

*Dinner Party
with the Saints*



Dinner Party with the Saints



WOODEENE KOENIG-BRICKER

Recipes by Celia Murphy



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Dinner Party with the Saints

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For Pippa



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Welcome to a Dinner Party with the Saints! Pull up a chair and join a select group of the Heavenly Host as we celebrate their lives . . . and some special foods.

Why a dinner party? One of the traditional images of heaven is the Banquet or Marriage Feast of the Lamb. Revelation 19:9 says, “Blessed are those who called to the wedding feast of the Lamb.” The idea of those who have lived a holy life, gathering in celebration, has often been interpreted as our being present at the Eucharist with all those saints in heaven. But what if the banquet could be seen as a little more earthly than theological? In this book, I imagine what it would be like if sixteen saints were to gather for a dinner party in heaven as they await the arrival of the Guest of Honor.

For far too long, the stories of the saints have emphasized their spirituality instead of their personalities. How often have you read the hagiography of a saint that could be summarized as “He or she did good deeds, helped the poor, prayed a lot, accepted suffering, and died a holy death.” Now, of course, the reason they are saints is because of their good deeds, help for the poor, writings, and prayers, but sometimes in emphasizing their spirituality, we lose sight of the people who lived and breathed and loved—and slept and laughed and ate—in a specific time and place in history.

Another, more modern temptation in telling the lives of saints is to abandon the hagiography for pure history. This is just as insidious, since a biography often seeks to undercover faults and failures, often with more than a soupçon of judgment. In doing so, the flaws that are part of all humanity can take precedence over the striving for holiness, and we are left wondering exactly why the person was considered to be so holy. Not to mention the fact that we are often tempted to judge their actions by the psychological understandings of our own times and think that the saints may have been more in need of therapy than canonization.

In this book, my desire is that you will get to know the saints in a new and hopefully entertaining way by seeing them interacting in an imaginary setting, but while still being the very real men and women they were and still are.

Naturally, I've had to take major liberties, because the conversations and activities surrounding the party are purely figments of my imagination. For those of you who are scholars and students of a certain saint, I'm sure you will feel that I left out many important details. To that, I say that this is not to be taken as a scholarly record of any of the saints represented here. This is not a "lives of the saints." The biographies are meant to be a sampling of their lives, not a comprehensive study. However, the actual biographical material and historical facts are as accurate as I can make them. And because the stories and legends about them are often great fun to read, I've included a sampling of the tales that have been told about them. These are to be taken with a "grain of salt."

But the foods they bring are based, as much as possible, on ingredients and foods that they either talked about eating or would have eaten in their historical periods. My dear friend Celia Murphy, who is classically trained in culinary arts, helped me create the recipes. (Okay, she created them. I just gave historical guidelines and encouragement. Except for the locusts. I figured them out on my own.) With her masterful touch, they are designed for modern cooks and modern palates, including vegetarian and gluten-free options. I'd like to think that the saints would recognize and enjoy the food even if they didn't have the exact same dishes on their tables.

My hope is that you will enjoy sitting down at this *Dinner Party with the Saints* and come away with a deeper appreciation for these holy people, as well as a few moments of amusement and several great recipes to try. If so, then I will feel greatly blessed indeed.



*Dinner Party
with the Saints*



CHAPTER 1

St. Peter



So what else do you need for the dinner party?" St. Peter asked, while ticking names off a list resting on the counter of the checkpoint for heaven. He looked up and waved through the Pearly Gates a wide-eyed man clutching a small child. The man and his infant son were still dripping from the tsunami that had claimed their lives moments before. A piece of seaweed dangled over the child's face. "Make sure they get dried off," Peter said to the angel standing at attention near him. "And see that the baby gets a nice toy." The angel nodded, his placid features at odds with the flaming sword in his hands. "Now then," Peter said, turning to a petite dark-haired woman with flashing brown eyes tapping her foot impatiently. "The party."

"Yes, the party," St. Teresa of Avila said. "I think we've got it covered." She checked off items using her fingers. "Guests invited. Room set up. At least we know there won't be a problem with weather," she laughed.

"Well, St. Brigit might like a little rain," Peter said. "She did come from a rainy part of the world."

"Too bad," Teresa said. "After that little donkey and stream incident, I'm happy never to see another drop of rain."

"Donkey and stream?"

"I thought everyone knew that story," she said.

Peter shook his head. "I must have missed it."

