

International Scientific Conference

SPIRITUALITY AND FOOD



Ljubljana, December 19th 2020

Organization

Faculty of Theology, University of Ljubljana

(Institute of Moral Theology and Spiritual Questions of Modern Culture;

Research program P6—0269 Ethical-Religious Grounds and Perspectives of the Society and the Religious Studies in Context of Education and Violence)

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Program and abstracts

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Editors:

Ivan Platovnjak, Erika Prijatelj

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PROGRAM

Saturday, December 19th 2020

14.30-14.35 Welcome speeches

Dean of the Faculty of Theology Prof. Dr. Janez Vodičar

President of the Program Committee Assist. Prof. Dr. Ivan Platovnjak

President of the Organizing committee Assist. Prof. Dr. Erika Prijatelj

(Chairperson: Erika Prijatelj)

Lectures

14.35-14.50 Vassilios Bebis (USA, Greece): *References to Food in the Sacraments of the Eastern Orthodox Church*

14.50-15.05 Ivan Platovnjak (Slovenia): *Spirituality of Discipleship in Connection with Food*

15.05-15.20 Piotr Roszak and Berenika Seryczyńska (Poland, Spain): *Food on Camino de Santiago: Holistic Anthropology and Pilgrimage*

15.20-15.35 Elzbieta Osewska (Poland): *Educating Young People in Spirituality*

15.35-15.55 Discussion and Break

(Chairperson: Roxanne Meshar)

Lectures

15.55-16.10 Tone Svetelj (USA): *Philosophy of Food or We are What We Eat*

16.10-16.25 Danica Rotar Pavlič (Slovenia): *Food and health*

16.25-16.40 Borut Škodlar (Slovenia): *Food and mental disorders*

16.40-16.55 Erika Prijatelj (Slovenia, USA): *Psychology of Food*

16.55-17.15 Discussion and Break

(Chairperson: Tone Svetelj)

Lectures

17.15-17.30 Avi Meshar (Israel, USA): *Food for Shabbat*

17.30-17.55 Ahmet Türkan (Turkey): *Food and Spirituality in Islam*

17.55-18.10 Roxanne Meshar (USA): *Food and Celebration in the Time of Covid-19: A Pastoral Perspective*

18.10-18.30 Discussion

18.30 Conclusion

INTRODUCTION

In this symposium, we want to show, under different aspects, how important food is for people. We cannot live without food. But even more importantly, it is about a holistic attitude towards it, because otherwise food can often become, especially in the Western world, a path to various addictions and diseases. The question is, what is it that helps people to establish a holistic relationship with food? We believe that people's attitude towards food is shaped by their spirituality, which in the broadest sense is a way of life through which people find answers to their life questions, the content and meaning of their life, values that remain forever, and their wholeness as well as holiness. The symposium will therefore be interdisciplinary. Presenters from different faculties, colleges, universities and different cultures will each show what needs to be considered if we want to establish a holistic attitude towards food so that it can help people to be able to achieve what is the goal of their spiritual life. These approaches will be as follows: philosophical, anthropological, psychological, medical, culinary, biblical, theological, patristic, ethical, pedagogical, cultural, ecumenical, interreligious and others.

ABSTRACTS

Prof. Dr. Vassilios Bebis, Graduate Theological Foundation, USA

References to food in the sacraments of the Eastern Orthodox Church

This study attempts to construct a demonstration of the importance that food has in the sacramental theology of the Eastern Orthodox Church. The method employed examines the data available (that is, the text of the seven sacramental services) and presents the patristic thought on the subject. More specifically, the thought of St. Justin, Irenaeus, Gregory Nazianzen, Gregory of Nyssa, Cyril of Alexandria, Cyril of Jerusalem, and Makarios of Corinth. The study concludes that the sacraments of the Eastern Orthodox Church appreciate food as God's blessing to people for the salvation of their soul and body. As it is pointed out in every sacramental service, Holy Communion (that is, the Eucharistic Bread and Wine) is the essential food offered to the believers for "the remission of sins, and life eternal."

Key words: celebration, forgiveness, healing, union, sharing, thanksgiving, love

Dr. h.c. Avi Meshar, Chaagkri Seminary and University, Israel, USA

Food for Shabbat

What is the delicious meal called 'Cholent' and how did the tradition of 'Cholent' (Hebrew: צ'ולנט) (and its counterpart - 'Hamin' (Hebrew: חמין)) enable Jews to honor the requirements of Shabbat? This presentation will explore the multi-varied tradition of Cholent, presenter's own experiences and memories of this dish and its contribution to allowing rest and focus on Shabbat.

