

Food for Thought

Lent Course 2017

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Lent reflections for the Church Urban Fund

These reflections are intended to be equally helpful for individuals working alone, or groups working together; small groups or whole congregations.

Each week takes the Common Lectionary Sunday Readings as a jumping off point, and then moves to other scriptures.

Foreword

Lent is a chance to interrogate our relationship with food - perhaps the most basic relationship we have with the world around us.

In many ways "food is the new rock and roll", but despite shows like "The Great British Bake-Off", these days we do less and less actual cooking ourselves, and more and more consuming of what others, or machines, have created for us.

Today food is politics, food is class, food is religion, food is society - but that was equally true in Jesus' day. In "Bake off" land, Mary Berry is a voice of authority from a confident middle England and Paul Hollywood embodies a "working man done good" persona we like to affirm. At the same time, in Nadiya Hussain, one Asian mum has become an icon of hope to the wider British society, holding out the possibility that we can negotiate our current cultural minefields, and find a friendly face within the seemingly alien world of Islam.

But the reality of food for so many people in our country today is far away from the shining kitchens we see on TV. Many people are struggling just to keep warm and keep fed, especially if they have children to support. Problems with food are often signs of wider problems like debt, ill health or general poverty - and so Lent is a time to explore salvation in a holistic sense - how God calls us into fullness of life - and that's a story that always culminates at Easter!

"We are what we eat" - nothing goes deeper than things that we take into ourselves. The food we eat becomes the molecules that make up our bodies, our hearts and minds. The food choices we make display our passions and commitments to the world. A considered choice to fast or to become vegan, or a vegetarian - or any number of other minority food commitments present a real challenge to the assumptions and practices of the majority. Some choose to pay more for organic or high welfare food - but how moral is that when so many cannot even afford basic foodstuffs?

Debate about what could or could not be eaten by Gods people is a major theme in both Jesus' and St Paul's ministry, in their difficult dialogue with their Jewish inheritance. The prayer Jesus taught his disciples contains the plea that we might find enough to eat each day we live. Today, fasting at Ramadan is one of the main ways British Muslims make their faith visible each year. Food - whether we partake or whether we refrain - is always saying something about what we believe.

Let's explore!

Lent 1

Reflecting on the Sunday Readings

In the book of Genesis, the whole idea that as humans we have fallen away from an original state of grace and closeness to God is expressed in terms of eating.

In Genesis 2:15-17 and 3:1-7, humanity is placed in a garden full of edible plants which can be freely eaten - but God sets in place a limit on our freedom, reserving one tree, which somehow represents a degree of knowledge that is inappropriate for humans. In the story we transgress this boundary, and eat the forbidden fruit, and so enter into life as we know it now - a life we all find is often filled with discontent, and where we frequently feel far away from God.

In the season of Lent we seek to recover some degree of what was lost in "the fall". We voluntarily place a limit on our eating and drinking, and make time to be close to God.

Psalms 32 expresses a sense of returning to closeness with God after a time of alienation.

Romans 5:12-19 proclaims the very tangible hope Christians have of the complete reversal of what we call "the fall" in God's future. This turn around has begun with the coming of Jesus Christ, and will be fulfilled in God's good time. Jesus is God's free gift to us, reversing the dominion of sin and death, and replacing them with grace and righteousness. This power of Christ to transform our lives rests on his conquest of sin and death at Easter - but Matthew 4:1-11 shows us that he was master of his own appetite and able to resist all temptation from the beginning of his public ministry.

Reflection:

The story of the "Garden of Eden" contains the sense that some things count as "dangerous knowledge" for human beings. Certainly, in society today, we obsess about what we eat, but however much knowledge or skill we seem to accumulate in relation to food, we seem never to get to a point of peace and satisfaction. We try to "do the right thing", but we know that sooner or later the newspapers will tell us we've got it all wrong and that the latest research proves that the wonder food we put our faith in is in fact not so good for us!

This Lent, consider if both our appetite for, and our anxiety about, food is an expression of our basic state of distance from God. Certainly, many great saints and religious communities have been characterised by restraint and simplicity in eating - and many great sinners have been known for gluttony and excess!

Can the simple act of "giving up something for Lent" make a real difference to you? Will that make you feel you can step off the treadmill of worrying about what you eat for a while? Do you need to go further, and try fasting by giving up a meal or more on a regular basis this Lent? Or would just eating more simply in an intentional way over the season help you?

