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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.](#)