

Frankly Speaking

February 2007

Lent, Year C

St Paul's Episcopal Church, Woodville, TX

Break Down the Walls; Come, Know Jesus (Holy Ghost Power)

SHROVE TUESDAY, ASH WEDNESDAY AND LENT

Shrove Tuesday is also known as "Fat Tuesday," or "Mardi Gras" in the French. This refers to the tradition of using up all the fats and sugars in the kitchen before Ash Wednesday in preparation for Lent, since fasting was traditional during Lent. Some have used the "Fat Tuesday" tradition as an excuse for binging on all the foods and drinks that were going to be off-limits during the sacrificial days of Lent, hence the sometimes scandalous festivities of "Mardi Gras" in some traditions.

The term "Shrove Tuesday" comes from the tradition that the Queen (Elizabeth I) would go to Confession before Ash Wednesday, thus having her sins "shriven," or forgiven - or, literally, "shrunken".

In the Episcopal church, we often recognize Shrove Tuesday by holding pancake suppers. Be sure to attend our pancake supper on Tuesday, February 20, from 5 to 7 p.m., sponsored by the St Paul's Men's Group.

Ash Wednesday is the first day of Lent. We receive the



St Francis has been feeding the birds who visit St Paul's

imposition of ashes during the Ash Wednesday services, which means that the priest dips his thumb into the crushed ashes and makes the sign of the cross on your forehead. Traditionally, you do not wash it off until you bathe, because when others look at you or you look in the mirror, you are reminded again of the words spoken in the service: "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return." The ashes are a reminder that God created us out of the dust of the earth and are a sign of our mortality and penitence. They come from burning some of the palms that

were blessed last year on Palm Sunday, and so the ashes are also holy.

Lent lasts 40 days. The last day of Lent is Holy Saturday, the day before Easter. Although that makes 6½ weeks, Sundays are not considered days of Lent because they are not penitential days. So we count Ash Wednesday, Thursday, Friday & Saturday (4 days), then the next 6 weeks Monday through Saturday (6 days x 6 weeks), for a total of 40 days.

Lent is the primary penitential season of the church year, Advent being the other penitential season. While in Advent we prepare for the arrival of the Messiah in the form of a baby, in Lent we prepare for that same Messiah's self-sacrifice. A much larger, more significant event: A more serious preparation.

During Lent, we will have some changes to our Sunday liturgy. We will begin each Eucharist with the Penitential Order, usually including recitation of the Ten Commandments and the General Confession. Typically, we do not say

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CONFIRMATION

On January 28th, Bishop High made his annual visitation and confirmed or received six new Episcopalians attending St Paul's.

Confirmed:

George Standley
Hannah Montgomery
Lee Cone

Received:

Janice Montgomery
Urbano Gonzales
Woodie Cone

In addition, Nick Lucas was unable to be present for confirmation on January 28th, and will instead be confirmed on February 25th in Galveston.

(Note: See the January 2007 *Frankly Speaking*, "Ask Fr. Steve" column, for more information about Confirmation.)

FR. STEVE'S SCHEDULE

Fr Steve will be out of town the following days:
Thursday, Feb. 1 through Sunday, Feb 4

For emergencies, contact the Rev. Dorothy Gremillion at St. Luke's Episcopal, Livingston, or the Rev. Tommy Williams at Woodville United Methodist.

NOTE: The church office will be closed on Thursday, Feb 1 and Friday, Feb 2.

WHAZZUP? Upcoming Events

Feb 1-4: Cursillo #215, The Cursillo of the Power of the Holy Ghost, Camp Allen. Lou Campbell, Rector; Fr Steve, Asst Spiritual Director

Feb 20: Shrove Tuesday with Pancake Supper, 5 - 7 p.m.

Feb 21: Ash Wednesday
8:30 a.m. School chapel & imposition of ashes
6:00 p.m. Ash Wed liturgy with imposition of ashes & Eucharist

Feb 22: Deadline for March newsletter submissions

Feb 24: Moon Magic, St Paul's School fundraiser, at Our Lady of the Pines Family Center, 7 -11 p.m.

Mar 16: Relay for Life Dinner Dance featuring the Gray Panthers.

Mar 22: Deadline for April newsletter submissions

Apr 1: Palm Sunday

Apr 5: Maundy Thursday 6 p.m.

Apr 6: Good Friday 12 noon

Apr 7: Easter Vigil 8 p.m.

Apr 8: Easter Day

Apr 22: Deadline for May newsletter submission

Submit your information on upcoming events to be included in the next newsletter!

ASK FR. STEVE

Q: Why do people "give up" things for Lent?

A: The practice of "giving up" something for Lent is part of the sacrificial act of penance. When we "give up" something, it should be something we value, especially something that has a "reward" value. Then, when we want the cookie or cigarette or movie that we "gave up," we are reminded that we are making a sacrifice and the reason we are doing it. If what we "gave up" had no value to us, we would not get that reminder.

