

PRAY Jesus, you call us to flavor our world with love like your own. Help us use our gifts to shine with compassion and justice. Amen.



SPiRIT

Does your light shine more like...



the **SUN** or the **MOON**?



a **CANDLE** or a **FLASHLIGHT**?



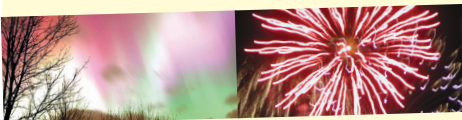
a **WARNING LIGHT** or a **READING LIGHT**?



a **LAVA LAMP** or a compact **FLOURESCENT BULB**?



the **NORTHERN LIGHTS** or **FIREWORKS**?



Is the spice you add to groups more like



SALT or **PEPPER**?



SALSA or **KETCHUP**?



CHILI POWDER or **CINNAMON**?



YELLOW or **DIJON MUSTARD**?



Christina in Costa Rica

Two young fish swimming along meet an older fish swimming the other way. The older fish nods at them and says, "Morning, how's the water?" The two young fish swim on, and then one of them looks at the other and asks, "What is water?"

"IF I DON'T, WHO WILL?"

by Ellie Roscher

Christina Gutierrez recognizes the air we breathe, the food we eat, and the water we drink are too essential to life to take for granted. She knows that choices she makes affect the food, water, and the environment that keep us alive and well.

Food enamored Christina as an energetic and happy kid. "I loved preparing and eating salads with backyard garden vegetables," she remembers. "In the first grade, I started checking cookbooks out of the library and fell asleep reading them every night in bed. For birthdays, I asked for kitchen

gadgets like chefs' knives and a crème brûlée torch."

While her friends were watching *SpongeBob*, Christina watched *Jamie Oliver* and *Two Fat Ladies* on the BBC. She preferred cooking and baking banana walnut bread to playing sports.

"By the time I was 12, I had lived in Peru, Chile, and Italy because of my mom's work," she says. "That deepened my love of food, language, and culture. I saw how people in other countries make different decisions about food and lifestyle. This helped me make my decisions more intentional."



One day when she was little, Christina saw her uncle pick up trash off the street. She didn't understand why he went out of his way to pick up a piece of someone else's trash.

"If I don't, who will?" he told her. "If no one cleans up, the world will be a mess. I have to try to make a difference, even if it seems insignificant."

Her uncle's words changed Christina's mindset. She started thinking about the impact she made on the environment. "Everything I do has an effect on this earth, whether for better or for worse."

Christina started thinking about the ethics of water. She learned about the privatization of water in documentaries such as *Blue and Gold*. The film challenged her to consider the drinks she was choosing to consume.

"Buying a \$3 bottle of water for convenience sake can be taking away clean water from someone else who doesn't have access while my tap water is clean," Christina says.

By the time Christina entered high school, she had already done a fair share of thinking and studying about food, water, and the environment. No longer wanting to work alone, she started a Green Team at her school. A small group of committed students made action plans to raise awareness about being green.

The Green Team sold reusable water bottles with the school logo on them to cut down on the purchase of bottled water. They made and distributed reusable lunch bags out of free scraps from the fabric store to cut down on disposable paper bags. They partnered with two teachers who were master gardeners

to build a rain garden and a vegetable garden on school grounds.

Bike-to-school days became popular for students who lived close. The team raised money for solar panels and brought in speakers on Earth Day to continue to educate the student body.

In her four years, the Green Team grew under Christina's leadership. Students shared ideas about how to alter personal habits to support the environment while working on school-wide policy changes.

As a student at Notre Dame, Christina spent a summer in Costa Rica. She connected with an association of organic farmers, ASOPROLA (*Asociación de Productores La Amistad*) and worked, ate, lived, and learned on organic farms. She helped prepare the soil for seedlings and assisted with watering. The farm had only a hose for watering, however.

"I had to water every tomato, cilantro, cucumber, bean, spinach and pepper plant separately," she reports. "As tedious as it sounds, I love being close to vegetables growing and having time to think."

The farm has 14 beehives that house around 40,000 bees. Besides watering, Christina tended

to the bees, cut down bananas to sell, and planted coffee. Christina enjoyed, maybe most of all, eating food right off the land she tended during the day.

At the end of the summer, Christina traveled from the farm to EARTH University in San Jose. EARTH University is a carbon-neutral campus that accepts students from over 25 countries. The campus produces almost all the food in the cafeteria, including the meats and dairy.

The bathroom near the cafeteria collects human waste, processes it, and takes it to a generator to provide energy to the cafeteria to cook the food. Food waste left over on cafeteria plates goes to feed the pigs. The pigs' waste is made into biofuel to power the lights.



SUNDAY GOSPEL

5th Sunday in Ordinary Time

What if salt loses its flavor?

NARRATOR 1: As Jesus sat on the mountain, he spoke to his disciples:

JESUS 1: You are the salt of the earth. But what if salt goes flat? How can you restore it's flavor? Then it is good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.

JESUS 2: You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. No

one lights a lamp and puts it under a bushel basket. The place for a lamp is on a stand where it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, your light must shine so that all people may see goodness in your acts and give praise to your heavenly Father.

Matthew 5.13-16

Lettuces and herbs grow in beds along the buildings. Students use pineapple rinds donated from a pineapple juice company to make natural gas. This creativity raised Christina's awareness of what was possible to a whole new level.

In Costa Rica, Christina noticed that her work around food, water, and the environment builds community. One hostel where she stayed listed the following community rules: "Turn off your TV. Leave your house. Know your neighbors. Look up when you are walking. Plant flowers. Greet people. Help a lost dog. Pick up litter. Bake extra and share. Share your skills. Listen before you react in anger. Learn from new and uncomfortable angles."