"I was traveling to visit one of my convents," Teresa began. "The weather had been frightful, and the bridge was washed out over one of the streams we had to cross. I decided to ride the donkey, but he panicked and we both ended up being swept downstream. I was soaked to the skin, everything in the cart was lost, and I don't mind telling you, I was pretty annoyed with God." Peter raised an eyebrow. "I remember saying, 'If this is how you treat your friends, it's no wonder you have so few of them,'" Teresa added.

"And what reply did you get?"

"The only one I expected. Just a sort of chuckle that could have been distant thunder."

“Sounds about right,” Peter added.

“But enough about me,” Teresa said. “Are you going to be with us? I know you are one of the busiest saints up here, tending the Golden Gate and all.”

The idea of heaven being guarded by a Pearly Gate comes from Revelation 21:21: “The twelve gates were twelve pearls, each of the gates made from a single pearl.”

“Pearly gates,” Peter corrected. “Fortunately, we aren’t bound by the laws of time and space,” he replied. “I can be in two places at once if need be. As you know, when saints used to do that on earth—bilocation, I think it’s called—it really freaked people out; but up here, it’s par for the course.”

“Do you even know what that expression means?” Teresa teased.

“It means you’ve played a round of golf with an average, ordinary score. Nothing special. Brigit told me,” Peter said as he waved another soggy group into heaven. “Golf was invented in her part of the world. A bit after her time, and in Scotland, not Ireland, but she has always been interested in things of Celtic origin. You can take the girl out of the Celts, but you can never take the Celtic out of the girl. Or so I’ve been told. Anyway, I think I might have liked playing golf. Out in the fresh air, walking, being with friends. Maybe we should consider building a course up here.”

Teresa rolled her eyes. “Chasing a little white ball. What a waste of time. But each to their own, I suppose. I think fishing is boring, too.” She watched as Peter waved through another family who had been taken by the tsunami.

“It’s going to get pretty busy here in a few minutes,” Peter said. “Natural disasters and wars always make for a lot of new arrivals. But I’ll be there as soon as I can.”

“So, what have you been assigned to bring to the dinner party?” Teresa asked abruptly. “Something good, I hope.”

Peter smiled wryly. “Fish . . . and bread.”

“Of course. We couldn’t have a banquet without them. How many fish are you going to bring? Two?” she asked, with a glint in her eye.

“Enough for all,” Peter said with a wry smile. “There is always enough since it’s easier to multiply up here than it was down there. What about you? I know you have a bit of a sweet tooth.”

“Not this time,” Teresa said, “but I have a special treat planned. Speaking of which, I need to check on it. Wouldn’t want it to get overdone. When are you going to come?” she asked, as she pushed open the guardhouse door and let the celestial light flood in.

“Soon. I’ll be busy here for a while longer, but I do have to escort the guest of honor to the feast.”

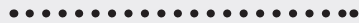
“Only fitting, since you are the rock on which the Church was built. I’ll see you both when you get there.”

Peter smiled and then turned to the increasingly long line of new arrivals. Their names kept appearing on the sheets in front of him—a bit of quantum physics disguised as magic, he liked to say. After a lifetime of physical activity as a fisherman, he rather liked tending the Pearly Gates.

He enjoyed seeing the look of surprise on some people’s faces as they realized where they had ended up. He especially enjoyed seeing those who had been skeptical or even disbelievers in their lives realize that there really was an afterlife—and it was good.

Peter felt a tiny frisson of what he vaguely remembered as anxiety as he looked at all the tsunami victims. Drowning had been one of his greatest fears when he was on earth.

The Greek word that we generally translate as “fisherman” is more akin to “seaman.” It is a general term for anyone who made their living on or near the sea, such as a longshoreman or a sailor, rather than a specific career designation. However, we do know that Peter and his brother Andrew were actual fishermen since they were catching fish in nets.



It is unlikely that Peter knew how to swim since, as odd as it seems to us, fishermen and sailors of that time often did not know how. This would explain why Peter was so panicked when he began to sink as he walked on water toward Jesus.

He supposed he could take swimming lessons in his spare time, but that would require getting wet, and he had been wet enough all the times he had waded in the Sea of Galilee for another few millennia.

The Sea of Galilee, where Peter spent his time, is not a sea, but is actually a large lake. Roughly thirteen miles long and eight miles wide, it rests about 680 feet below sea level and has a maximum depth of 150 feet. Other names for this body of water include Lake Gennesaret, Sea of Tiberias, and Chinnerth. Today it is called the Sea of Kinneret, and it is Israel's largest source of drinking water.