Read Mark 1:1-11

These verses are the oldest elements of the tradition handed down to us about Jesus and his ministry. In the opening to Mark's gospel, (which was later used as a source by Matthew and Luke), John the Baptist is seen as a messenger, preparing the way for God's decisive action in Jesus and his ministry. John's mission is understood as a fulfilment of the prophecies given long before to Isaiah.

John offers people the opportunity to "turn around" their lives (to "repent" means to "change direction").

John is someone who has consciously stepped aside from the norms of his society, including those on diet. Instead of living from the produce of traditional farming, and obeying the complex Jewish food laws, he is living off whatever he can find in the wilderness of Judea. Only insects and their by-products are mentioned in the text! John must have seemed as strange and challenging to his original audience as he does to us. However, making what we might call a pilgrimage or a retreat, to join him in the wild places, and be washed in the river Jordan, proved irresistible to so many of the city-dwellers of Jerusalem. It was also an essential rite of passage for Jesus, as he moved from the quiet preparation of his early life into the intensity of the three years of public ministry that led inexorably into his death and resurrection.

Questions for further reflection:

1. Most people live within easy reach of a retreat house, monastery or centre of pilgrimage. Have you taken the time to explore such places in your area? If so, did the experience help you?
2. Have you ever made a special journey to hear a Christian speaker? Was it worth it? Did it lead you to "turn around" any part of your life?
3. CUF supports many projects that help people turn around their lives, often with the very basic issue of feeding themselves and their families. Why not read the report <https://www.cuf.org.uk/hungry-for-more> ? You may like to break it down into shorter sections. Why not explore some of the stories that come out of CUF's work on the CUF website or YouTube (just search for Church Urban Fund). Gemma's story from Together Middlesbrough takes 5 minutes 30 seconds to watch and is really inspiring, and gives you the essence of what's in the written report: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tdnz_Miys4Q

Lent 2

Reflecting on the Sunday Readings

Genesis 12:1-4 is a vital part of the "genealogy of hope" which the Bible traces through many generations from the "fall" of humanity through to its redemption in Christ. God calls Abraham to go out on a journey, away from what he has known, to explore a new land. God promises him greatness - as a blessing to others. Perhaps your Lent experience will be a journey that leads you to bless others?

Psalms 121 offers us reassurance that God is with us in all our journeying.

In Romans 4:1-5, 13-17 St Paul revisits God's promises to Abraham, as he builds his argument that we are saved by our faith in God, not our adherence to the actions prescribed in the laws of the Old Testament.

In John 3:1-17, Jesus, in the strongest and most poetic terms, draws a great divide between what is of God's kingdom, the new birth of baptism and the Holy Spirit, the things of heaven and eternal life - his mission in order that "the world might be saved through him" - and "what is born of flesh" and "earthly things".

Both Jesus and Paul seem to be placing our typical practical human preoccupation with what we eat firmly in a place of secondary importance to our more purely spiritual relationship with God.

Reflection

Much of the Old Testament law was about food regulations, e.g. Leviticus 11:1-20. Some of these rules seem to have their root in good common sense for keeping people healthy in the Mediterranean environment. Other rules seem to arise from a sense of reverence and respect towards all living things (Leviticus 17:10-16).

However, by the time of Jesus these basic rules had evolved into a huge system we might describe as "food legalism", which separated those who observed it from the rest of society. In particular, following food regulations embedded within scripture seemed to be taking precedence over the wider Biblical agenda of justice and mercy.

Jesus and Paul don't deny all value to the legal traditions they had been raised in, but made it clear that it they were of a different and inferior importance to God's grace and especially his saving action in Jesus Christ.

Do you sometimes worry that the "food fads" of our own time can approach the strictness and intensity of the food laws of the Old Testament? Do you think a lot about what you eat, or do you just "go with the flow"?

Read Mark 2:13-28

These incidents are foundational traditions about Jesus and his priorities, and are also recorded by Luke (5:27 - 6:9) and Matthew (12:1-14). These stories share a sense of urgency and opportunity - through Jesus, something is happening that demands a response, and sets aside inherited caution and scruple. The reality of what's happening in Jesus' ministry is expressed in terms of food and drink.

