

Reflection Tuesday Week 7 -Shrove Tuesday 2023

Today, Shrove Tuesday, is the Tuesday before Ash Wednesday that marks the beginning of the Lenten Season. It is also known as **Mardi Gras**.

The word itself, *Shrovetide*, is the English equivalent for “Carnival,” which is derived from the Latin words *carnem levare*, meaning “to take away the flesh.” This was seen as the last chance for merriment which, unfortunately, in some places resulted in excessive pleasure. Shrovetide was the time to cast off things of the flesh and to prepare spiritually for Lent.

“To shrive” means to go to confession. In the past, in England during the week before Lent began, all were required to go to confession. With all their sins forgiven, Lent became a time for penance and a renewal of faith. Shrovetide allowed the partaking of the pleasures from which a person would abstain during Lent. In England, Shrove Tuesday had a special significance. Pancakes were prepared and enjoyed to help us deplete our eggs, milk, butter, and fat which were part of the Lenten fast. The need to eat up the fats gave rise to the French name **Mardi Gras**; meaning **fat Tuesday**.

Pope Francis: *“The command that God the Father addresses to the disciples on Mount Tabor as they contemplate Jesus transfigured was: ‘Listen to him.’” The first proposal, then, is very clear: We need to listen to Jesus. Lent is a time of grace to the extent that we listen to Jesus as he speaks to us. During this liturgical season, the Lord takes us with him to a place apart. While our ordinary commitments compel us to remain in our usual places and our often repetitive and sometimes boring routines, during Lent we are invited to ascend ‘a high mountain’ in the company of Jesus and to live a particular experience of spiritual discipline — asceticism — as God’s holy people.”*