The line of people wound back and forth, seemingly to the horizon if there were such a thing in heaven. Processing that many people would take weeks, maybe even months on earth, but here in heaven, everyone felt as if they were tended to immediately. It was one of the nicest things about the celestial heights. No waiting.

Peter picked up the paper with an ever-increasing number of names appearing on it. "Welcome," he said opening his arms to another wet group that was huddling together. "We've been expecting you."

Did You Know?

At the time of St. Peter, the pyramids of Egypt were already nearly 3,000 years old!

BIOGRAPHY *St. Peter*

UNKNOWN – AD 64

The story of St. Peter is part and parcel of the foundation of Christianity. The rough and tumble fisherman was among the first followers of Jesus, and his journey of faith took him from the shores of the Sea of Galilee to Vatican Hill in Rome, where, according to tradition, he was martyred.

Simon, son of Jonah, was from Bethsaida but lived in Capernaum, where he and his brother Andrew ran a fishing business.

They apparently were successful enough to have owned their own fishing boat and have at least two employees, James and John.

Andrew was originally a disciple of John the Baptist. After Andrew concluded Jesus was the Messiah, he told this to Simon, and Simon gave up his fishing business to follow Jesus. We know that Peter was married, but we do not have any record as to what his wife thought about his new career path. Although it would be unlikely that she, if she were still living, would have actually taken up the nets herself, she might well have continued to run the apparently prosperous business with other employees since Peter was able to return to his boat after the Crucifixion. After the Crucifixion, in John 21:3, he told Thomas, Nathanael, and four other disciples in a phrase that still expresses

Both Bethsaida and Capernaum, now archaeological sites, are located on the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee.

Because wood was such a scarce and treasured commodity, wooden fishing boats were highly prized and carefully repaired. The remains of one such boat, known as the Jesus Boat, was found in 1986 when drought exposed it on the shore of the Sea of Galilee. While there is no evidence it is Peter's boat, it is very similar to the ones Peter would have owned.

Fishermen in Peter's time often fished at night because their nets were less visible to fish in the darkness.

his clear frustration, “I am going fishing.” It was at that time, after a disappointing night on the lake, that Jesus appeared to them, telling them to let down their nets one last time.

At one point, Jesus changed Simon’s name to Peter, a name meaning rock or stone. Jesus then said that it was upon this rock that he would build his Church, thus indicating that Peter was to become the leader of the Twelve Apostles.

Peter was present at all of the major events of Jesus’s ministry, including the Transfiguration, as well as most of Jesus’s most notable miracles such as the Feeding of the Five Thousand. He himself experienced the net-breaking haul of fish as recorded in Luke 5:1–11 as well as walking (at least temporarily) on water.

There are about twenty different kinds of fish in the Sea of Galilee. The most famous is the Tilapia Galilea, sometimes called St. Peter’s Fish. It was the most commonly consumed fish in Peter’s time. Sardines, referred to as “small fish,” may have been the fish used in the multiplication of the loaves and fish. Another fish found in the Sea of Galilee is called *sfamnun*, in Hebrew. A type of catfish, it was considered unclean according to Jewish dietary law because of its lack of scales and thus was unlawful to consume. Because *sfamnun* has an eel or snakelike appearance, some scholars think that Jesus might have been referring to it rather than a true serpent when he said that no good father would give his child a snake when asked for a fish (Luke 11:11).

At the Last Supper, Peter famously refused to let Jesus wash his feet until Jesus explained that if he didn’t permit it, Peter would have “no part with me.” That made the ever-impetuous Peter tell Jesus to wash his feet and his hands and his head as well. Despite his affirmations of faith, Peter denied Jesus three times before the Crucifixion, leading to his great sorrow. However, his remorse wasn’t enough for him to actually attend the Crucifixion; instead he went into hiding.

After Mary Magdalene and the other women told the Apostles that Jesus had been raised from the dead, Peter and John ran to the empty tomb, where Peter saw the linen burial wrappings as well as the cloth that had been placed

on Jesus's head, even though he did not fully understand what had happened. Following Pentecost and his infusion of courage, Peter traveled extensively, spreading the gospel. He journeyed to Lydda, Joppa, Caesarea, Samaria, Antioch, and possibly Corinth while making numerous trips back to Jerusalem where, along with James the Just and John, he was revered as an elder of the faith.