Q: How long do I have to "give up" my reward?

A: Lent is 40 days long. The first day is Ash Wednesday and the last day is Holy Saturday, the day before Easter. If you look at a calendar, you will see that that makes 7 weeks. That's because Sundays are **not** considered days of Lent. Sundays are always "feast" days, not "fast" days.

One benefit of this is that, if you find you absolutely cannot go from Ash Wednesday to Easter Sunday without your treats, you can get a break every week.

When our children were young, we would "give up" sweets as a family. But because Sundays are "feast" days, the kids could have their cookies or cake on Sunday, which helped them manage the rest of the week. I personally found that when I gave up sweets completely for Lent four years ago, not eating them on Sundays either, it was actually easier since I craved them less.

However, the point of Lent is **not** lifestyle or health changes, but spiritual growth.

Q: Isn't there anything else I could do?

A: Absolutely! Instead of giving up something, you can *add* something to your daily routine.

For example, you could add 15 minutes of daily prayer, perhaps picking something specific to pray for. You might decide on a schedule of praying for world peace on Mondays, the worldwide church on Tuesdays, local ministries on Wednesdays, members of your own church, family and friends on Thursdays, the departed on Fridays, and your own spiritual needs on Saturdays.

Or you might attend the Stations of the Cross at noon every Friday during Lent. Or add 15 minutes of reading your Bible or some other spiritual aid. Or add a weekly meeting with a spiritual advisor.

Or make an appointment with me or another priest or clergy person for making your formal Confession and receiving the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

I plan to invite Fr Rucker from Port Neches to come up one day during Lent to hear confessions for those who would prefer not to confess to their parish priest.

The point is, do something different from your routine so that when you do it, whether you are giving something up or adding something to your routine, your focus turns to God and gives you a deeper awareness of God's presence and love.

Fr Steve+

DIRECTORY UPDATES

CHANGE

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THOSE CRAZY EPISCOPALIANS!

Why do they do that?

Why do some people “cross” themselves? What does it mean? How do you know when to do it?

“Crossing” oneself is an ancient practice, an outward sign of praying in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

In fact, the sign is the shape of the cross formed on one’s own body. At the words “in the name of the Father,” you touch your forehead to symbolize the Creator from whose mind all creation sprang. At “and the Son,” you touch your heart to symbolize Jesus living in you (“come into my heart, Lord Jesus”). At “and the Holy Spirit,” you touch your left chest, then your right chest near the shoulder joint, to symbolize the Holy Spirit enfolding you in his love and protection. If you go to an Orthodox church, you will see people making the Holy Spirit sign from right to left instead of from left to right. That’s the “eastern” tradition, which is older than our “western” tradition and probably what was done in the early church. But that’s ok. Jesus loves us all just the same.

So if you choose to cross yourself, the most obvious time to do it is when somebody says “in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.”

Other phrases appropriate for crossing yourself include “Blessed be God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,” which we hear at the beginning of the service, and “in the Name of the Lord,” which we hear during the Great Litany, in the Sanctus (“Holy, holy, holy Lord...”), when we say “Blessed is He Who comes in the Name of the Lord.”

What other times?

Shrove Tuesday, Ash Wednesday and Lent (Continued from page 1)

“Alleluia” during Lent, and we sing less. This change reminds us that this is not “ordinary” time but is instead a season for self-examination, denial and penitence.

Lent ends with Palm Sunday, the first day of Holy Week. The Holy Week services are some of the most moving you will ever attend. The impact is greatest when you attend all of them, for you then get a very strong sense of the last days of Our Lord’s earthly life.

Look for more information about Holy Week, what we do and why, in future issues.

- Near the end of the blessing of the bread & wine, when the priest says “sanctify us also.”
- When we pray for the departed.
- At “I believe in the resurrection of the dead” during the Creed.
- At the elevation of the bread and the wine, when the priest says “this do in remembrance of me.”
- After both have been blessed, when the priest lifts both and says “The gifts of God for the people of God.”

Of course, crossing yourself is not limited to specific times in church. Your private prayer time may be made more meaningful by doing so.

The act itself can be a prayer, too. Some people find it a natural response to a serious or scary situation, such as when passing – or escaping! - an auto accident, hearing about a tragedy in someone’s life, or hearing an ambulance or fire siren. It is a physical prayer for the person in distress. God understands and doesn’t need our words, just our hearts.

If you would like to try it but are afraid you might not know how to do it “right,” practice during your private prayer time. If you don’t feel comfortable crossing yourself in church, don’t. Our Father who knows all, knows what is in your heart and that is sufficient.

