

"Slow Food in a Fast Nation: Reflections on the Meaning of Meals"
Jean Humphreys

Where do we eat our meals? What do we eat? How do we eat our meals? Does any of this really matter? In *For the Life of the World: Sacraments and Orthodoxy*, Schemann introduces the importance of eating to the image of life. "Man must eat in order to live; he must take the world into his body and transform it into himself, into flesh and blood. He is indeed that which he eats, and the whole world is presented as one all-embracing banquet table for man. And this image of the banquet remains, throughout the whole Bible, the central image of life." (11) This paper will attempt to look at the way in which we eat our meals in a hurried nation and how this reflects our image of life. First of all we need to look the meaning of slow food. Actually first I need to get up and get the door, because the deliveryman is here with our Chinese food! Remember that like in most academic papers, I will deal with the ideal, but will try to mention reality occasionally.

Slow food is a movement which began in Italy and emphasizes spending time together over delicious, nutritious meals. "Slow Food tells members to prepare for 'suitable doses of guaranteed sensual pleasure and slow, long-lasting enjoyment.' If you have a good time while you eat, the movement argues, you'll have better meals. And a better life" (Kummer 18). This food is not necessarily "gourmet" or expensive, but is good wholesome food shared with others.

The friends opened a modest restaurant in the center of Bra, the Oseteria del Boccondivino, to serve good honest food at low prices. They held boisterous suppers that lasted until dawn, joining together pleasure and learning. All this was in a spirit opposite to the one national gourmet society then extant, a gentlemen's club that listed to the right. From the start the

group would combat every elitist tendency, every overpriced wine and fancied food. Any ritual smacking of secret societies would be ridiculed. Women were welcome, and so were people without much money to spend. Simple, good food of the land and bonhomie were values in themselves, the friends said. They distrusted 'moralistic revolutionaries' and, worse 'anyone who doesn't laugh.' (Kummer 19)

It is hard to imagine this movement beginning in our American culture, with meals eaten on the go and fast food seeming ubiquitous at every highway intersection, mall, school, and even in some churches. Brentwood Baptist Church in Houston now has a McDonald's (Schollosser 281). When comparing the difference between fast food and slow food, think of the changes in eating Sunday lunch at your grandmother's house (or at what you wish your grandmother's house was like) to grabbing something to eat at McDonald's on the way home Sunday from church.

The Slow Food movement stands in direct opposition to everything that a fast-food meal represents blandness, uniformity, conformity, the blind worship of science and technology. The McDonald's Corporation has a slogan, One Taste Worldwide, that perfectly encapsulates the stultifying, homogenizing effects of its global empire. Why would anyone want to live in such a world? What conceivable motive, other than the profit motive, would drive anyone to pursue one taste so ruthlessly? If fast food is the culinary equivalent of a sound bite, then Slow Food is an honest, thorough declaration of intents. Many tastes are better than one, this new movement says." (Kummer 10)

Massimo Salani, a Catholic theologian from Italy, stirred a huge debate when he said that fast food was Protestant. Remember that we found that McDonald's in a Baptist church.

"Food," Mr. Salani told the newspaper, is a "gift of God to humanity" that should be eaten in tranquillity because it contains "something sacred". "The fashion of fast food completely ignores the sacred nature of food," he continued. "People who go to McDonald's are looking for a quick meal. They gobble down food to satisfy their hunger so that they can move on to something else."

Asked by the newspaper whether this was a result of the "Protestant cultural model," Salani replied: "I know American society well enough to respond in the affirmative. The individual relationship between man and God established by Luther is also reflected in the way one eats. The communitarian aspect of sharing is missing. Fast food is certainly not a Catholic model." (The Anglican Journal)

George Ritzer, who developed the theme of McDonaldization, describes further the difference between eating as it was created and redeemed to be as a communal time to an event, which has been secularized.

