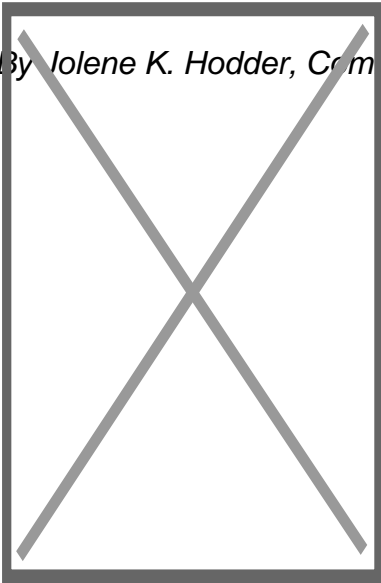


A mixed salad

By Iolene K. Hodder, Commissioner –



I love salad. Just



thinking about the cool crunch of fresh vegetables and the flavorful collision of complementary tastes makes my mouth water. I love the fact that the combinations of fresh greens, vegetables, legumes, grains and dressings are endless. Constructing my salad makes me feel like an artist, painting my plate with God's edible gifts. In fact, to make it more colorful, maybe I should swap out my croutons for M&M'S!

Most salads, though, aren't quite as artistic. Caesar Cardini (1896-1956) invented a salad in Tijuana, Mexico, in 1924 on the Fourth of July weekend. It is said that on this busy weekend, Cardini was running low on food and he put together a salad for his guests from what was left over in the kitchen. That was the genesis of the Caesar salad.

Apparently, the Cobb salad was the invention of a restaurant manager, Bob Cobb (I'm not making this up, folks) at the Brown Derby restaurant in Los Angeles. It was made at the end of a long day, when Cobb realized he didn't have time to eat. He was simply using up leftovers in his icebox. It didn't get anyone's attention until he mentioned it to Sid Grauman of Grauman's Chinese Theatre in Hollywood. Grauman tried it and loved it. It became an instant hit with the public.

Credit for the origin of Crab Louie salad depends on who you talk to. But most historians agree that it began appearing on menus of finer West Coast establishments between the turn of the 20th century and World War I.

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According to Scott McKnight in his book, "A Fellowship of Differents," a church is a mixed salad. He believes that the "American Way" of constructing a salad is to throw lettuce and other vegetables in a bowl, smothering it with dressing, making the individual ingredients disappear under the homogeneous flavor of the whole. But rather than simply throwing everything together without dressing, picking each item out of the salad to eat separately, he recommends that you "chop up spinach and arugula. Cut up tomatoes, carrots, onions, red peppers, and cabbage. Add nuts and dried berries. Sprinkle some pecorino Romano cheese on it. Drizzle olive oil over it to bring the taste of each item to the fullest."

Ephesians 4:4-7 says that you have one Master, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who rules over all, works through all, and is present in all. Everything you are and think and do is permeated with Oneness. But that doesn't mean you should all look and speak and act the same. Out of the generosity of Christ, each of us is given his own gift (MSG).

When I visit a corps, I look for what type of salad is being served. I believe that God designed the Church to be a fellowship of "differents." It is to be a beautiful mixture of men and women, rich and poor, from all cultures and all walks of life. We must honor and celebrate our cultural differences, our diverse backgrounds, languages, gifts and skills. We should acknowledge that different roads have led us into fellowship. We must never try to hide those differences or expect newcomers to give up their individuality. God created our diversity, and as McKnight suggests, it is then Jesus Christ that unites us. It is the Holy Spirit that takes our differences and uses them to build the Kingdom of God.

Let us work together to create the right kind of salad in our corps. Then we will surely *taste and see that the Lord is good* (Ps. 34:8a).