WHAZZUP? Upcoming Events 2

Cursillo

Cursillo will be held February 1-4 at Camp Allen. Lou Campbell is rector and Fr Steve is assistant spiritual director. St Paul’s can send 4 candidates, and possibly more if other parishes don’t fill all their slots. Contact Fr Steve or anyone who has attended Cursillo to find out more.

Other dates in 2007 are June 14-17, August 2-5 and November 1-4

Shrove Tuesday

St Paul’s Men’s Group will again sponsor the the Shrove Tuesday (Mardi Gras) Pancake Supper, on Tuesday February 20. Plan to eat with us!

Ash Wednesday

February 21. Services include the imposition of ashes. You are invited to attend School Chapel at 8:30 a.m. or the traditional Ash Wednesday service at 6 p.m.

Holy Week

Plan to attend the full Holy Week Schedule.

- Palm Sunday, April 1
 - Maundy Thursday, April 5, 6 p.m.
 - Good Friday, April 6, noon
 - Easter Vigil, Saturday, April 7, 8 p.m.
 - Easter Sunday, April 8
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CHILDRENS' LETTERS TO GOD

1. Dear God, Please put another holiday between Christmas and Easter. There is nothing good in there now. Amanda
2. Dear God, Thank you for the baby brother but what I asked for was a puppy. I never asked for anything before. You can look it up. Joyce
3. Dear Mr. God, I wish you would not make it so easy for people to come apart. I had to have 3 stitches and a shot. Janet
4. Dear God, If we come back as somebody else, please don't let me be Jennifer Horton - because I hate her. Denise
6. Dear God, I read the bible. What does beget mean? Nobody will tell me. Love, Alison
7. Dear God, How did you know you were God? Who told you? Charlene
8. Dear God, Is it true my father won't get in Heaven if he uses his golf words in the house? Anita
9. Dear God, I bet it's very hard for you to love all of everybody in the whole world. There are only 4 people in our family and I can never do it. Nancy
10. Dear God, Did you really mean, Do Unto Others As They Do Unto You? If you did then, I'm going to get even with my brother. Darla
11. Dear God, I like the story about Noah the best of all of them. You really made up some good ones. I like walking on water, too. Glenn
12. Dear God, My Grandpa says you were around when he was a little boy. How far back do you go? Love, Dennis
13. Dear God, Do you draw the lines around the countries? If you don't, who does? Nathan
14. Dear God, It's O. K that you made different religions but don't you get mixed up sometimes? Arnold
- 15.. Dear God, Did you mean for giraffes to look like that or was it an accident? Norma
16. Dear God, In Bible times, did they really talk that fancy? Jennifer
17. Dear God, What does it mean you are a jealous God? I thought you had everything you wanted. Jane
18. Dear God, How come you did all those miracles in the old days and don't do any now? Billy
19. Dear God, Please send Dennis Clark to a different summer

camp this year. Peter

20. Dear God, Maybe Cain and Abel would not kill each other so much if they each had their own rooms. It works out OK with me and my brother. Larry

21. Dear God, I keep waiting for spring, but it never did come yet. What's up? Don't forget. Mark

22. Dear God, You don't have to worry about me. I always look both ways before I cross the street. Dean

23. Dear God,
My brother told me about how you are born but it just doesn't sound right. What do you say? Marsha

24. Dear God,
If you watch in Church on Sunday I will show you my new shoes. Barbara

25. Dear God,
Is Reverend Coe a friend of yours, or do you just know him through the business? Donny

26. Dear God,
In Sunday School they told us what you do for a job. Who does it when you are on vacation? Jane

27. Dear God,
In school we read that Thomas Edison made light, but in Sunday School they said you did it first. Did he steal your idea? Sincerely, Donna

28. Dear God,
I do not think anybody could be a better God than you. Well, I just want you to know that. I am not just saying that because you are already God. Charles

29. Dear God,
It is great the way you always get the stars in the right place. Why can't you do that with the moon? Jeff

30. Dear God,
I am doing the best I can. Really. Frank

31. Dear God,
I didn't think orange went with purple until I saw the sunset you made on Tuesday night That was really cool. Thomas

Thanks to various people who have emailed this.

SAINT VALENTINE

We've all heard about Valentine's Day ever since we started school and exchanged valentines with Cupids carrying bows and arrows, and ate those little sugary, heart-shaped candies. We know Valentine's Day is all about *L-O-V-E*. Right?

But how did it get started? And why is it sometimes called *Saint Valentine's Day*? Here's some info from the Internet.

"The Origin of St. Valentine"*

The origin of St. Valentine, and how many St. Valentines there were, remains a mystery. One opinion is that he was a Roman martyred for refusing to give up his Christian faith. Other historians hold that St. Valentine was a temple priest jailed for defiance during the reign of Claudius. Whoever he was, Valentine really existed because archaeologists have unearthed a Roman catacomb and an ancient church dedicated to Saint Valentine. In 496 AD Pope Gelasius marked February 14th as a celebration in honor of his martyrdom.