Eating together was a fundamental basis of social order in which the exchange of gifts (especially food) took place. In Christianity, the bread and wine are exchanged as symbols of the sacred gift of body and blood. If we treat McDonaldization as a secularization of religious patterns of friendship and familiarity associated with sacred meals, then the McDonald's snack

represents a privatized and individualistic pattern of consumption which does not aim to build bonds of belonging. (28)

One explanation of the wide spread of fast food in our nation comes back to economics. The hourly wage as adjusted for inflation has declined since 1973, and with this decline more women have gone to work outside home. "The entry of so many women into the workforce has greatly increased demand for the types of services that housewives traditionally perform: cooking, cleaning, and childcare. A generation ago, three-quarters of the money used to buy food was spent to prepare meals at home. Today about half of the money used to buy food is spent at restaurants – mainly at fast food restaurants" (Schollosser 4). As families face tight economic times, they look for apparently cheap, quick food. "Americans now spend more money on fast food than on higher education, personal computers, computer software, or new cars. They spend more on fast food than on movies, books, magazines, newspapers, videos, and recorded music – combined" (3). Unfortunately Schollosser points out that this "cheap price" does not cover the real cost of fast food, "The annual cost of obesity alone is now twice as large as the fast food industry's total revenues" (261).

And fast food correlates with obesity, although it is harder to prove causation. However when countries are compared, those with higher amounts of fast food sold have higher amounts of obesity when analyzing the introduction and spread of fast food. "The United States now has the highest obesity rate of any industrialized nation in the world. More than half of all American adults and about one-quarter of all American children are now obese or overweight" (Schollosser 240). Schollosser's book is fascinating and also deals with some of the other

problems associated with fast food, including the high consumption of grain by cattle, unclean and unsafe working conditions in restaurants and meat processing plants, unfair labor practices, bacteria and diseases in ground beef, and other problems. We'll save these for another day!

In the United States, our marketers know that in order to get people's physical tastes hooked, either on tobacco or fast food they need to market to children. When young children eat at McDonald's, they learn to love the taste, associate it with toys and a playground, and bring their grandparents and parents with them.

The story of McDonald's manipulation of children is a disturbing one, how the company advertises to them, luring in children at a very young age, hooking them on collections of toys. And then hooking them on the food, which is famously defined by being salty-sweet. The child gets a burst of taste, which makes other foods seem bland in comparison. In time, the child gets hooked on a lifetime of this kind of consumption, this kind of food, which for most Americans is ultimately the last kind of food they need. They don't need the fat and calories and salt and sugar. An interesting study found that the health of immigrant children deteriorated the longer they were in the United States, in great measure because their diet comes to resemble that of American children, consisting of lots of junk foods. (Ritzer 27)

Our country is covered with corporations marketing their wares in schools, which have financial incentives for allowing this practice. "Students who lack the proper corporate school spirit do so at considerable risk. When Mike Cameron wore a

Pepsi shirt on 'Coke Day' at Greenbrier High School in Evans, Georgia, he was suspended for a day" (Moore 111).

With obesity, come many health problems, contributing "as much or more to the development of a group of chronic diseases, including cancer, as does smoking or poverty" (American Cancer Society). One cause found in this study by RAND Corporation researcher, Thun is "Big servings are used by fast-food places and inexpensive restaurants as marketing tools."

With this condemnation of fast food we need to keep a balanced perspective, for how many of us truly eat slow food at all times? In the words of one of the wise Sweet Potato Queens,

...I cannot bear fast food. I like food that can be prepared fast – but at home, not where I have to pay somebody for it. If I go to a restaurant, I want to sit down and have somebody come to the table and ask me what I want and then go fetch it for me and clean up after me. I despise standing at a counter and craning my neck up at a giant wall menu. I will drive through a Krystal, of course, but that's different, and only for special occasions like movies and New Year's Eve. (Browne 172-173)

We can be caught up on what to eat and spend so much time and thought on this subject we no longer enjoy the food that God has given us. We may have different views on whether Christians should eat a vegetarian diet based on Genesis 2 and 3 or eat meat as allowed by God for Noah in Genesis 9. Should we follow the diet of Daniel and only eat vegetables and water? Do we become caught up in the source of our food and not eat food raised or prepared by businesses who have "defrauded labors of their wages" as we read in Malachi 3:5? Salani speaks of this balance

"Where fast-food habits are the exception, there is no problem. When they become a way of life, they contribute to directing our attention away from the idea that food is a gift from God" (Pacitti.) If we do not keep a balanced perspective we can become the prodigal son's brother as described by Garrison Keillor.