This list sums up life lessons Christina learned in Costa Rica and brought back home to the United States. Christina has built her life around intentionally learning about the everyday actions of our lives—eating food, drinking water, breathing air, interacting with the environment.

Christina urges us to be aware of the ethical and personal implications our choices have. "We should all be aware of the food we put in our bodies to survive and thrive. I challenge myself and all of us to

think about the foods we choose to consume, where they come from, how they are prepared and packaged, their impact on my body and the environment. Become interested in something that gets you excited, pursue it whole-heartedly, and try to be a life-long learner!" she says.

What is water? Christina is living into her answers and her own ethics for using Earth's resources. So can we, honoring all of God's creation and preserving it like salt.

QUESTIONS

1 What awakens Christina's interest in food, water, and the environment? 2 How does living in other cultures make Christina a more conscious eater? 3 How are the foods we eat, water we drink, and air we breathe ethical issues? 4 Which of the community rules at the hostel do you keep? 5 How do Christina's actions work like salt in the world? 6 How do Christina's actions give light to others? 7 What are ways you can be salt and light in your community?

Mark your reaction to the following questions by circling the answer that best expresses your opinion.

Former New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg tried to end the super-sizing of sugary beverages, like soda, by making 16 ounces the largest size available. Do you agree?

- 1 Strongly agree
- 2 Agree
- 3 Neither agree nor disagree
- 4 Disagree
- 5 Strongly disagree

The Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards say snacks in school vending machines now have to be less than 200 calories. Do you agree with this plan?

- 1 Strongly agree
- 2 Agree
- 3 Neither agree nor disagree
- 4 Disagree
- 5 Strongly disagree

I carry a reusable water bottle with me and try not to buy water in plastic bottles.

- 1 Strongly agree
- 2 Agree
- 3 Neither agree nor disagree
- 4 Disagree
- 5 Strongly disagree

My family pays attention to where our food comes from.

- 1 Strongly agree
- 2 Agree
- 3 Neither agree nor disagree
- 4 Disagree
- 5 Strongly disagree

My family eats fresh fruits and vegetables on a regular basis.

- 1 Daily
- 2 3-4 Times a week
- 3 1-2 a week
- 4 1-2 a month
- 5 Seldom/never

Church: a community called to flavor and shine.

Jesus calls his followers to be salt of the earth and light of the world in Sunday's gospel. These images express the mission of the Church in the world today. To what do salt and light call us?

Salt gives potatoes, burgers, chips, bread more flavor. A little salt flavors a whole dish.

Everybody uses salt. It's common. Salt of the earth people don't put on airs. They live like Jesus in their families and at work. They help others and appreciate help. They do the right thing and treat others honestly and respectfully. They live Jesus' basic teaching—love one another as I have loved you.

Salt also preserves. People salt their money away in bonds. Before refrigeration, people dried and salted meat to keep it edible for trips and voyages. The salt image envisions Church as a community that preserves Jesus' teaching by living it.

As individual grains of salt, Christians are small, but together as a community Christians can flavor the whole. The image of salt calls Christians to become the flavor of love in the activities of the world.

Our sun is the reason life arises on Earth. Sunlight calls forth life. Trees turn the sunlight into the air we breathe. Sun ripens the vegetables and fruits we eat.

Light allows us to see. It contains all the colors of the rainbow. It symbolizes unity in diversity.

People light up when someone reaches out in friendship or when they suddenly get an idea. To light up in this sense means we see on people's faces their invisible feelings. We think of our conscious awareness as inner light.

The light in a lighthouse or in a window becomes a beacon that points the way home or points the way around danger. In directing followers not to hide their light under a basket, Jesus challenges us to radiate his teachings and become a beacon to others.

Christine lets her light shine by following her interest in foods, immersing herself in other cultures, and discovering new green ways to live. She wants to learn from everyday people who farm and fish and grow their own food. She is creating an ethic that honors creation and seeks to preserve it like salt.

The word for *Church* in Latin is *ecclesia*, which means an assembly. The Church is both a global community with headquarters in the Vatican and the local Christian communities that exist in dioceses and parishes. Within parishes each Christian adds flavor and shines forth with the light of Christ, according to his or her gifts.

The Church originates with the disciples Jesus gathers and teaches during his public ministry. These men and women accompany Jesus as he brings the good news from village to village.



Jesus commissions twelve to take the good news of his resurrection to the ends of the earth. Twelve is the number of the tribes of Israel. Symbolically Jesus is sending out apostles to all the peoples of Earth.

The Church is one because it has one founder in Jesus Christ, one Spirit, one faith. The Church is holy because Jesus empowers believers with his self-giving love and gives us the Spirit to teach and sanctify us. The Church is apostolic because our bishops trace their teaching back to the apostles Jesus taught. The Church is catholic because it reaches out to all peoples in all cultures.

FAITH in ACTION

- 1 What is the most common, signature way you act like a Christian? To what groups do you add this flavor?
- 2 What flavors of other cultures do you experience in your parish?
- 3 What global problem would you most like to put in the world spotlight? Seek on the web organizations that are addressing the problem and interest others in participating in their work.
- 4 How do you have voice in our world? What is your message?
- 4 If you were a group that gave salt of the earth awards, who would you nominate to receive the awards?

His disciples form Jesus' true family. They are the seed and beginning of God's kingdom on Earth. "To those whom he gathered around him, he taught a new 'way of acting' and a prayer of their own"

Catechism of the Catholic Church #764