Jesus calls a "bad person", Levi the tax collector, to follow him, and sits down to eat with him and other disreputable people. Whereas other spiritually serious people, including John the Baptist's followers, had fasted, Jesus' disciples do not, at least for now. Jesus proclaims that his ministry is as full of power and effervescence as new wine! Jesus then claims the authority and mantle of King David, who ate as necessity and opportunity demanded.

Jesus' actions seem to have embodied a sense that God's perfect future was breaking in to our imperfect present, through his ministry.

Jesus embodies a rejoicing freedom, which is irresistibly attractive - intoxicating even. But, if we're honest, the sense of "getting a bit carried away" might also cause us some alarm, and some sympathy for the Scribes and Pharisees looking on!

Questions for further reflection:

1. Do you ever feel a bit "carried away" in your Christian life, whether in times of worship or prayer or fellowship? If not, would you like the opportunity to explore a more spontaneous dimension of spirituality?
2. In practice, would you be able to sit down and eat and drink with people who are very different from you, and perhaps "disreputable" in some way, as Jesus did?
3. French wine makers often describe their wine in terms of "panache", suggesting "a flamboyant confidence of style or manner" (Oxford English Dictionary). Do you ever wish that the church of today could show a bit more panache?
4. CUF does address the serious issues of today with confidence. Why not explore the reports, research and resources on its website some more? Are you aware of any CUF partnerships in your area?

Lent 3

Reflecting on the Sunday Readings

Exodus 17:1-7 is another story of God's people journeying, this time on their long and winding road from slavery in Egypt to freedom in the Promised Land. It is a time of testing and quarrelling, as the people Moses is leading lose hope within the harshness of the desert environment. Moses named the grim place they got to after what happened there - Massah means "test" and Meribah means "quarrel".

Psalms 95 harks back to that time. Moses found water for the people hidden in the rocks, and the psalm calls God "the rock of our salvation". The psalmist urges us to stay positive, worship God, and trust in our relationship with God as his "people" and his "sheep".

In Romans 5:1-11, St Paul is still looking back at the faith of Abraham, which stood independently of any legal code, as an analogy to our faith in Jesus Christ. He wants our faith to rest solely on the action of God "who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead" (Romans 4:25). The heart of faith is the understanding that Jesus "was handed over to death for our trespasses and was raised for our justification" (4:26). Once this is firmly established, Paul rejoices in the peace which the grace of God revealed in Christ gives. His enthusiasm is hard to resist as he says "God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit" (5:5) and "God proves his love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us".

In John 4:5-42 Jesus is again transgressing legalistic social conventions to share deeper spiritual truth. He reaches out across the social divide between Jews and Samaritans, and men and women. Normally this would have meant that they could not share a drink of ordinary water together. Instead, the spiritual "living water" he shares with her releases such power in her that she also overcomes the barrier that had existed between her and her own community. Jesus then echoes his earlier analogy with water by speaking of his work in doing God's will as being like food which meets all his needs.

Reflection

Throughout the history of the church there has been a fundamental conviction that the coming of Jesus into the world, and his ministry of teaching and self-giving, changes everything. Jesus Christ is the ultimate "game changer" - in his presence, nothing stays the same, old evils are confronted, new possibilities arise.

How real does this seem to you at the moment? Have you ever felt that knowing about Jesus was bringing a new, life-changing resource in your life? Is anything that you are doing or trying this Lent actually helping you spiritually at the moment?

Read Revelation 22:1-7

We all need a sense of where things are headed - especially if, we are engaged with situations of real suffering and hardship which can leave us drained and anxious. Here, at the conclusion of the New Testament, the image of the water of life recurs, and is seen to be flowing directly to us from God and the Lamb (Jesus, God incarnate).

The bible begins with the picture of a garden, watered by a great river, and made specifically for humanity (Genesis 2:7-10,15). It finishes with a picture of a city with God's water of life flowing through its heart (Revelation 22:1-2).

The overall narrative is one of God creating humanity in love, seeing us "fall" away, and pursuing us in love, which is revealed specifically in Jesus Christ. He gives us a foretaste of the ultimate triumph of God's loving purposes in our world. Until that day comes, we work with the light of the hope it arouses in our hearts and minds.

A common dream for city dwellers is an "escape to the country" - a longing to go "back to Eden". But, the Bible seems to say that God is going to redeem our cities instead! CUF came into being because of a report the Church of England published called "Faith in the City", and it continues to work wherever poverty and deprivation exist.