People can forgive anybody for just about anything but they don't respect *nobody*, and so a miserable sinner with one redeeming virtue is equal to a righteous person with a secret fault. Maybe better. The prodigal son's brother learned that lesson one day about 6:00 P.M. in St. Luke's gospel when he stumbled through the back door bone-tired from another ten-hour day hoeing corn and heard happy voices and found a crowd of family friends on the patio, the fatted calf on the spit, the band warming up, the beer on ice, and the honored guest, Donnie, dressed in rags and smelling of pig ****, and his dad hugging him. His dad had never hugged him, hardly even squeezed his hand, his dad wasn't a hugger, but he was all wrapped around the prodigal. The brother said, 'What's happening? Oh, hi, Don. Nice to see ya, feller. *What's going on, Dad?*' Then he caught the gleam on Donnie's finger. 'The *emerald?* You're giving him the emerald ring that you told me - Dad, you promised me that ring. Two years ago. This isn't right Dad.' Hot angry tears filled his eyes, but nice person that he was, he also felt darn guilty about making a stink when everybody else in the parable was jumping up and down.

His dad said, "Look! It's Donnie! He left and now he's back! Be happy! We're having veal tonight!..."

Soon afterward, the brother joined a humane society opposed to cruel practices in the meat industry, e.g., calf fattening. ... You run off and waste your substance on riotous living with a fast crowd in Galilee, you shouldn't expect to come home and get a feast and a ring and a big hug. (Keillor 45-46)

Now let us look at what eating and meals should be through our Christian viewpoint. The Old Testament is full of injunctions concerning what to eat and how to treat the people we see in our fast food restaurants, the poor. In the New Testament, Christ repeatedly took care of people throughout His everyday life and evident in His miracles. How many times do we read of Christ eating and feeding His disciples? Remember that one of His few recorded acts after His resurrection was to tell these disciples where to fish.

It was out of compassion that Jesus performed several of his food-related miracles, such as turning a few loaves of bread and a few fish into enough food to feed thousands. Jesus commingled charity and compassion in a social setting. Even today, this is a powerful combination, and the evangelical energy of Jesus' actions and ideals lives on in the Christian ideals of charitable service within the community – ideals attainable through the path of the inner meal. As if to confirm this, a Benedictine monk once told me with a wink and a smile, 'The two things that Jesus does in the New Testament are to eat and to heal' (Altman 69).

Altman continues to say that communion was first demonstrated as part of a meal. This was part of the natural communion with both God and other believers. "At the time of the Last Supper, the sacrament of communion was not separate

from the meal. For many years that tradition carried on, and I can understand why. Eating after a Holy Communion reminds us that all food is sacred.

It allows the personal experience of God to be part of a shared communion with others. Every time we eat with others, we commune with them” (75). Remember that in Acts 6 deacons were first selected to daily distribute the food. Henri Nouwen describes a communion within the L’Arche community, which takes care of the severely disabled.

This afternoon I took the train to Paris to celebrate the Holy Thursday liturgy with the L’Arche community, ‘Nomaste.’ It was a very moving celebration. We gathered in the community room of Nomaste. There were about forty people. In his welcome, the director of the community, Toni Paoli, expressed his vision that L’Arche should be not simply a comfortable place for handicapped people, but as Christian community in which people serve one another in the name of Jesus. After the Gospel reading, he again proclaimed his deep love for Jesus. Then he stood up and washed the feet of four members of his community.

After the Eucharist, a rice dish, bread, and wine were brought and put on the altar. In silence, deepened by three short Gospel readings about God’s love, we shared this simple food.

