrated works in Chinese literature. He wrote "Wine-lovers' heart is not in the cup" (idiom)

Wu Jingzi (1701-1754) He was a novelist in the Qing Dynasty, He wrote about Nanking's social custom of being "More than Rich"....He wrote with satire and humour.

Then today's small fruit coffee arabica, and the biggest growth of Brazilian coffee, the middle sized fruit of Robusta coffee and the cheaper version of 'instant coffee' are all favorites of peoples' daily drinks. And so is Tea, or Chai as called in India. Because of Chinese Teas' economical value to the West, an Opium War was fought causing millions of deaths of Chinese addicted to opium. Under England's culture of "afternoon tea", this became a stylish way of enjoying tea and bits or sweet delicacies, between lunch and dinner.

Adding on to the many new choices of drinks, fizzy or carbonated drinks are also popular with the young. Soft drinks now known as alcohol free still contain 0.5% of alcohol (natural or man made).

Andreas Sigismund Marggraf was a German chemist whose discovery of beet sugar in 1747 led to the development of the modern sugar industry.

Under the ruling of England, India has formulated the way to produce 'salt'. As the Government has the only right to produce salt, there was the 1930 demonstration of the country of India led by Mahatma Gandhi, a famous peaceful march of Indians to the sea, to obtain salt. This was led to beating and punishment by the English soldiers.

Edward Colstan (1636-1721) English Anglican gained much wealth from the slavery trade, during the time of sugar production from cane plantation. Even such basic seasonings we use today has instigated much suffering and injustice among poorer countries. In 2013, the movement of Black Lives Matters spread in the West, and slavery was abolished in 2020 June.

With sea salt crystal, Fleur de sel/ Salt flowers were used by the French to be sprinkled on dishes and to be melted in the mouth to enhance one's taste of food.

In ancient times, BC480-450, From the island of Sassos in Greece, in Turkey's Istanbul's Museum, is displayed an intricate carving of a feast for the dead on a grave's headstone.

In China, we celebrate the dead to enjoy a paper made feast to be burnt for them to grant eating and drinking after death.

Fr. Gu Baohu writes , food and wine sacrifice to God are Christian's ways of giving thanksgiving and offerings to atone for our sins.

Epicurus 341-270 B.C.E. He said, every beginning of eating is for one's pleasure. We should pay attention to the simplicity of feeding, so as to turn away from desire of "over thirst or longing for more". He stressed one should consider first who we eat with over what we eat.

Ludwig Feuerbach 1804-1872, An atheist, German anthropologist and philosopher, best known for his criticism of idealism and religion, especially Christianity. He believes man eats what he is and that we are what we eat. "Nature" is his religion and man should give thanks to the farmers for their crops and the animals whose blood and meat were eaten.

Rev. Howard LUI, S.J. advocates Christians to fasting as a manner to give, charity and love, and atone for one's sin. There are many ways of repentance and fasting is one. The bible stresses: Fasting, prayer and charity gains better relationship to God and man, it is one's willingness to renounce temptation, and depend and trust in Jesus crucified on the holy cross.

Vegetarianism is ecological, healthy, and is now popular with religious and ordinary people around the world, especially those who refuse the killing of animals for food.

The Vegetarian is a 2007 novel by South Korean author Han Kang, winner of 2024 Nobel Prize in Literature. A South Korean woman's sudden vegetarianism begins a parable both serene and violent.

Dr. Fritz Allhoff wrote books on epicurean philosophy. His book "Food and Philosophy" offers a collection of essays which explore a range of philosophical topics related to food. (Eat, Drink, and be Merry)

Albert J. Bellows (1829-1883) wrote the book "The Philosophy of Eating" The science of physical health. Muscular strength and Mental activity by means of diet... As a Christian, he thanks God for His creations for man to enjoy Food and Drink.

