

SHROVE TUESDAY TALK

Presented by The Fraternal Society of Saint John The
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I FAST AND HELP OUR LADY WORK MIRACLES- WHAT'S YOUR SUPERPOWER?



**I FAST AND HELP OUR LADY WORK
MIRACLES-WHAT'S YOUR SUPERPOWER?**

Text by Mike Church ©2023-CRUSADE Radio Guild

A LITTLE HISTORY OF MARDI GRAS/SHROVE TUESDAY - Rev. Fathers,
Ladies & Gents and Radical Traditional Catholic Extremist Enemies of The State!

According to historians, the celebration of Mardi Gras has its roots in the pagan Roman celebration of Lupercalia. This was a February holiday and it honored the Roman god of fertility. It involved feasting, drinking, and carnal behavior. So THIS is what most people think Mardi Gras is and always has been. [SLIDE - MARDI GRAS]

However, with the rise of the Church in ancient Rome, Christian teaching and morals took root, but there always remained a strong need to blend ancient Roman traditional practices with the growing Christian faith. The blending of tradition with new religious beliefs was a common practice in the ancient world and it helped people to transition away from paganism. So THIS is what Mardi Gras is actually supposed to be about. [SLIDE - PANCAKES]

As The Catholic Faith spread throughout Europe during the first millennium, different cultures celebrated the last day before Lent in their own ways, adapting the practices to suit their cultures. In France, the holiday became particularly popular as people feasted on foods that would be given up during the forty days of Lent. Meats, eggs, and milk were finished off in one day, giving the holiday its French title of 'Mardi Gras' which literally translated means 'Tuesday Fat' or what we call today Fat Tuesday.

This French tradition for Shrove Tuesday of course made its way to France's crown jewel in the new world: New Orleans. Catholic New Orleanians created the ad hoc organizations that hosted the first Mardi Gras balls, dances and street festivities which seemed to get more unruly every year. With the city on the verge of banning Mardi Gras altogether. Then, in 1857 a group of young men founded the *Mistick Krewe of Comus*, and produced the first themed nighttime parade. But by 1861 and with the War of Northern Aggression looming, Mardi Gras was

cancelled. After the War of Northern Aggression and with New Orleans reeling from its losses and evil Union occupation and domination, the people wanted to bring Mardi Gras back and the previously unruly street parades were restarted. By the 1870's, City leaders, which naturally included Catholics (because New Orleans was known as the Crown Jewel of Catholicism in The Mississippi River Valley) wanted to make the day a more formal event complete with Southern charm the city was famed for.

[SLIDE] That's when Rex entered the picture in 1872. The Krewe of Rex's official history follows.

[SLIDE] The news that Russia's Grand Duke Alexis Romanoff would visit Mardi Gras and New Orleans provided another impetus to add order and brilliance to the day.

The group of young men who founded the Rex Organization hoped not only to entertain the Grand Duke, but also to create a daytime parade that would be attractive and fun for the citizens of the city and their guests. [SLIDE] True to the Rex motto, "*Pro Bono Publicoæ*" for the public good," they succeeded beyond their hopes. They selected one of their members, Lewis J. Solomon, to be the first Rex, King of Carnival. Before he could begin his reign he had to borrow a crown, scepter, and costume from an actor who happened to be performing in town at the time.

[SLIDE] The first Rex Parade bore little resemblance to the Rex Processions of later years. Rex rode a horse, not a float. The parade that followed was made up largely of the informal maskers and marchers who were on the streets anyway.

[SLIDE] In 1873 Rex held its first ball, and selected the first Queen of Carnival. Carnival balls traditionally were formal and very private affairs, with elegant decorations, tableaux presentations, and with dancing limited to the masked and costumed members and their guests.

[SLIDE] Other traditions developed, including Rex's arrival in his Kingdom by boat on the Monday before Mardi Gras. Accompanied by costumed officials, Rex would descend grandly from his royal yacht and join a parade to City Hall. There city leaders surrendered the keys of the city to the new Sovereign of this fanciful and temporary realm. Rex's reign as "King of Carnival" had begun.

[SLIDE] The Rex Organization, incorporated as "The School of Design," went to work to achieve the twin goals of presenting a grand daytime procession as the highlight of Mardi Gras day, and to encourage visitors to come to New Orleans to enjoy the celebration.

[SLIDE] In subsequent years, and to this day, Rex has issued his Official Proclamation of Carnival, and invited his subjects to gather in his "Capital City" to celebrate. Rex continues to this day and recently, in 2020, the Archdiocese's newspaper ahd this write up about a local priest¹.

[SLIDE]Msgr. Christopher Nalty, pastor of Good Shepherd Parish in New Orleans, is a native New Orleanian steeped in the Carnival tradition. He is a member of Rex (he believes he might be the only Catholic priest who is a member) and rode in truck parades as a kid. For the past 25 years, he also has ridden in Zulu, Proteus, Comus, Endymion and Bacchus.

¹ <https://clarionherald.org/news/msgr-nalty-hail-rex->

Among his prized “priestly” duties during Carnival is celebrating a noon Mass for Bacchus, the Sunday before Mardi Gras, **and blessing the Rex krewe and floats** before they roll from their Claiborne Avenue den on Mardi Gras day.

He said he inherited the Bacchus gig after the death of beloved Jesuit Father Harry Tompson, who was close friends with the Bacchus founders, who are Catholic.”