Sitting in the basement room in Paris surrounded by forty poor people, I was struck again by the way Jesus concluded his active life. Just before entering on the road of his passion he washed the feet of his disciples and offered them his body and blood as food and drink. These two acts belong

together. They are both an expression of God's determination to show us the fullness of his love. (158-159)

Stepping away from the redemptive power of communion, we still see the meaning of slow food at some points in our culture, particularly at funerals. In *Miriam's Kitchen*, Elizabeth Ehrlich, describes a journey of learning to cook with her Jewish mother-in-law, and of learning her Jewish heritage through this journey. In this scene, she reflects on the death of her grandmother.

People come. The family must not be alone, even if it prefers solitude. There will be visitors, a stream of murmuring, kissing, weeping relatives, friends, and neighbors, colleagues, members of the synagogue. They will bring gifts of good and drink, serve the mourners with heaping plates, and naturally, help themselves. Trays will arrive from the delicatessen, bags of bagels and rye breads. Baskets of fruit will be set out, boxes of chocolates opened, cakes sliced and arranged. The women will be busy, clearing, setting washing, wrapping and unwrapping, making coffee, making tea.

Breaking the stiff silence, my father says, gently, "This is good food." And it is, it is. It is clean, nutritious, and prepared with more kindness and humanity than any meal ever was. It fulfills all that God commands a person to do. (315, 320)

In our times of transition, of sorrow and gladness we turn to rituals and with those rituals of comfort we turn to food. These times are ideally spent with family and friends gathered around a table or in the kitchen preparing food and sampling and talking. For so many of our memories are of the kitchen of the smells and taste of something our grandmothers made and which no one else can make in

quite the same way. What will it be for our future generations if their memories are of how the lasagna you bring home from Sam's smells as it comes out of the oven? If their memories are of dinner grabbed on the way home and never of eating together as a family? Now in my real life on Monday nights we have football booster club meetings and our sons have Young Life and FCA and our daughter is away at college, so every night is not our ideal life and God is gracious. Yancey speaks of this dilemma, this tension between two worlds, in *Rumors of Another World*,

The biblical view is at once more subtle and more connected. It presents reality as a seamless whole, with no neat division between sacred and profane or between natural and supernatural. There is only God's world, a sacred world, which has been profaned by human rebellion. Our mission is to bring the two together, to reconnect and hallow God's world, to build settlements of God's kingdom in the desecrated habitat of earth. (188)

Our mission is to bring these together. We demonstrate to the world through communion around the table, what communion with God, with each other can be. What would the world be like if we were to sit around the dinner table with other people, perhaps different people? Would the world look different? Clarence Jordan spoke of the connection, "We ought to be sitting around Jesus' table drinking wine and eating bread together.... The sit-ins never would have been necessary if Christians had been sitting down together in church and at Christ's table all these many years." The mission statement of L'Abri was "To show forth by demonstration, in our life and work, the existence of God" (Schaeffer 15-16). One way in which Edith and Frances Schaeffer accomplished this was by having young

people stay in L'Abri, their home, with them, preparing food with them, eating meals with them.

John Goldingay is an academic, now the David Allan Hubbard professor of Old Testament at Fuller Theological Seminary, who has lived and is living with his wife Ann who has multiple sclerosis. Goldingay has spent years taking care of his wife, feeding her, cleaning her, pushing her in a wheelchair, putting her in bed. Through this time he has written and studied Old Testament and describes how he has learned to love the book of Ecclesiastes.

The Teacher has seen the oppression that takes place in the world (another irony here, for the historical Solomon was a major cause of it in his own country)... The conclusion is then surprising: People can do nothing better than to eat and drink and find satisfaction in their work. That comes from God. It is God's gift (3:22). A portrait of God as the great giver is the surprising center to the theology of Ecclesiastes. (124)

What a gift God has given of eating and drinking! Of time spent in the kitchen preparing this food. In *One True Thing*, Anna Quindlen describes the centrality of the kitchen to families, saying "...the axis of the earth passed dead center through the kitchen and the living world and the world kept spinning, our family unchanging, safe and sound" (87). In one of his cookbooks, Graham Kerr speaks of the need for spending time preparing good food and gathering for meals and correspondingly describes a world in which we do not take the time or effort to gather around the table.

