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PAUSE

REFLECT

"Ode to the Artichoke"

by Pablo Neruda

The tender-hearted

upright

artichoke

girded itself as

a warrior, constructed

a small dome,

to keep itself

waterproof

within

its scales.

...

and then one day

it was into the grand

willow basket

with the others and off

to the market

it marched

to fulfill its dream:

the militia!

In columns

never more martial

than at the fair,

men

in their white shirts

among the vegetables

became

field marshals

of the artichokes,

the closed ranks,

the voices of command,

and the sudden detonation

of ... a fumbled cashbox,

but

then

comes

Maria

with her basket,

who fearlessly

picks out
an artichoke,
looking at it, examining it
against the light as if it were an egg,
she buys it,
drops it
into her basket
with a pair of shoes,
a white cabbage and a
bottle
of vinegar as well
then
entering the kitchen
plunges it into the pot.
And so it ends,
in peace,
the career
of the armored vegetable
called 'artichoke,'
and presently
scale by scale
we undress

this delight
we munch
the peaceful paste
of its green heart.

The artichoke reminds us of the gospel call to be broken as food for others. How do you feel called to do that today?

PRAY

Write, or compose in your head, a short ode to a type of food that you appreciate.

Lenten Daily Food Reflections

pause | reflect | act

Editor's note: *These daily reflections on food, faith, climate and our lives will provide spiritual sustenance for the Lenten journey. They are inspired by the [Lenten Food Waste Fast](#) at the Ignatian Solidarity Network.*

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This story appears in the **Lenten Daily Food Reflections** feature series. [View the full series.](#)