Although Paul does not mention Peter by name in any of his writings, tradition says that the two men worked together in Rome, with Peter serving as the city's first bishop. It has long been believed that Peter was crucified in the gardens of Nero shortly after the fire that destroyed Rome in AD 64. According to tradition, he was crucified upside down, so as not to die exactly like Jesus, and was buried under what is now the high altar of the Basilica of St. Peter. In the 1960s, bones from a man in his sixties were located where tradition had always placed them, causing Pope Paul VI to declare they were most likely the relics of Peter.

Two epistles in the New Testament have been attributed to Peter. Because of the sophisticated use of Greek, some scholars question if Peter himself wrote the letters, since it would be unusual for an Aramaic-speaking fisherman to have studied classical Greek. One likely suggestion is that Peter may have used a secretary to assist him, as did Paul. The letters themselves are primarily concerned with encouraging Christians to stay steadfast even in the light of persecution and do not contain any new doctrine or dogma. Several other apocryphal writings have been attributed to Peter or claim to quote him, including the Gospel of Mary and the Acts of Peter.

The idea that Peter would be the gatekeeper of heaven is based on Matthew 16:19 in which Jesus says, "I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." While traditional Catholic teaching has often cited this passage with regard to the Sacrament of Reconciliation, it has also been used to suggest that Peter uses his keys to admit souls to heaven.

St. Peter is the patron of many professions including, obviously enough, locksmiths, fishermen, and shipbuilders, but also butchers, bakers, and cobblers, the latter because he walked on water with Jesus. He is remembered on June 19, the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul.

Legends, Lore, and Miracles

It is known that Peter was married, since Jesus healed his mother-in-law (Matt. 8:14–15), and Paul refers to Peter’s wife in 1 Corinthians 9:5, although she is never named. Eusebius, a Roman historian, says she was martyred the same day as Peter. Legend says that they had a daughter named Petronilla who also died a martyr’s death. Certain families in modern-day Syria and Lebanon claim direct blood lineage to him.

The apocryphal Acts of Peter recounts the story that when Peter was fleeing Rome to avoid execution, he met the risen Lord. Peter asked Jesus, “*Quo vadis?*” or, “Where are you going?” Jesus replied, “I am going to Rome to be crucified again.” This gave Peter the courage to turn back and face his martyrdom.

Peter is said to have preached and taught in the catacomb of St. Priscilla on the Via Salaria in Rome.

One of the oldest representations of Peter is on a bronze medallion from the third century. Throughout the ages, the image of Peter has been singularly consistent, showing a stocky, bearded man with curly hair.

Peter, along with Paul, is said to have appeared to Attila the Hun in the fifth century, dissuading him from sacking the city of Rome. St. Peter Nolasco (1189–1256) claimed that Peter appeared to him to encourage him to continue his missionary work in Spain.

Quote

“Master, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.”

(John 6:68)

Recipe

St. Peter would have caught and eaten tilapia on a regular basis. Most likely, it would have been grilled over a charcoal fire, as mentioned in John 21:9. It would also have been smoked and dried, resulting in something like fish jerky. On special occasions, tilapia would have been oven-baked and served with herbs and spices. A flavorful herbed crust on top of fresh tilapia fillets in this dish makes for an easy, elegant meal. This parsley-crumb topping is versatile, and is wonderful on lamb and chicken as well.



Parmesan and Parsley-Crusted Roasted Tilapia

- **PREP TIME:** 15 minutes
- **COOK TIME:** 10-15 minutes
- **SERVES:** 6
- **SPECIAL EQUIPMENT NEEDED:** Baking pan (cookie sheet)
- **THIS RECIPE IS LACTO-PESCATARIAN.** It contains fish and cheese.
- **MAKE IT GLUTEN-FREE** by substituting gluten-free breadcrumbs. Or toast several slices of gluten-free bread, then scrape with a grater to make your own gluten-free breadcrumbs. Ensure that your cheese is gluten-free.

INGREDIENTS

6 tilapia fillets, rinsed, patted dry. (If frozen filets are being used, thawed.)	2 cloves garlic
1 cup plain breadcrumbs	1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
1 cup fresh parsley, packed: leaves washed, stems removed (Italian Flat Parsley or Curly Parsley, approximately 1.2 ounces of parsley leaves)	¼ teaspoon oregano
¼ cup Parmesan cheese, grated	½ teaspoon basil
¼ cup olive oil, plus extra tablespoon for pan	2 teaspoons paprika
	¼ teaspoon salt
	¼ teaspoon pepper

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 400 degrees.