Once again, food is the down to earth heart of the Biblical vision! The city of God's future has a tree straddling the river of the water of life, producing an abundance of fruit. Perhaps this is the redemption of the tree of knowledge, which we could not handle in the Garden of Eden, but will one day learn to harness for the good of all?

However, the image that speaks most to me is that of "the leaves of the tree" which are "for the healing of the nations". There is clearly a lot of healing work to do before the vision of Revelation can be realised. For so many people, it is someone sitting down with them, plus a drink of tea, and listening, which is the beginning of a healing process. For so many churches, it is opening their doors and offering some kind of "community cafe" - where the leaves of the tea bush are infused in hot water - that leads them to a new level of effectiveness and impact.

Questions for further reflection:

1. Have you had any experience of healing within the context of your faith or the life of the church? Have you ever had the opportunity to offer support, prayer, hope or healing to others?
2. Does the gap between God's ultimate vision for us and our day to day reality ever seem unbridgeable to you? Or do you see small, achievable steps we can take, which have meaning within this wider vision?
3. Is there more that you or your church could be doing? What might be realistic, achievable and sustainable for you and your community? Are there ideas or information on the CUF website that could come alive in your context?

Lent 4

Reflecting on the Sunday Readings

1 Samuel 16:1-13 sees the prophet Samuel on a covert mission to anoint a new king of Israel, (soon revealed as David, the shepherd boy), under the nose of the old king, Saul. He achieves this through the pretext of sharing a sacrifice to the Lord with Jesse and his sons. We normally focus on the practice of animal sacrifice from the point of view of worship of God and atonement for human sin. However, this perspective can prevent us from seeing that an event which involved roasting a whole cow and sharing most of the meat amongst a large group of men would have resembled an enormous barbecue party much more than the kind of acts of worship we enjoy today!

Psalms 23 gives us an intimate glimpse into the spirituality of King David, remembered, despite his many failings, as "a man after God's own heart".

Ephesians 5:8-14 reminds us that, though St Paul is at pains to show us that ethical behaviour in itself does not set us right with God, he still believes good behaviour is crucial in honouring God. Paul and Jesus seem to have preferred their disciples to cultivate a Spirit-led discernment rather than to develop a rigid legal code. However, Paul is clear that greed (5:3 & 5) and sexual immorality are a "darkness" (5:8) which contrasts with the "light" of Christ (5:8,9).

John 9 is a tale of deep conflict between the light and life of Jesus and his way, and the theology of his opponents. The chapter begins with the question of whether suffering is a deserved punishment for sins committed. Jesus denies this - he says rather that suffering creates an opportunity for God to bring transformation. Jesus heals the man born blind, who is then subjected to an extended interrogation by Jesus' enemies. Their parting words to the healed man reveal the bankruptcy of their position - they believe his suffering was deserved because he was "born entirely in sins" (9:34). Jesus concludes that his opponents are the ones who are truly blind.

Reflection

Society today progresses by writing new laws, issuing new guidelines, and offering training. These things have their place, and every CUF supported project is shaped by these directive forces. And yet, the newspapers always seem to be full of the next scandal, generally caused by people who knew what the rules were, but chose to ignore them. The government now has a special "Behavioural Insights Team" of psychologists, who seek to subtly "nudge" the public towards "doing the right thing". They modify the wording of public communications such as income-tax demands and speed penalty notices to make them more persuasive, because the traditional approach of "carrot and stick" is so ineffective in changing people's behaviour!

Our very flexible approach to Lent in modern times seems to flow from the same human logic. Within the church we are not prescriptive about what types of fasting or discipleship Christians should undertake, as we might have been in former ages, but we encourage people to find their own way of marking the season. And yet - part of us would love to be told exactly what to do, so we would not have the responsibility of deciding for ourselves...

Read Galatians 2:11-21

Food and drink can bring out the legalist in all of us. We can be divided over the merits of organic food, fair trade products, vegetarianism and more. Perhaps even more powerful is food snobbery - what we eat can embody feelings of superiority over others that would otherwise remain unknown. There ought to be a higher point of unity that brings us together, despite everything - but somehow it's almost impossible to sit down together in peace if the people at one end of the table are observing one set of food rules, and those at the other end another set of rules. The best solution is usually to work out who is the "host" on any given occasion, and let them set the rules!