I passionately believe that the home dining table is our last remaining tribal gathering place. Sitting face-to-face, elbow-to-elbow over hot,

steaming plates of simple food, we nourish our bodies and feed our souls. This is the place where families and friends gather. A place where communities take shape and hospitality beckons. A place where self-worth is fostered. And a place where tender feelings and ruffled feathers can be soothed simply by breaking bread together.

But as I examine more recent memories, I discover that we have drifted away from the table during the past few years, a trend that I believe many of us share. For awhile, television news tempted us to balance trays on our knees and fret about the world even while we ate. Busy schedules meant that eating often became snacking, and hospitality seems like too much work. (11)

Television is such an interesting portrayal of society and one in which we often see family and friends eat together. In *Sienfield* the characters ate and talked at the neighborhood diner. In *Friends* they may gather around the table or may eat on the couches or at the coffee shop. Even in family shows mealtimes together may be portrayed, but rarely is prayer shown, even on *Seventh Heaven*. One exception to this is the *Simpsons* in which the family eats and prays together, for better or worse (Pinsky). If television is partially a reflection of our culture, what does this say about the influence of Christians' eating on others? If we are to be the light and salt and to influence culture, let's take a minute to see what we look like to the world. Well, the bottom line is "we don't look so good." In a national study, sociologist Kenneth Ferraro found that Baptists are the heaviest group, although this denominational difference was less significant when controlled for social class (Purdue). Ferraro explains this by saying, "American churches are

virtually silent on excess body weight, despite a Biblical dictate for moderation in all things. In the Book of Proverbs, gluttony is listed with drunkenness as a sign of moral weakness, but few religious groups have any proscriptions against overeating." How many sermons on gluttony have you heard recently?

What does the world see when it looks at our churches, our body of Christ? "The Golden Arches are now more widely recognized than the Christian cross" (Schollosser 5). How do we change our worldview to incorporate slow food? First of all we select food that is wholesome and is a wise use of creation's resources. We look for vegetables and fruit that are fresh and ideally grown locally. Then we spend time together both preparing and eating our food. If we choose to eat out we try to look for a restaurant that follows these guidelines. Anne Tyler describes this in *Dinner at the Homesick Restaurant*.

Bib lettuce, Boston lettuce, chicory, escarole, dripping on the counter in the center of the kitchen. While other restaurants' vegetables were delivered by anonymous, dank, garbage-smelling trucks, Scarlatti's had a man named Mr. Purdy, who shopped personally for them each morning before the sun came up. He brought everything to the kitchen in splintery bushel baskets, along about eight a.m., and Ezra made a point of being there so that he would know what foods he had to deal with that day. Sometimes there were not eggplants, sometimes twice as many as planned. Mr. Purdy rejoiced in food as much as Ezra did, and for the same reasons - less for eating himself than for serving to others. (131-132)

When eating at restaurants don't always choose the "brand name," but look for good local restaurants, which support the communities and pay a reasonable wage to its employees. One source for this that we've used on road trips is *Roadfood: The All-New, Updated, and Expanded Edition*. In this book the Fort Worth listings include Angelo's, Joe T. Garcia's, Kincaids's, Massey's, and Paris Coffee Shop. All of these restaurants I would recommend to you; for barbecue, Mexican food, wonderful hamburgers with ground meat that is fresh, chicken-fried steak, and a great breakfast. Remember it is not all about "natural food" or "low-calorie food," but of eating good food with friends and family in celebration of God's world.

"Babette's Feast" is a story of grace, and how this grace is displayed through one meal. Phillip Yancey describes this story and film in *What's so Amazing About Grace?*

Karen Blixen, wrote the story "Babette's Feast", under the pseudonym Isak Dinesen. The story was made in film and set in a fishing village on the coast of Denmark. In this grim setting, a white-bearded Dean lead a group of worshipers in an austere Lutheran sect.

