

Shrove Tuesday

13 February 2024



I acknowledge the First Nations Peoples as the first inhabitants of the nation and the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which I live and learn. I pay my respects to the Elders past and present, for they hold the memories, traditions and hopes of the First Peoples across the nation. I acknowledge their deep spiritual attachment and relationship to Country and commit to the ongoing journey of reconciliation, truth-telling and healing.

Context

Shrove Tuesday

Shrove Tuesday has several monikers around the world. In French speaking countries, it is known as 'Mardi Gras' and in a growing number of countries it is referred to as 'Pancake Day'. Of course, the term 'Shrove Tuesday' is still widely used by people of the Catholic faith. It occurs on the day prior to Ash Wednesday, which signals the beginning of the Season of Lent. Shrove Tuesday's association with pancakes refers to the 'emptying' of any extravagant foods in fridges and pantries in preparation for fasting during the Lenten season. It is a feast before the fast and a day that many believers begin to prepare spiritually for, with the imminent approach of Lent. Whilst this day of preparation can be associated with a focus on penance, that is, seeking forgiveness for our shortcomings, Shrove Tuesday also presents an opportunity to prepare for the Season of Lent through the practice of contemplation.

Contemplation requires minimising distractions for focus, which I suggest is an excellent way to prepare for Ash Wednesday and the Lenten journey ahead! Some Catholics contemplate the Scriptures writings, while others may gaze upon artists' impressions of the Holy Face of Jesus.

Let's start with some scripture writings...



DC Celebrates Mardi Gras With Annual Pancake Races. Photography. Britannica ImageQuest, Encyclopædia Britannica, 25 May 2016. [quest.eb.com/images/115_3940095](https://www.britannica.com/quest/eb.com/images/115_3940095). Accessed 9 Feb 2024.

Scripture- James 1: 12, 16-18-18[MG1] A reading from the letter of St James

(This version from The Catholic Children's Bible)

Happy are those who remain faithful under trials, because when they succeed in passing such a test, they will receive as their reward the life which God has promised to those who love God. Do not be deceived, my dear friends! Every good gift and every perfect present comes from heaven; it comes down from God, the Creator of the heavenly lights, who does not change or cause darkness by turning. By God's own will God brought us into being through the word of truth, so that we should have first place among God's creatures.

The Word of the Lord.

Reflection

Interestingly, in the Catholic Lectionary, Shrove Tuesday does not have its own allocated Scripture readings, as is the case for most significant events in the Church. Instead, you may find wisdom writings about God's love for humanity from the mass of the day. This year, Shrove Tuesday falls in the Sixth Week of Ordinary Time, and listeners will hear Scripture from the Letter of St James. This ancient text provides an apt reminder for believers to remain steadfast through the spiritual trials of the Lenten journey towards personal growth.



DC Celebrates Mardi Gras With Annual Pancake Races. Photography. Britannica ImageQuest, Encyclopædia Britannica, 25 May 2016. [quest.eb.com/images/115_3934597](https://www.britannica.com/images/115_3934597). Accessed 9 Feb 2024.

For faithful followers, the beginnings of Lent can seem daunting when we consider the changes required over the next 40 days. Maintaining a fast from something we may be quite dependent on, increasing our prayer routine and finding the means for almsgiving in the current financial climate may seem overwhelming when starting out. 'Fasting' can take many forms, and sometimes it helps to think of it as gifting others with your time, talents, and treasure. Start where you can. Inevitably, there will be longing through difficult times, yet this sharpens our focus on God and moves our minds and hearts away from the 'noise' we are accustomed to.

This clarity can contribute to a 'conversion of heart' as we strive for better habits, attitudes and thoughts that call us into right relationship for closeness and contentment with God. The opening line Happy are those who remain faithful under trials reminds people of faith that staying the course with God is where happiness can be found.

Let's consider too, the practice of gazing at religious artefacts. Contemplating the Holy Face of Jesus is associated with two miraculous images: Veronica's Veil and the Holy Shroud of Turin. The Catholic Church acknowledges the Feast of the Holy Face of Jesus on Shrove Tuesday each year. In the Gospel of John, Jesus says to Philip, Whoever has seen me as seen the Father. Thus, by contemplating the Holy Face of Jesus on Shrove Tuesday, it prepares us to grow closer to both Jesus and God in this Lenten season.

Prayer

On this Shrove Tuesday, you may like to meditate on the words of Pope St. John Paul II even, and call upon the Holy Face of Jesus to guide you through this Lenten season:

Holy Face, which looks at us and searches for us, kind and merciful,

You who call us to conversion and invite us for the fullness of love, we adore and bless you.

In Your luminous Face, we learn to love and to be loved, to find freedom and reconciliation, to promote peace, which radiates from you and leads to you.

Amen.

Call to Action

- Pull out your favourite pancake (or pikelet) recipe and cook up a storm with any 'extravagances' you have in the pantry – choc-chips, maple syrup, frozen berries and whipped cream or butter!
- Turn your pancake-making into a faith filled experience using scripture to reflect on fasting and fullness in faith with Beth Barnett's [Shrove Tuesday Liturgy for Making Pancakes](#).
- For a food-free kitchen-friendly (read: no clean-up involved) resource guide for families with children see Evangelisation Brisbane's [Lent ideas for kids](#).
- Another resource which helps children to plan their Lent can be found at the [St Paul Center](#)[MG1] .
- For adults who are interested in the honouring the Feast of the Holy Face of Jesus, you may like to view this short [video](#).