In St Paul's letter to the churches of Galatia, he recalls how he cried "foul!" against St Peter over the issue of table fellowship. United by faith in Christ, he and Peter as Jewish Christians had regularly eaten together with Greek Christians, because their common faith in Jesus was more important than their different backgrounds. However, when some Christians from Jerusalem who wanted gentile (non Jewish) believers to be circumcised like them, came along, Peter followed their Jewish practice of not eating with the uncircumcised.

To St Paul, this crossed a "red line". He too was proud of his Jewish heritage, and respectful of other Jewish Christians, but he could not tolerate this division of those who should be united. He believed that something new had come into the world through Christ, and that "a person is justified (made right with God) not by the works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ" (Galatians 2:16). Paul keeps emphasising that putting our faith in what God has done for us in Jesus is what makes the difference. He concludes by pointing out that if works of the law like circumcision were enough to put us right with God then there would have been no need for Christ to die for us (2:21). The upshot of all this is that if someone is accepted by God because of their faith in Jesus Christ, then how can anyone who shares that faith refuse to sit down and eat with them because they lack some other sign of faith such as circumcision?

Questions for further reflection:

1. How far would you be prepared to go outside of your comfort zone to share fellowship with other Christians? How much can you focus on the common faith you share with others, whatever their social or ethnic difference from you? How much does their cultural difference from you make the intimate sharing of table fellowship seem repugnant?
2. Do you struggle to accept the presence of other food traditions as "near neighbours" in your community? Would you find it hard if a local shop you currently value changed hands and became a place where you don't feel at home any more? Would you struggle if new neighbours moved in and cooked intrusively strong flavours next door to you every day?
3. CUF works ecumenically on food projects - why not look up the work of Together Middlesbrough, which has brought churches together to address food poverty in their community, especially "holiday hunger", which hits families when the free school meals which keep them going in term time are not available? CUF also manages the Near Neighbours project, which has become recognised for its outstanding achievements in bringing faith communities together and increasing community cohesion.

Lent 5

Reflecting on the Sunday Readings

Ezekiel 37:1-14 is a crucial text that stands behind so much of the ministry of Jesus and the testimony of the whole New Testament. The vision given to Ezekiel of the resurrection of Israel anticipates the resurrection of Jesus. Because he is the messianic representative of the people of God, he is the "first fruit" of the new life God is bringing into being. Christ's resurrection points to the eventual transformation of the whole created order - which is partly realised in the life of the church in our own time, as the wind of the Holy Spirit blows through it. We are heirs to the prophecies of the Old Testament, and their fulfilment in the New Testament. Can you take hold of them so they mean something your own life? Or do they seem completely beyond your experience?

In Psalm 130, the writer seems to be crying out for some kind of experience of resurrection - but in this low place, they know they can trust the character of God as forgiving, loving and redeeming.

Romans 8:6-11 invites us to live in the light of the resurrection. There are two ways to live - one way, powered by the Spirit of Christ, connects us to the resurrection - the other knows nothing of the resurrection, and is trapped in hostility to God. The resurrection enlarges our view of the world, and takes us beyond the futility of the ordinary pattern of life, as defined by sin and death.

John 11:1-45 shows us a harrowing and exhilarating example of life lived in the light of the future resurrection. It both has the pattern and shape of the resurrection to come, in that Lazarus is raised from the dead - but it also falls short of it, in that Lazarus is raised to re-enter a normal life that will end in due course, not yet into a new world order. It is clear from the start that Jesus is "using" this painful episode as a means of teaching his disciples something about God's long term plans, however inhumane that may seem as a short term response to the needs of his friends. Martha affirms her faith in a future day of resurrection (11:24). Jesus tells her that in him, that future "day" has come into the here and now (11:25-26), through him.

Reflection

In most churches, the shared symbolic meal which they refer to as "the Eucharist", "Holy Communion" or "the Mass" is the most regular proclamation of the resurrection that takes place. In this sacramental liturgy we are invited to think of Jesus both as someone whose death and resurrection was a historical event of world changing importance, as someone who is present with us as we pray, and as someone who will return in glory as the consummation of human history. In our churches this faith in the past, present and future significance of Christ's resurrection is expressed in a multitude of phrases throughout the service within which the bread is blessed and broken, but is also encapsulated in a simple summary formula such as "Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again".