What few worldly pleasures could tempt a peasant in Norre Bosburg, this sect renounced. All wore black. Their diet consisted of boiled cod and gruel made from boiling bread in water fortified with a splash of ale. On the Sabbath, the group met together and sang songs about 'Jerusalem, my happy home, name ever dear to me.' They had fixed their compasses on the New Jerusalem, with life on earth tolerated as a way to get there. (19)

How often do we tolerate this life and separate it from the spiritual world?
Do we look and act much like these villagers dressed in black?

Babette came to their village after fleeing the civil war in France where her husband and son were killed and began cooking for them. She continues to communicate with France and wins ten thousand francs in the French lottery. She has cooked for the elderly daughters of the Dean and asked if she can prepare a French meal for them.

After some discussion they agreed to eat the French meal, withholding comment about it lest Babette get the wrong idea. Tongues were meant for praise and thanksgiving, not for indulging in exotic tastes. (23)

Are we willing to try different food? We have such an opportunity at Dallas Baptist University to learn from our international students. Take the time to take one of the international students in your classes or in your office to dinner at a restaurant of their native country. Be brave and let him or her order for you!

Although no one else spoke of the food or drink, gradually the banquet worked a magical effect on the churlish villagers. Their blood warmed. Their tongues loosened. They spoke of the old days when the Dean was alive...
(23-24)

Spend time eating with others! Have a banquet without a speaker, where you have time to talk with people. As Tony Compolo says, *The Kingdom of God is a Party!*

"Babette's Feast" ends with two scenes. Outside, the old-timers join hands around the fountain and lustily sing the old songs of faith. It is a communion scene: Babette's feast opened the gate and grace stole in. (24)

Inside the sisters speak with Babette and realize that she has spent all of the ten thousand francs on this meal.

“Babette’s Feast” is not simply “a story of a fine meal but as a parable of grace; a gift that costs everything for the giver and nothing for the recipient.” (25)

And remember grace, not the wishy-washy kind that only wants an “A” for effort, but true grace. Grace that looks beyond the cost, grace that demonstrates to the world that we are the light and salt and have a faith in the God that owns all of the cattle on the hill. “Grace came to them in the form of a feast, Babette’s Feast, a meal of a lifetime lavished on those who had in no way earned it, who barely possess the faculties to receive it” (26).

Some of the key lines from Babette’s Feast are attached, but let me end with these words of the general as he dines with the villagers. “Yes, we even get back what we rejected. For mercy and truth are met together; and righteousness and bliss shall kiss one another.”

Appendix

Key Lines from *Babette's Feast*

Transcribed by David Schimpf, professor of film and theology at Marian College

<http://cw.mariancollege.edu/dschimpf/keylinesfrombabettesfeast.htm>

First hymn in film:

Jerusalem, my heart's true home
Your name is forever dear to me.
Your kindness is second to none
You keep us clothed and fed
Never would you give a stone
To the child who begs for bread

Narrator: Babette's presence in the house of the two sisters can only be explained through the hidden regions of the heart.

Hymn sung during beginning of first flashback:

Oh, Lord allow thy kingdom
To descend upon us here
So that the spirit of mercy
May wipe out all trace of sin
Then we shall know in our hearts
That God lives here with us
And that Thou art dwelling
With those that trust in Thee

Pastor (end of sermon after which Lorens Lowenhielm leaves): Mercy and truth are met together, my dear brothers and sisters. Righteousness and peace shall kiss one another.... God's paths run beyond the seas and the snowy mountain peaks where the human eye sees no tracks.

Lorens Lowenhielm (parting words to Martina): I am going away forever, and I shall never, never see you again. For I have learned here that life is hard and cruel, and that in this world there are things that are impossible.

Hymn (sung when Achille Papin first hears Philippa's voice)

Lord, our God,
Thy name and glory
Should be sung throughout the world
And every soul Thy humble subjects
And every wayfarer shall sing along Thy praise

God is God even if all land be deserts
God is God even if all life were ended
If the people should vanish and, divine heavens,
Will reign over the countless and play the harp so beautifully.

Highest mount and deepest vale shall vanish
Heaven and earth as well will perish
Each height and peak shall be no longer
But the Lord's glory shall rise again in a thousand hearts

Papin's prayer:

Almighty God, Thy mercy ascends to the heavens, and Thy righteousness reaches to the ocean depths. Here is a diva. She will have Paris at her feet.

