

**23<sup>rd</sup> SUN. in ORD. TIME (A-3) Food Justice for all**

“Owe no debt..., except that which binds you to love.” (Rom. 13:8) Do we love God enough to bind ourselves to loving our neighbor and loving God’s creation? All biblical references of the verb “to bind,” say it means: to tie up, to have pledged or promised, or to tend to wounds. So can we tie ourselves to acting justly, loving tenderly and walking humbly with our God? Can we promise to show our love in how we act?

Weeks ago Jesus told Peter what he told all his disciples today: “whatever you declare bound or loosed on earth is bound or loosed in heaven.” That, all, includes you and me. What do we declare bound?

We are celebrating Labor Day weekend. It’s the USA’s official summer’s end. We normally highlight the plight of workers locally and nationally. Today we’ll narrow our theme to the plight of food-chain workers who plant, grow, harvest, process, or sell our food. We point to the need for personal justice, that is, personal right-relationship with the way we feed our bodies. After all, biblical justice is right-relationship.

Sadly the USA is bound up in a system of food growing/producing that ruins our pursuit of happiness. **Dismal fact:** Nearly 1 of 3 kids under 5 in our County is over-weight. Obesity leads to problems with diabetes, blood pressure, cholesterol, asthma, & psychological problems. Couple this with the fact that the rampant use of anti-biotics in farm animals are rendering many human diseases resistant to those we need to heal, and we have a growing health concern.

Many of us can’t get healthy food. There are 4 times more fast-food restaurants than markets/produce vendors. Unless we begin to know where our food comes from and support ways of farming that care for people, animals, land and water, we risk becoming unhealthier than we are now. What can we do? Support our efforts to bring justice to our Food-chain system of growing and producing what we eat.

You received a card as you walked in. Please sign it if you feel like we do: that we need to take a stand. Keep the upper portion of the card, for it also has a website you can go to: [www.svjustfood.org](http://www.svjustfood.org), providing info on (1) urban farms/gardens and (2) Full-circle farms. There are plenty of Farmers Markets. Educate yourselves on Organic Foods, who produces them, which markets sell them, etc. Find out which pays just and living wages and benefits. This is Good News to us.

Learn how you can stand up for farm workers and save lives. Support Mercado and food-service workers who seek to provide for their families. Did you know their average salary is \$21,692? Did you know that that is well below the self-sufficiency standard of the USA? Let us become Good News to these workers by standing by them as they seek to up their income to living-wage standards.

Go to your local stores and ask for healthier foods. Teach your children about the importance of a healthy, balanced diet, and model for them by eating one. Become Good News to yourselves and your families.

Jesus' own mission statement is in Luke 4: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because the Lord has anointed me to preach Good News to the poor, heal the broken hearted, return sight to the blind, declare liberty to the captives, and declare the favorable year of the Lord." Jesus bound himself to healing and freeing and to loosening the bonds of the unjustly bound.

Jesus uses "bound and loosed" to commission all of his disciples to do as he did. As disciples, as students of the Word, we must bind ourselves to Christ's mission. When the presider says: "The Mass is ended..," he sends us as apostles to do what Christ did: to bind ourselves to a mission of binding wounds, healing, and loosening and removing the bonds of what impedes loving God, others, ourselves and God's creation." May we all answer with conviction: "Thanks be to God."