

Shrove Tuesday¹

Shrove Tuesday is the third or last day of Shrovetide, which consists of the three days before the beginning of the liturgical season of Lent on the fourth day before the first Sunday in Lent, which is known as "Quadragesima," which is preceded by the Sundays known as Septuagesima, Sexagesima, and Quinquagesima, representing approximately the 70th, 60th, and 50th days, respectively, before Easter. Quadragesima represents about 40 days before Easter, however, since Lent has developed into 40 days, to "mirror" the forty days of our Lord's fast in the wilderness following His Baptism in the Jordan River by John The Baptist, and to recall the forty years the freed Hebrew slaves wandered in the desert following their Exodus from Egypt through the Red Sea under Moses, it was found necessary to add four days before Quadragesima Sunday to complete the forty days because the six weeks between Quadragesima and Easter have only six days each for fasting, which total thirty-six days of fasting, the first day (Sunday) of each week being a feast day and not a fast day.

The word "Shrove" is taken from the word "shrivel." Shrivel means to reduce. The word "Shrivel" was modified into the word "Shrive," which came to mean "to minister the sacrament of penance," or to "pardon or purge," or "to confess one's sins, especially to a priest." In some English churches it was custom to ring the church bell at noon on Tuesday to call all to confession. The bell was referred to as the Shriving Bell. Thus the ridding of one's sins through confession and subsequent absolution by a priest was the process of "Shriving" or being "Shrived or Shroved."

The process of being "shroved" applied to more than the ridding of one's sins. Since the season of Lent required fasting from certain foods and from entertainment, the reduction of one's larder of rich foodstuffs such as meat, dairy, fat, flour, and eggs was a process of being shroved. Thus the day before Ash Wednesday, when Lent begins, the custom of making pancakes and reducing the larder became a custom in England, because pancakes are made from eggs, milk, flour and fat to grease the cooking pan. The pancake meal was accompanied by meat, frequently bacon and/or sausage. Since the day was always on Tuesday of the week, it became known as "Shrove Tuesday." Anglican churches began the custom of having a supper of pancakes and meat to celebrate the end of feasting during the week until the season of Lenten fasting would end. This custom has been passed on through the Anglican churches that use the

Anglican liturgy, which are primarily those that descended from the Church of England, of which the Anglican Catholic Church is one.

In some European churches the custom of celebrating the end of feasting before fasting in Lent became known on the Tuesday before Ash Wednesday as

“Fat Tuesday” or in the French language “Mardi Gras,” celebrated with parades and costumes, masks, beaded necklaces and dances, and the making of special cakes containing an object such as an infant Jesus or a King, resulting in the cake being known as a “king cake.” Various customs resulted from being the one to receive the piece of the cake with the infant or king in the cake. In Romance language speaking countries, these celebrations were called “Carnival” derived from the words “Carne Levar” meaning “to take away meat.” Each country and culture has developed its own customs and ways to celebrate the ending of feasting and the beginning of fasting and penance in preparation for the coming of the celebration of our Lord’s Passion and Resurrection to pay for our sins and to bring us eternal salvation and eternal celebration in the Kingdom of God.³ May God grant us a joyous celebration and a Holy Lent, bringing a lasting Eastertide.-- DFT +

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² Webster’s New World College Dictionary, MacMillan NY, NY, 1988 (3rd Ed.) p. 1244 (shrive, shrivel, shrove, & shrove-tide)

³ See Wikipedia or Google “Shrove Tuesday” for most of the above information.

Dear Friends,

Greetings from rainy Nazareth! I just wanted to e-mail all of you with some of our current prayer requests, and let you know that we are doing well. Thanks for everything you do through our work here in the Holy Land. This is and always has been a team effort, some go, and some send, and if you do not send, then we cannot go.

1) Pray for David Julian (age 7) as he is struggling with Arabic in 2nd grade. We did our best to practice with him often in the USA, but there is no substitute for actually living in a city where Arabic is the day-to-day language.

2) Pray for our recent Sudanese graduates. They came to Israel as refugees and wanted to study the Bible and theology and ministry, but they did not have a very solid education to begin with, ie, could not read and write English or Arabic very well. So they did not fit into our curriculum as it was. But we did feel like this was an opportunity from above, so we devised some simplified material for them and they have learned a great deal. Now that Southern Sudan is a country, most of them will need to leave. Pray that they will be able to use what basic lessons they learned at Nazareth Seminary as they go back to their

home land. A number of them are Anglicans, by the way. This will probably be the only professional training most of them will ever receive!

3) Pray for Duane, as he is trying to put together a day-conference for local believers on witness to M's. If the vision for this ministry stays with a handful of specialists it will never really never get off the ground. If the laity of the various local churches get excited about it, then it could change everything. I am shooting for April for this. I need the right contacts and the right speakers, among other things.

4) Pray for Sharon, she was asked to sing with the choir again. Previously they did Handel's Messiah in Hebrew. It was a great chance for her to make friends with some Jews, including some Messianic folks. Normally in Nazareth we don't get that opportunity. The problem is that the practice is in Tel Aviv, which is a good 90 minutes from Nazareth. So we need to weigh the benefits and costs.

5) Pray for good health for Samantha and Amelia, as Amelia has started preschool recently. Samantha is a bit small for her age, due to her early birth, but nothing that the doctors are worried about. Give thanks for this!

6) Pray for Duane, he is teaching in Arabic this semester, which is never easy! Give thanks that I've made significant progress with my doctoral thesis recently.

7) As we recently remember the feast day of Valentine, martyr and elder of the church in Rome, it is good to thank God for our happy marriage!

8) Pray for Christ Church in Nazareth, it is our Anglican parish here and has almost no vision for outreach. I don't know what we can do, but pray for the Spirit to energize the people and the pastor.

Finally, a **special** request that weighs on my heart:

Normally in Nazareth I try to go out at least once a week and hang out around town and get into 'conversations'. It's pretty hit or miss, but it has resulted in some lengthy and rather passionate conversations lately. I have no idea how much good these conversations do in terms of the Kingdom, but I do feel it is an important part of our witness. So please pray that I'll meet the right people and say the right things in these conversations. Most of the other workers don't do anything of

this sort, and I guess I can understand why, as one has to invest most of a day to get into one good conversation, and even then it's not a sure thing. But on the other hand I don't feel we should give it up.

Peace be with all of you, as we prepare our souls and bodies for the Great Lent, or as we call it in Arabic, the Fast of the Great Feast (sawm al 3iid al kbiir). The Orthodox Christians here more or less go vegan during this time, so keep that in perspective and ask the Spirit how you can discipline your body and soul during this time of reflection and confession.

For the Kingdom,

Duane and Sharon Miller
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