Scene from Don Giovanni:

Papin: A voice within me calls you, it calls you from my heart
Come now, don't fight against it;
It is the voice of joy

Philippa: I tremble, yet I listen
I'm fearful of my joy
Desire, love, and doubting
Are battling in my heart

Papin: Come, then, with me, my beauty

Philippa: Masetto still loves me

Papin: I'll make you a great lady

Philippa: My soul weakens already

Papin: Come on, come on

Papin: Come with thy hand in mine, dear

Philippa: I would, and yet I would not

Papin: Don't fight! It will be fine, dear

Philippa: I'm afraid of my own joy

Papin: Let us leave, my beauty

Papin: Oh, come, oh come

Philippa: Let us go

Together: It's you, it's you I love, heart and hand uniting; love will unite us

Papin's letter to the sisters:What is fame? The grave awaits us all. And yet, my beautiful soprano of the snows, as I write this, I feel the grave is not the end. In Paradise I shall hear your voice again. There you will forever be the great artist God intended you to be. Oh, how you shall enchant the angels. Babette knows how to cook...

General Loewenhielm (speaking of the first time he had cailles en sarcophage: One day in Paris, after I had won a riding competition, my French fellow officers invited me out to dine at one of the finest restaurants, the Cafe Anglais. The chef, surprisingly enough, was a woman. We were served Cailles en Sarcophage, a dish of her own creation. General Galliffet, who was our host for the evening, explained that this woman, the head chef, had the ability to transform a dinner into a kind of love affair, a love affair that made no distinction between bodily appetite and spiritual appetite. General Galliffet said that in the past he had fought a duel for the love of a beautiful woman. But now there was no woman in Paris for whom he would shed his blood—except this chef. She was considered the greatest culinary genius. What we are now eating is nothing less than Cailles en Sarcophage.

The General's speech (quoting the pastor): Mercy and truth have met together. Righteousness and bliss shall kiss one another. Man, in his weakness and shortsightedness, believe he must make choices in this life. He trembles at the risks he takes. We do know fear. But no. Our choice is of no importance. There comes a time when your eyes are opened. And we come to realize that mercy is infinite. We need only await it with confidence, and receive it with gratitude. Mercy imposes no conditions. And, lo! Everything we have chosen has been granted to us, and everything we have rejected has also been granted. Yes, we even get back what we rejected. For mercy and truth are met together; and righteousness and bliss shall kiss one another.

Hymn Philippa sings at end of feast:
Oh, watch the day once again hurry off
And the sun bathe itself in water
The time for us to rest approaches
Oh God, Who dwelleth in heavenly light
Who reigns above in heaven's hall
Be for us our infinite Light in the valley of night

The sand in our hourglass will soon run out
The day is conquered by the night
The glories of the world are ending
So brief their day, so swift their flight
God, let thy brightness ever shine
Admit us to Thy mercy divine

General's last words to Martina: I have been with you every day of my life.... You must also know that I shall be with you everyday that is granted to me from now on. Every evening I shall sit down to dine with you: not with my body, which is of

no importance, but with my soul. Because this evening I have learned, my dear, that in this beautiful world of ours, all things are possible.

Song around the well:
The clock strikes and time goes by:
Eternity is nigh.
Let us use this time to try
To serve the Lord with heart and mind.
So that our true home we shall find.
So that our true home we shall find.

Philippa: The stars have moved closer.
Martina: Perhaps they move closer every night.

Babette: It was not just for you.
Martina: Now you'll be poor for the rest of your life.
Babette: An artist is never poor.
Philippa: Did you prepare that sort of dinner at the Cafe Anglais?
Babette: I was able to make them happy when I gave of my very best. Papin knew that.
Philippa: Achille Papin?
Babette: Yes. He said: Throughout the world sounds one long cry from the heart of the artist: Give me the chance to do my very best.
Philippa: But that is not the end, Babette, I'm certain of that. In Paradise, you will be the great artist that God meant you to be. Ah, how you will delight the angels!

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