The first representation of Saint Valentine appeared in The Nuremberg Chronicle, a great illustrated book printed in 1493. [Additional evidence that Valentine was a real person: archaeologists have unearthed a Roman catacomb and an ancient church dedicated to Saint Valentine.] Alongside a woodcut portrait of him, text states that Valentinus was a Roman priest martyred during the reign of Claudius the Goth [Claudius II]. Since he was caught marrying Christian couples and aiding any Christians who were being persecuted under Emperor Claudius in Rome [when helping them was considered a crime], Valentinus was arrested and imprisoned. Claudius took a liking to this prisoner -- until Valentinus made a strategic error: he tried to convert the Emperor -- whereupon this priest was condemned to death. He was beaten with clubs and stoned; when that didn't do it, he was beheaded outside the Flaminian Gate [circa 269].

Saints are not supposed to rest in peace; they're expected to keep busy: to perform miracles, to intercede. Being in jail or dead is no excuse for non-performance of the supernatural. One legend says, while awaiting his execution, Valentinus restored the sight of his jailer's blind daughter. Another legend says, on the eve of his death, he penned a farewell note to the jailer's daughter, signing it, "From your Valentine."

St. Valentine was a Priest, martyred in 269 at Rome and was buried on the Flaminian Way. He is the Patron Saint of affianced couples, bee keepers, engaged couples, epilepsy, fainting, greetings, happy marriages, love, lovers, plague, travellers, young people. He is represented in pictures with birds and roses."

*Source - http://www.catholic.org/saints/saint.php?saint_id=159

"The History of Saint Valentine's Day"**

Valentine's Day started in the time of the Roman Empire. In ancient Rome, February 14th was a holiday to honour Juno. Juno was the Queen of the Roman Gods and Goddesses. The Romans also knew her as the Goddess of women and marriage. The

following day, February 15th, began the Feast of Lupercalia.

The lives of young boys and girls were strictly separate. However, one of the customs of the young people was name drawing. On the eve of the festival of Lupercalia the names of Roman girls were written on slips of paper and placed into jars. Each young man would draw a girl's name from the jar and would then be partners for the duration of the festival with the girl whom he chose. Sometimes the pairing of the children lasted an entire year, and often, they would fall in love and would later marry.

Under the rule of Emperor Claudius II Rome was involved in many bloody and unpopular campaigns. Claudius the Cruel was having a difficult time getting soldiers to join his military leagues. He believed that the reason was that roman men did not want to leave their loves or families. As a result, Claudius cancelled all marriages and engagements in Rome. The good Saint Valentine was a priest at Rome in the days of Claudius II. He and Saint Marius aided the Christian martyrs and secretly married couples, and for this kind deed Saint Valentine was apprehended and dragged before the Prefect of Rome, who condemned him to be beaten to death with clubs and to have his head cut off. He suffered martyrdom on the 14th day of February, about the year 270. At that time it was the custom in Rome, a very ancient custom, indeed, to celebrate in the month of February the Lupercalia, feasts in honour of a heathen god. On these occasions, amidst a variety of pagan ceremonies, the names of young women were placed in a box, from which they were drawn by the men as chance directed.

The pastors of the early Christian Church in Rome endeavoured to do away with the pagan element in these feasts by substituting the names of saints for those of maidens. And as the Lupercalia began about the middle of February, the pastors appear to have chosen Saint Valentine's Day for the celebration of this new feast. So it seems that the custom of young men choosing maidens for valentines, or saints as patrons for the coming year, arose in this way.

**Source - http://www.pictureframes.co.uk/pages/saint_valentine.htm#history

For more information on St Valentine, Google "Saint Valentine" or check out the following sites:-----

- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint_Valentine
- http://www.lonekeep.com/lki_home/Valentine.htm
- <http://www.americancatholic.org/Features/ValentinesDay/default.asp>
- <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15254a.htm>
- http://www.pictureframes.co.uk/pages/saint_valentine.htm
- <http://www.catholic-forum.com/saints/saintv06.htm>

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Break Down the Walls; Come, Know Jesus (Holy Ghost Power!)

NOTE: The Church Office will be closed on Thursday, Feb 1, and Friday, Feb 2.

Quick Peek at Upcoming...

Feb 1-4: Cursillo, Camp Allen

Feb 20: Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper, 5 - 7 p.m.

Feb 21: Ash Wednesday, 8:30 a.m. School Chapel and 6 p.m.

Feb 22: Deadline for March newsletter submissions

Feb 24: St Paul's School Moon Magic Fundraiser, Our Lady of the Pines Family Center, 7 - 11 p.m.

ST VALENTINE OF TERNI



and his disciples. 14th century France. Richard de Montbaston