

BBQ & Orthodoxy

Michael Sean Winters | Feb. 8, 2011 | Distinctly Catholic

I was delighted to see such heartfelt comments on my post last week about BBQ. To be clear, and to repeat, I do not consider BBQ preferences to be the stuff of orthodoxy. Kansas City style BBQ may be the "official" BBQ of the National Catholic Reporter, but I am just as happy with North Carolina BBQ, east or west, when I am served it. Beef or pork is another instance where what the Holy Father calls the "great et, et" comes into play: Why choose between them when you can enjoy both! Protestant theology is classically defined by its penchant for "either/or" constructions. We RCs prefer "both/and."

There is, however, one point that requires the culinary equivalent of a CDF statement. It happens every so often that you get invited over to someone's home for a BBQ and they serve burgers and hot dogs. That is a cookout. That is grilling. That is not BBQ. BBQ is the slow cooking at a low temperature of a tough piece of meat to break down the muscles and tendons so that they melt into the meat and tenderize it. Low & Slow. When I do a pernil or a beef brisket, if we want to eat at 8 p.m., I get up at 4 a.m. to take the pork butt or beef out of the fridge to let it come to room temperature. At 6 a.m. it goes on the grill or in the oven. 14 hours later, it is ready. That is BBQ. I love burgers and I like hot dogs but they are not BBQ. On this point, BBQ fans of all stripes and from all regions can agree.

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