The Ashkenazi (Northern European) Cholent and its Sephardi counterpart, Hamin, have been a favorite staple for Jews for millenia, since the Second Temple - nourishing and nurturing their bodies, minds and spirits. It has even morphed into fast food establishments in Israel (and other countries) called "Cholenterias", many even serving the ultra-Orthodox Jewish communities in Jerusalem and Bnei Brak.

Key words: Jewish, stew, Shabbat, ashkenazi, sephardic, cholent, hamin

Dr. Roxanne Meshar, St. Thomas University, ret., USA

Food and Celebration in the Time of Covid; A Pastoral Perspective

Being separated during times of celebration and meal sharing has been a reality for many families long before Covid19 arrived. Celebrating at a distance happens for many reasons (e.g. families in the military, on call healthcare workers, inclement weather in northern climates, to name a few). How have they adapted? What traditions have they embraced? What can they teach us? In this presentation the presenter considers key insights into our human tradition of spirituality and food with regard to celebrations and what makes these celebrations memorable for connecting with others at a deeper level. She reminds us how important it is to advocate for public policies that help foster connections and resources for

families. Finally, she offers ideas on how to share a memorable meal and create space for meaningful conversation with those closest to us, but physically distant, in this time of pandemic.

Key words: celebration, families, distant, connecting, resources, holidays, policies

Prof. Dr. Elzbieta Osewska, University of Applied Sciences in Tarnów, Poland

Educating Young People in Spirituality

The contemporary educational context is very diversified, but in most European countries is based on postmodernity with all its conditions, with special emphasis on individualism, consumerism and cultural changes. Taking into consideration a variety of challenges and threats arising from 'liquid modernity', among them strong consumerism, it is important in accord with Christian inspirations to support education in spirituality. In spiritual and religious education right language is needed for helping young people comprehend the interplay between their needs, desires and the complex social environment. It provides the intellectual tools for learning how to hold in creative tension the demands of consumption and individuality on the one hand, and the security and responsibility for the future of human being and nature. It involves helping youngsters learn how to interrogate the cultural conditioning they receive from many quarters especially in the commercial and entertainment worlds. Teachers, especially RE teachers need to be model interpreters of meaning, prompting their pupils through their study and research to explore the meaning of community and spirituality. As Christian we need a shift from individual decisions based on satisfactions to decisions based on values with special emphasis on hope, love and faith.

Key words: Europe, consumerism, Christianity, spirituality, values, religious education

Assist. Prof. Dr. Ivan Platovnjak, Faculty of Theology, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia

Spirituality of Discipleship in Connection with Food

Today's pandemic Covid-19 has evoked loneliness and the perception of abandonment in many people. Several people perceive that even God has abandoned them, because they can no longer attend Mass and receive the Holy Eucharist. But has God abandoned us? The author is convinced that God wants to encourage us through the pandemic to discover God's presence among us. He begins with his experience of tasting God's presence through everyday food. Later, he presents the role food has in the life of a religious person through the light of Holy Bible and Eucharist. At the end he stresses how Jesus invites us to have a view at the food in the spirit of discipleship. The more we are prepared to be taught through food in the spirit of Christ the more grateful and joyful we become. At the same time, we become gift/food for others.

Key words: Spirituality of Discipleship, Jesus Christ, Holy Spirit, Food, Gift, Pandemic Covid-19

Assist. Prof. Dr. Erika Prijatelj, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia; Boston College; Hellenic College, USA

Psychology of Food

Food, according to Maslow, is one of the most basic human needs like air, water and shelter. Food provides us with nutrients and through food we can connect with others, for example, by preparing and sharing meals. On one hand, food is essential for our life; on the other, people can use food as a coping mechanism to deal with feelings of stress, boredom, anxiety and/or to prolong feelings of joy that often lead to regret, guilt or shame. The question for us is how to develop a healthy appreciation for “external food” and how to learn to innerly nurture ourselves in order to live in a way that our inside world also expresses itself on the outside.

