

1. “Eat food. Not too much. Mostly plants.” With these words Michael Pollan begins his book, *In Defense of Food*,
  - a. a follow - up to his *New York Times* bestseller *The Omnivore’s Dilemma*.
  - b. In which he traces our food’s journey
    - i. From the places that it is grown, raised, caught and hunted
    - ii. to our dinner table.
2. However, if *The Omnivore’s Dilemma* talks about where we get our food,
  - a. *In Defense of Food* goes to the very nature of what we are eating.
  - b. For Pollan asserts that most of us stopped eating food decades ago.
3. The idea seems ludicrous;
  - a. Our streets are filled with restaurants
  - b. Our mailboxes filled with take out menus
  - c. Our supermarkets are filled with food!
4. But this is just the point. According to Pollan our fast-food, take out, junk, supermarket food is not real food;
  - a. it is genetically modified, chemically altered fake food.
  - b. Why? Simply because it does not nourish us.
  - c. Instead, It makes us fat.
    - i. Don’t think so? Just look around – especially at our young people
  - d. It makes us sick.
    - i. Don’t think so? Just look around – especially at how many of us are developing diabetes
  - e. It can even kill us.
    - i. Don’t think so? Just read the scientific literature about the connection between
      1. Cholesterol and heart disease
      2. Salt and high blood pressure
      3. Fat and certain forms of cancer.
  - f. It is little wonder eating is no longer a source of pleasure but anxiety as we struggle with out sugar, our salt, our calories and our fat. Deep down we know what Pollan is saying is true; our fake food is killing us.
5. In the ancient world, this idea would be crazy.
  - a. Because in the ancient world there was little food at all; real or fake.
6. Which is why when they spoke of heaven, when they spoke of paradise, when they spoke of the kingdom of God
  - a. As Isaiah does in the first reading and Jesus does in the Gospel,
    - i. They spoke of a **feast** of choice foods and fine wines
    - ii. The kind of feast that only the rich people could afford;
    - iii. The kind of feast that most people only experienced on their wedding day.
7. Their physical hunger for food is what made Isaiah’s words today so powerful
8. Their yearning for that feast is what made Jesus parable today so meaningful.
  - a. And this is precisely why they leave us so cold.
9. Because while for them the idea of a feast filled them with joy

- a. It fills us with anxiety about calories and waist lines
- 10. Because while they were nearly starving
  - a. We are not.
- 11. But then again, maybe we are starving every bit as much as they were;
- 12. Not because of fake food;
- 13. But because of fake politics:
  - a. You know;
    - i. the kind of politics we hear in the presidential debates,
      - 1. With their monologues of carefully memorized talking points and buzz words
    - ii. The kind of politics we see in this presidential election
      - 1. With their attack ads and smear campaigns
    - iii. The kind of politics, which looks like public service, sounds like it; but is really self-service.
      - 1. Because it uses fear and prejudice to manipulate people
      - 2. And hold on to public office.
- 14. And because of fake religion:
  - a. You know:
    - i. The kind of religion that has become a consumer product
      - 1. Marketed by mega churches and bookstores
    - ii. The kind of religion that has become a means of manipulation
      - 1. Used to frighten and anger people and thus to control them
    - iii. The kind of religion that looks like religion but is really idolatry
      - 1. Because it teaches people to ignore science, and place blind faith in a book that was never intended either by its authors or by the God who inspired it to be used that way.
- 15. It is little wonder that so many people are calling for radical change in politics
- 16. It is little wonder why people such as Christopher Hitchens and Sam Harris call for the abolition of religion.
- 17. They are disgusted: literally; they have a bad case of indigestion;
  - a. Because fake religion and fake politics are like fake food;
  - b. They don't nourish us; over time they sickens us; and can even kill us.
- 18. And when we see how fake politics and fake religion
  - a. Are corrupting our common life together as Americans
  - b. We realize that we share their indigestion.
- 19. And thus we are hungry – starving in fact.
  - a. Just like the people in Isaiah's day were;
  - b. Just like the people in Jesus' day were.
- 20. Hungry for real politics rooted in justice;
  - a. A justice which Jesus says is like a feast where all are invited
  - b. And all are free to choose or reject the invitation.
- 21. Hungry for real religion rooted in faith;
  - a. A faith which Isaiah says does not kill and destroy,
  - b. But precisely unites people all over the world;

- c. Which wipes tears from faces instead of causing them,
  - d. And teaches us not even to fear death, rather than to fear everything.
22. All their talk about food is really just a way of talking about the kingdom,
- a. That place where Isaiah says all are called to dwell;
  - b. That place where JESUS says all are given the choice to enter
  - c. That place where all are nourished in body as well as spirit.
23. IN *In Defense of Food*, Pollan says that the struggle for real food is not easy
- a. For it means we have to change the way we eat.
  - b. “Eat real food; not too much mostly plants”.
  - c. And that change isn’t easy; for it means going up against government agencies, restaurant chains and the food industry;
  - d. All of whom have a vested interest in keeping us attached to our fake food.
24. And of course as Christians and Americans
- a. We realize that the struggle for faith and for justice is no less easy;
  - b. For it often means going up against the very same political and religious forces
    - i. Which ignored Isaiah in his day
    - ii. And killed Jesus in his.
25. But the simple fact that we hear Isaiah’s words today;
26. And the simple fact that we Christians believe that not even death could stop Jesus mean that while prophets may be ignored and even God’s son can be killed;
- a. That dream of the kingdom is bulletproof.
  - b. And thus the invitation Jesus makes in today’s gospel is still stands.
27. Are you hungry for justice;
- a. So hungry that you are ready to work for it, pay for it, vote for it?
28. Are you hungry for faith?
- a. So hungry that you are ready to struggle for it, sacrifice for it, pray for it?
29. Well then come to this table, come to this altar. Because if the Eucharist we share is anything; it is the hors d’oeuvres of that feast where all are invited, all are welcomed, all are healed and all are fed.
- a. Sit and think
  - b. Stand and pray;
  - c. Listen to Isaiah
  - d. Eat and drink Jesus.
  - e. Enter and be fed;
  - f. Go out and feed others,
30. But in the mean time, look around at all the different people
- a. Who have responded to the invitation
  - b. And are gathered here around this one table.
    - i. For all of it is a glimpse,
    - ii. An appetizer of the kingdom
    - iii. A foretaste of the feast.
      - 1. Doesn’t it whet your appetite for more?