Raymond D. Boisvert , professor emeritus of philosophy, teaching at Siena College, Albany N.Y. His book is: I Eat, Therefore I Think : Food and Philosophy radically rethinks the key philosophical concerns by approaching the subject via a crucial by often overlooked prism: the stomach. Combining stomach and mind, this book allows us to chart new pathways for dealing with ethics, aesthetics, religion, social/political questions, and our general understanding of reality and of humans in it. (Do we trust to eat food and drink served on our tables)

N. Dane Scott, the book called "Food, Genetic Engineering and Philosophy of Technology", it writes about Magic Bullets, Technological Fixes and Responsibility to the Future. We have to date no ability to decipher how changing natural food DNAs is an acceptable norm and the future is vague and uncertain that man should alter what was originally created by God.

Julian Baggini, philosopher, his book "How the World Eats" is an attempt to come to terms, ethically and logically, with the implications of producing food on an industrial scale and moving it from one part of the world to another; the fair share of the benefits of all : farmers, wholesalers, retailers, food production factories....

Michiel Korthals (1949...) a philosopher; his books, Before Dinner, writes about philosophy and ethics of food, philosophy of agriculture, of nature. His point is that during meals, it can be times to make peace, or argue or a chance for revenge. Food is an important part of what we need, but we cannot overestimate the meaning of 'Food' either.

Monsignor Zhao Yizhou (1926-2015) . He served Taiwan for many years, without forgetting mainland China. As bread is a staple food, monsignor Zhao asks us to eat and share this bread with others. Jesus is the WORD, became man and used His body and blood as man's true food for the soul's nourishment.

Monica Liu (1928-2016) Catholic and a very famous artist in Taiwan, also in religious art. She graded “food and drink” into 3 rankings:

1. First, God’s creation and Man’s obedience: God gave us food for mankind
2. Second, Covenant of God and alliance with man: God’s words nourishes man
3. Third, the Gospel with charity and love: God is His earthly children’s food; Jesus gives us his Body and Blood as food for our souls when we receive the Holy Communion

Father Hou Jingwen talks about man taking a meal is a big move, as the meal offered is not sacred, but with the etiquette, it may reinforce the connections between God and man. As Christians, we anticipate and await Jesus’ coming. The Lord has drawn the curtains of His feast with us, which covenant has been sealed with His blood. In the end, everyone will be face to face with the Lord at the end of the world.

Saint Ignatius of Antioch was a significant early Christian bishop and martyr. His life and teachings illustrate the strength and resilience of faith in the face of persecution, contributing to the notion that “ the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church. He wanted to be eaten by lions and to become the wheat of God, grinded to clean flour to be made as bread. He did not wish to eat man’s food but only wanted to eat the food of God which is Jesus’ body, and he wished to drink Jesus’ blood so that the Love of God will never vanish.

In closing, let us review from the Bible , Jesus view of eating and drinking:

The Lord’s aspiration, vision and heart:

Matthew 9:10-11

While Jesus was having a meal in Matthew’s house, many tax collectors and other outcasts came and joined Jesus and his disciples at the table. Some Pharisees saw this and asked his disciples, “Why does your teacher eat with such people?”
((Matthew 9:13 Jesus said , Go and find out what is meant by the scripture that says: It is kindness that I want, no animal sacrifices, I have not come to call respectable people, but outcasts.))

Luke 19: 5-6

When Jesus came to that place, he looked up and said to Zacchaeus, “Hurry down, Zacchaeus, because I must stay in your house today. Zacchaeus hurried down and welcomed him with great joy.
((Luke 19: 9-10 Jesus said “ Salvation has come to this house today, for this man, also, is a descendant of Abraham. The Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”))

John 1, 2

Two days later there was a wedding in the town of Cana in Galilee. Jesus’ mother was there, and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding.

John 2 :10 the man in charge of the feast said to the bridegroom “Everyone else serves the best wine first, and after the guests have drunk a lot, he serves the ordinary wine. But you have kept the best wine until now.”