- If using a food processor:
Place garlic in a food processor with a steel blade. Pulse until finely minced. Add remaining ingredients (except tilapia). Pulse until the parsley is chopped and ingredients are combined.
- Alternate method if not using a food processor: Finely chop the garlic. Finely chop the parsley leaves. In a bowl, add breadcrumbs, Parmesan cheese, salt, pepper, and seasonings. Mix to combine. Add olive oil and stir well until breadcrumbs are coated uniformly. Add lemon juice, garlic, and chopped parsley. Stir well.
- Oil the baking sheet with a tablespoon of olive oil.
- Place tilapia filets on baking sheet, spaced evenly.
- With clean hands, remove $\frac{1}{6}$ of the parsley/crumb mixture from bowl and mound evenly onto a filet, patting the topping lightly onto filet.
- Bake for approximately 10-12 minutes, until the thickest part of the filet flakes well with a fork and crumb topping is lightly browned.

Prayers

TRADITIONAL PRAYER

○ Holy Apostle, because you are the Rock upon which Almighty God has built His Church, obtain for me I pray you: lively faith, firm hope, and burning love, complete detachment from myself, contempt of the world, patience in adversity, humility in prosperity, recollection in prayer, purity of heart, a right intention in all my works, diligence in fulfilling the duties of my state of life, constancy in my resolutions, resignation to the will of God and perseverance in the grace of God even unto death; that so, by means of your intercession and your glorious merits, I may be made worthy to appear before the Chief and Eternal Shepherd of Souls, Jesus Christ, Who with the Father and the Holy Spirit, lives and reigns forever. Amen.

CONTEMPORARY PRAYER

S t. Peter, help me to be able to admit my faults as you did and to be brave enough to make bold changes in my life. Be with me as I face my fears and remind me that, with faith, I, too, can walk on water. Amen.



CHAPTER 2

St. Teresa of Avila



Teresa Sánchez de Cepeda y Ahumada, better known as St. Teresa of Avila, turned away from the Pearly Gates and began walking, no, waltzing, down the golden street that transected the heart of heaven. Even while she lived in sixteenth-century Spain, she loved to dance, and now she danced with abandon, up and down every street in heaven. She had long since given up being “discalced” or barefoot as she did when she was on earth and instead wore high-heeled dance shoes.

“The better to tango!” she liked to say. Today she was wearing bright red boots with blue embroidery on the toes. *I should have shown them to St. Peter*, she thought, remembering that Peter was the patron of cobblers, among other things.

Most days she preferred to wander in the distant corners of the heavenly realm, but today she wanted to take the most direct route, so she headed straight down the golden street, turned left at the silver road, and headed toward the electrum path that led to one of the more bucolic corners of heaven.

She pushed open the heavy wooden door to her heavenly home—she jokingly called it her “Exterior Castle”—and was immediately greeted by the welcoming aroma of roasting partridge.

She stopped and took a long, deep breath, savoring the rich, spicy scent. The kitchen was next to the library, a very convenient location, she always said, since food and books went so well together. A staircase next to the kitchen wound its way to a turret overlooking a broad expanse of lawn and garden.

Teresa may not have actually gone barefoot all the time, especially not on her long journeys. She was, after all, as practical as she was spiritual.



In ancient times, electrum, an alloy of silver and gold, was one of the most valuable of metals. The Great Pyramid was topped with an electrum summit.

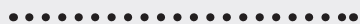


Teresa’s most famous written work was entitled *The Interior Castle*.

Teresa sighed with pleasure as she thought of the herbs she had picked there to season the partridges.

After opening the oven door and nodding approvingly at the brown glaze forming on the birds, she plopped down in an overstuffed chair in the library and glanced at the stack of books on a table. A romance. A history of fashion. A prayer book. All were well read.

Teresa was fond of fashion and fashionable clothes in her youth and read the equivalent of fashion magazines. She also loved to read romances, which consisted mostly of stories of knights, and even tried writing a few herself. She felt that a day when she couldn't read a new book was a day lost.



Gardens in the 1500s were both functional and decorative. Laid out in rectangular plots, the gardens contained plants that could be used in cooking, for medicine, and simply for pleasure. Kitchen gardens often included fennel, cabbage, onion, garlic, leeks, radishes, parsnips, peas, lentils, and beans. Infirmary gardens might contain savory, fenugreek, rosemary, peppermint, rue, iris, sage, bergamot, mint, fennel, and cumin. Grapes, roses, rosemary, carnations, and jasmine were planted for their beauty and fragrance.