Key words: cravings, emotional eating, connection, inner-nurturing, psychology of food sharing

Prof. Dr. Piotr Roszak, Faculty of Theology, Nicolaus Copernicus University Torun, Poland; Faculty of Theology, Univerisidad de Navarra, Pamplona, Spain.

Berenika Seryczyńska, PhD Student, Faculty of Theology, Nicolaus Copernicus University Torun, Poland

Food on Camino de Santiago: Holistic Anthropology and Pilgrimage

In the history of pilgrimage to Compostela, there are many accounts of the role of the so-called hospitaes, i.e. places to stay on the way to the sanctuary in Compostela, where pilgrims received medical care and a meal. Particular shelters, thanks to the properties of the Church, provided free meals for pilgrims. This custom continues today in the reality of the modern Camino de Santiago. It is expressed in the so-called menus de peregrinos, which not only offer a discount but promote local products, but also in many of the customs present in hostels where community meals are prepared together by all pilgrims or restaurants invite the first few guests to a free dinner. At the same time, the pilgrimage has a spiritual dimension, inviting to reflect on what is real food for thought. In this way, the food enters into broader anthropological goals, not becoming an "goal in itself" but a means to an end.

Key words: Commensality, communitas, slow food, hospitality, pilgrimage and food

Prof. Dr. Danica Rotar Pavlič, MD, Department of Family Medicine, Medical faculty, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia

Food and health

There is a tremendous amount of data and research results available on food and health with sometimes conflicting findings. Many people strive to gain longevity through nutrition. Others take eating for granted. Many do even not know that we celebrate World Food Day on 16 October at the initiative of the United Nations. The risks of developing nutrition-related chronic diseases will be presented. The possible impact of modern diets, the consumption of so-called superfoods and dietary supplements will be discussed. The healthy nutrition programs implemented by the Health Promotion Centers, Health Education Centers and programs conducted by graduate nurses in family medicine practices will be presented.

Key words: food, health, chronic non - communicable diseases, prevention, programs

Prof. Dr. Tone Svetelj, Hellenic College; Boston College, USA

Philosophy of Food or “We are What We Eat”

The quote of the Greek physician Hippocrates “Let food be thy medicine, and let medicine be thy food” currently seems to be more drastic than it was 25 centuries ago. If food has power to heal and restore, why presently has the role of nutrition been reduced to a list of rules, focused on the “should not’s”? Such a distorted and one-sided perception of food misses the crucial importance of nutrition: food not only heals and supports the physical body but also nurtures the human mind, sustains life through human movement, and generates our relationships with our bodies, friends, and broader community of support. Consequently, a new philosophy of food is required. The most basic question about food needs to be approached from a metaphysical, epistemological, ethical, political, aesthetical and spiritual point of view. What is it exactly?

Key Words: Plato, Gorgias, Philosophy of Food, Food, cooking, medicine, self-understanding.

Prof. Dr. Borut Škodlar, MD, University Psychiatric Clinic Ljubljana; Medical Faculty, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia

Food and mental disorders

Food is important for every one of us on all levels of experiencing. It is part of our body experience, of both the body schema and the body image. It is also part of our experience of emotions. Emotions as constitutive parts of our relationships reveal the importance of food in and for our interpersonal relationships. From our first contacts with important others to the most complex forms of our relationships, they all are pervaded by certain aspects of food and eating. They are thus intrinsically relevant for many mental disorders. Body, emotions and interpersonal relationships as three aspects of our fundamental experience of life, are also fundamental for our spiritual quests. They are the meeting points of mental and spiritual in our lives, important for prevention of mental disorders as well as for opening the door to invite the spiritual into our life.

Keywords: body schema, body image, emotions, relationships, mental disorder, spiritual quest

Assist. Prof. Dr. Ahmet Türkan, Dumlupınar University Faculty of Divinity, Turkey

Food and Spirituality in Islam

Food has a great effect on the formation of human thoughts and spiritual feelings. In addition to the science of medicine, what religions say about food is important. According to Islam, one of the causes of physical and spiritual degeneration in a society is food spoilage. In the Quran, Allah commands people to eat and drink clean things but not to waste them. While there are general principles regarding food and drinks in the Quran, there are details in the hadiths (words of the Prophet Muhammad). In this presentation, Islam's approach to food will be evaluated based on the verses of the Quran and the hadiths.

Key Words: Islam, Food, Spiritually, Qur'an, Hadith

NOTES

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