

“Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, left the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them he was hungry.”

(Luke 4: 1-2 NIV)

It's hard to believe but in the middle of this month of February the season of Lent begins. It seems that we just celebrated Christmas and New Year's!

As we have done in the past we will celebrate communion on February 11th. Then on Tuesday, February 13 we will hold our annual Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper. Both of these events are meant to prepare us spiritually and symbolically to enter the Season of Lent as we have in the past with our Community Ash Wednesday Service at the Catholic Church of the Resurrection.

Lent is a 40-day journey where we seek to improve ourselves spiritually so that we may more fully appreciate the Day of Resurrection on Easter. Communion gives us spiritual nourishment for the journey while the Shrove Tuesday is a symbolic reminder of the past traditions of the church.

The word *shrove* is a form of the Old English word *shrive*, which means to obtain forgiveness for one's sins by way of confession and sacrifice. The tradition of marking the start of Lent has been documented for centuries. Writings from as far back as the year 1000 mention the aspect of confession as preparation for Lent.

Before the Protestant Reformation, the celebration of Shrove Tuesday lasted a week or more before the start of Lent. The specific custom of Christians eating pancakes on Shrove Tuesday dates to the 16th century.

The association between pancakes and Shrove Tuesday may have arisen because it permits foods which are traditionally discouraged from being eaten during the Lenten season, such as butter, eggs, and fat to be used up. Christians use these ingredients on Shrove Tuesday to make pancakes or other rich foods.

Lent is a journey that begins the night before with the pancakes of Shrove Tuesday. But that's only the beginning of the journey. The rest of Lent we must spend in time of self-reflection looking at who we are and what kind of follower of Jesus we are. Fasting can help us to do that. Prayer, Bible Study, and other disciplines can help us to do that. But they are not the end in themselves. Like the pancakes of Shrove Tuesday, they are part of the process.

We have not been successful in Lent unless we emerge after the 40 days with a resurrection mentality. The Bible says Jesus emerged from the 40 days in the desert hungry. May we also emerge from Lent with a hunger to be better disciples for our Lord and King.

Have a great month and a successful beginning to Lent,

Pastor Tim