((John 2:11 Jesus performed this first miracle in Cana in Galilee; there he revealed his glory, and his disciples believed in Him.))

Luke 15:22-24

But the father called his servants. “Hurry!” he said. ‘Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and shoes on his feet. Then go and get the prize calf and kill it, and let us celebrate with a feast! For this son of mine was dead, but now he is alive; he was lost, but now he has been found.’ And so the feast began.

((Luke 15: 31-32 ‘My son, the father answered, ‘you are always here with me, and everything I have is yours. But we had to celebrate and be happy, because your brother was dead, but now he is alive; he was lost, but now he has been found’))

John 13:2

Jesus and his disciples were at supper. The Devil had already put into the heart of Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, the thought of betraying Jesus.

((John 13:26-27 Jesus answered, ‘I will dip some bread in the sauce and give it to him; he is the man.’ So He took a piece of bread, dipped it, and gave it to Judas, the son of Siman Iscariot. As soon as Judas took the bread, Satan entered into him, Jesus said to him, ‘Hurry and do what you must!’))

John 13:18

I am not talking about all of you; I know those I have chosen. But the scripture must come true that says, ‘The man who shared my food turned against me’.

((John 13:19-20 Jesus said I tell you this now before it happens, so that when it does happen, you will believe that ‘I Am Who I Am’. I’m telling you the truth; whoever receives anyone I send receives me also; and whoever receives me receives Him who sent me.’))

Matthew 14:15-16

That evening his disciples came to him and said, ‘It is already very late, and this is a lonely place. Send the people away and let them go to the villages to buy food for themselves.’ ‘They don’t have to leave,’ answered Jesus. ‘You yourselves give them something to eat!’

((Matthew 14:18-20 ‘Then bring them here to me,’ Jesus said. He ordered the people to sit down on the grass; then he took the five loaves and the two fish, looked up to heaven, and gave thanks to God. He broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people. Everyone ate and had enough. Then the disciples took up twelve baskets full of what was left over.))

Luke 22:29-30

‘And just as my Father has given me the right to rule, so I will give you the same right. You will eat and drink at my table in my Kingdom, and will sit on thrones to rule over the twelve tribes of Israel’.

((Luke 27 Jesus said 'who is greater, the one who sits down to eat or the one who serves? The one who sits down, of course. But I am among you as one who serves.'))

Luke 12:37

"How happy are those servants whose master finds them awake and ready when he returns! I tell you, he will take off his coat, have them sit down, and will wait on them".

((Luke 12: 40 Jesus said, 'and you too, must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you are not expecting him'.))

How Jesus views the meaning of eating and drinking:

John 6:32-35

"I am telling you the truth," Jesus said, "What Moses gave you was not the bread from heaven, it is my Father who gave you the real bread from heaven. For the bread that God gives is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." "Sir, " they asked him, " give us this bread always." "I am the bread of life," Jesus told them. "Those who come to me will never be hungry; those who believe in me will never be thirsty.

((John 6 :40 Jesus said "For what the Father wants is that all who see the Son and believe in him should have eternal life. And I will raise them to life on the last day."))

Luke 22:14-16

When the hour came, Jesus took his place at the table with the apostles. He said to them, 'I have wanted so much to eat this Passover meal with you before I suffer! For I tell you, I will never eat it until it is given its full meaning in the Kingdom of God.'

((Luke 22:20 Jesus said, "This cup is God's new covenant sealed with my blood, which is poured for you.''))

Matthew 26:29

"I tell you I will never drink this wine until the day I drink the new wine with you in my Father's Kingdom"

((Matthew 26: 26-28 The Lord's Supper: While they were eating, Jesus took a piece of bread, gave a prayer of thanks, broke it, and gave it to his disciples. "Take and eat it," he said; "this is my body." Then he took a cup, gave thanks to God, and gave it to them. "Drink it, all of you," he said; "this is my blood, which seals God's covenant, my blood pours out for many for the forgiveness of sins.''))

Thanks be to God
Amen

