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March 18, 2020

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## PAUSE

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## 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?

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## **PRAY**

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

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### **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.](#)