She finally picked up a gardening book with flowers pressed in its pages. She paused for a moment on a design for a moonlit garden, one that consisted entirely of night-flowering and white plants. She made a mental note to ask Martin de Porres about white bougainvillea, a plant native to Peru, the next time they met. *White bougainvillea would be quite striking over a trellis*, she thought. Once, a new arrival to the heavenly realms asked her why she bothered with getting her hands and knees dirty in the soil when all she had to do was will for a garden and one would appear. "Ah," Teresa said. "It's clear you never were a gardener. It's not the having of a completed garden that matters. It's the planning and the planting and tending. A garden is a journey, not a destination. It's just that here we don't have to work as hard to make sure the plants thrive!"

About twenty minutes later, a bell in the kitchen went off. "Done!" she said to herself. "Just in time."

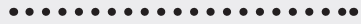
Waiting for chapel bells to signal the end of prayer time used to give her a headache, although headaches weren't a concern of hers anymore.

She pulled the pan of roasted partridge from the oven. Partridge was one of her favorite meals and a fitting dish for a dinner party with an honored guest. Teresa smiled to herself as she poured the fig sauce she had made, remembering a time when a basket of figs was given her as a gift. She sent a few to her brother with a note that if he wasn't going to eat them, he should send them back because she liked them better than he did. She tucked a brilliant white cloth over the top of her dinner party offering and set off down the street of gold.

Moments later, she was standing at the door of a small, rustic cottage with a thatched roof and window boxes filled with flowers of every unimaginable color.

While the building seemed unsuitably small for a dinner party, Teresa knew that looks were deceiving in heaven. The most modest building could house the most magnificent salon and the most disheveled person could be among the most honored of guests. Teresa knocked at the door, listening to the hollow echo. No response. She knocked again. Again, no response. She knocked a third time, this time a little harder. Things tended to work in threes up here—honoring the Trinity and all. A shuffling sound, like someone walking in oversized sandals, came from behind the rough wooden door. She sighed a bit impatiently and shifted the basket on her arm. The smell of cooked fowl wafted upwards and Teresa tucked the covering towel closer to keep in the heat. A breathless panting made her turn to see a ginger-haired woman clad in rough-spun wool charging up the path behind her. "Sorry I'm late," she gasped, as she slid to a stop next to Teresa.

Teresa sometimes found it hard to pray for long periods, often waiting impatiently for the bell that signaled the end of prayer time to ring. She once remarked that the end of the prayer hour could never come fast enough.



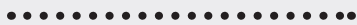
It is believed that Teresa suffered from migraines, since her descriptions of auras and lights match those given by migraine sufferers. She is the patron of those who suffer from headaches.

“Oh, St. Brigit, I don’t think you’re late,” Teresa said. “I’ve been waiting here for several minutes, and no one has come to the door.” Just then, a slight creaking noise caught their attention. A beaming, bearded face poked through the opening. “Welcome, welcome! Come on in!” Bl. Solanus Casey pushed the door open and gestured into an amazingly expansive room.

A long table was set with white linen and gleaming gold dishes. Place cards indicated the seating arrangements. Teresa tried not to be too obvious as she looked for her name. “Order of entry,” Solanus said, his gray beard bobbing. “The first shall be last and the last shall be first, you know. I think you’re over there”—he pointed near the middle of the table. “Now, let’s see what you’ve brought for the party.” He lifted the towel and sniffed appreciatively. “Partridge, I’m guessing.”

Teresa nodded. “With fig sauce.”

Once a nobleman served Teresa and her nuns a meal of partridge. Her nuns were shocked as she tucked in with delight, taking a whole partridge for herself. When questioned, she said, “There is a time for penance and time for partridge and now is the time for partridge.”



Spanish Rioja wine has been popular since the eleventh century BC.

“Excellent, excellent!” Solanus clapped his hands in anticipation. “And dear Brigit, I’m sure you must have brought beer.”

“Indeed, I have,” Brigit said, holding up the jug. “It wouldn’t be a proper party without a glass or two of beer, now would it?” Teresa smiled wryly. Beer wasn’t her beverage of choice. She was more of a Rioja girl.

Did You Know?

St. Teresa was one of the first two women Doctors of the Church. She and St. Catherine of Siena were granted the title in 1970.