Read Luke 22:7-20

Matthew, Luke and Mark all place Jesus' "Last Supper" with his disciples in the context of the Passover meal. This meal is a fundamental part of the Jewish spirituality which Jesus and his disciples shared, and it continues as an unbroken tradition within the Jewish community to this day.

The Passover meal celebrates and commemorates the beginning of the Exodus of the Jewish people out of slavery in Egypt and the beginning of their journey out of their suffering towards settlement in a land they could call home, Israel.

In Jesus' "Last Supper" with his disciples, he takes and transforms the Passover tradition so that it becomes a story for all humanity, which will be finally fulfilled when the Kingdom of God is fully revealed. In the original Exodus story the blood of a lamb saved the people. In the experience of Jesus' disciples he becomes what the liturgy calls "the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world".

So, Jesus' impending self-sacrifice becomes the means by which a new Exodus is achieved, in which all who place their faith in him are included. The New Covenant which he institutes is one of liberation from the oppression of sin, and brings citizenship into a new homeland which is both empowering in our present life, and carries an eternal promise.

When we share in the bread and the wine which represent Jesus' complete self-giving, we accept a radical equality and fellowship with one another. Whatever our differences, no one can claim to be greater or lesser than another in the sight of God. We all fall equally short of the glory of what God has graciously done for us in Christ. We are all equally exalted when we accept by faith that we can participate in what God is offering to us. So, the life of the church in which we participate is founded on a story of liberation from oppression, leads us to discover new life in our current circumstances, and points us towards a greater fulfilment in the future.

Questions for further reflection:

1. The importance of the New Covenant meal in Christian life means it is surrounded by ritual, theological argument and tradition. Are you still able to get something rich and fulfilling out of it within your personal spirituality, despite all this? Or do you need to think and talk your way around it more to get to a place where you feel you can "see the wood for the trees"?
2. As this Lent course concludes, why not embrace whatever services are on offer in your community with enthusiasm, in the hope that you will discover new perspectives and insights into the central mysteries of our faith? If Holy Week is not already celebrated ecumenically in your local area, why not supplement your usual commitments with a taste of other church's traditions?
3. CUF people are Easter people. We know that sacrificial love is God's redemptive plan for the world. We believe that the resurrection is our past, our present and our future.

Afterword

The Eucharist obliges us to come together with people that we may not like or approve of in all sorts of ways. We have to accept that whatever our differences with those around us, we stand equal before the grace of God. But, a question immediately follows on. Is it enough to share radical mutual acceptance with others at the Eucharist, or do you actually need to share an ordinary meal with your fellow believer as well some time?

For much of society, the language of sin, concepts like temptation, or even heaven and hell - only have real day-to-day force in relation to food. "Sin" is when a person on a diet eats something they have promised to abstain from. "Sins" are lapses from the diet that one allows oneself (perhaps 3 or 4 a day seem to be acceptable!). "Heaven" is a great experience in a Michelin-starred restaurant, or a quirky bistro of unique charm. "Hell" is when the coffee lover has to settle for instant...

This may seem outrageous to traditional Christian eyes - perhaps we are more rightly focused on the big issues of justice or the environment? However, in Jesus' time, a good deal of the practical content of day to day religion was about food - what you ate, how you prepared it, who you ate it with, how you cleared up afterwards. Jesus, followed by Paul, brought revolutionary change, sweeping away regulations about certain food being "unclean" or which prevented "pious" people from eating with certain types of people.

But - how quickly we start creating rules again, that seek to micro-manage what can and cannot be eaten with a clean conscience. The thing is that our day to day consumption of food is one of the most tangible ways we can express our position on big issues like justice and the environment - and suddenly a wet blanket of legalism is thrown over the warmth and acceptance of the "great feast" that Jesus kept calling his followers to celebrate.

In the age of the consumer, our purchasing decisions are how we vote, it's how we do politics now. We decide that we think organic food is the way to a better environment - and suddenly serving organic food becomes a badge of honour - but those who can't afford it are excluded. We commit to buy fair trade products for our church - and the nice lady who donates a jar of Nescafé becomes an embarrassment. Tricky choices, every day.

There is no end to this process of reflection - it's "the stuff of life".

A note from CUF

We'd like to encourage you to keep questioning your attitude to food as you move in to Easter and after then, as well.

If you have been moved by this reflection, we'd also like to encourage you to donate through the form on the back or even host a Big Pancake Party (find out more at www.pancakeparty.org.uk).

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