Alas, that is about the pinnacle of Catholicity that remains in New Orleans’ Mardi Gras celebrations. Let’s move on to 1 more Catholic aspect of Mardi Gras, the triad color scheme of PURPLE, GREEN and GOLD.

[SLIDE] Although no one knows the precise origin of the color combo, David Simpson and I have a theory that is shared by many others. Since the tradition is for “Carnival Season” to kick off on the Feast of the Epiphany of Our Lord and the baking of the first “King Cake” we theorize that the ancient English who started the King Cake tradition decided to honor their confection with a colorful medley that also reflected beauty of the visitation of The Magi.

Green for Myrhh

Purple for Frankencense

Gold for Gold

Of course we know this is at least partly correct because it comes to us in the Holy number of 3, what a trifecta! This brings us to today and ...

SHROVE TUESDAY

Shrove Tuesday is the last day of what traditionally was called "Shrovetide," the week preceding the beginning of Lent. 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" or *carné valé*, meaning "farewell to the flesh!" The Krauts had a term for it to "Fasching", which sounds very Nazi-like especially if you yell it like most Germans speak "*Sie werden den Karneval beenden!*" meaning "time for you lads to end your carnival"!! But shrovetide had another very important purpose which has been nearly completely lost in the modern vale of tears: "to shrive". Father William Saunders tells us...

In the Anglo-Saxon "*Ecclesiastical Institutes*," recorded by Theodulphus and translated by Abbot Aelfric about AD 1000, Shrovetide was described as follows: "In the week immediately before Lent everyone shall go to his confessor and confess his deeds and the confessor shall so shrive him as he then may hear by his deeds what he is to do in the way of penance."²

In the 7th century Pope St. Gregory, wrote to St. Augustine of Canterbury, and gave him this Lenten rule of fasting. "We abstain from flesh, meat, and from all things that come from flesh, as milk, cheese, and eggs." Looking at this list it's easy to see why on Shrove Tuesday, pancakes became all the rage, each family had to get rid of its dairy and making pancakes was a great way to do that.

[SLIDE - PANCAKES] This practice of fasting from not just green M&M's but from nearly all things pleasurable to our taste and smell senses was carried on for well over 1,200 years in some form or another. It was not until the Hell that is liberalism was unleashed upon Christendom that things began to change drastically and for the worse. In fact in mid-18th century France, lenten penances were deteriorating so alarmingly that in 1748, 40 years (40, is that number a

² <https://www.catholicculture.org/culture/library/view.cfm?recnum=5877>

coincidence!?) before the bloody French Revolution began Pope Benedict XIV instituted the “Forty Hours of Carnival”.

“Whereby prayers were offered and the Blessed Sacrament was exposed in churches during the three days preceding Ash Wednesday. In a letter entitled, *“Super Bacchanalibus,”* he granted a plenary indulgence to anyone who adored the exposed Blessed Sacrament by offering prayers and making atonement for sins.”³

FASTING IS AN ACT OF CHARITY

First things first, here is how NOT to look when you fast.

[SLIDE -BEGGAR]

Here is how to look while fasting.

[SLIDE- MAN PRAYING ROSARY]

If you don't have a Walther PPK a nice Rosary will suffice. But seriously? WHY do we fast and do penances in Lent and in general? Is it to be obedient sons and daughters? Is it to carry out some “mission” like we're commandoes and some special operations in the DMZ (the Demons and Moloch Zone)? No, it is because fasting is an act, ultimately, of Charity. Why is it an act of Charity? We fast because we love God above all other things and if we wish for the conversion and reversion of family, friends and indeed the world then we must be willing to quietly and privately renounce this world to which they are attached to bring the

³ Ibid

Grace necessary for that conversion. Remember it's prayer AND fasting. Here's a passage to remind us of this from your patron Saint John The Evangelist.

“I write unto you, babes, because you have known the Father. I write unto you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and you have overcome the wicked one. [15] Love not the world, nor the things which are in the world. **If any man love the world, the charity** of the Father is not in him.”⁴

Father Raniero Cantalamessa said in a homily given on this very subject in the Redemptoris Mater Chapel in Rome.

“Fasting is above all a sign of **human solidarity and Christian charity** because it leads men and women to choose freely, and thus with redemptive love, what for millions of people is obligatory.”

As Dom Prosper Gueranger says, does this passage mean that to be faithful Catholics we have to leave our homes and move out into the desert?!

“I have given them thy word, and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world; as I also am not of the world. [15] I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from evil.”⁵

⁴ <https://drbo.org/cgi-bin/d?b=drb&bk=69&ch=2&l=15-#x>

⁵ <https://drbo.org/cgi-bin/d?b=drb&bk=50&ch=17&l=14-#x>

William Edward Heartpole Lecky, an 18th century apologist and historian put Our Lord's institution of Charity as the bedrock of the civilization that would become Christendom.

“Christianity for the first time made charity a rudimentary virtue, giving it a leading place in the moral type, and in the exhortations of its teachers. Besides its general influence in stimulating the affections, it effected a complete revolution in this sphere, by regarding the poor as the special representatives of the Christian Founder, and thus making the love of Christ, rather than the love of man, the principle of charity. No achievements of the Christian Church are more truly great than those which it has effected in the sphere of charity. For the first time in the history of mankind, it has inspired many thousands of men and women, at the sacrifice of all worldly interests, and often under circumstances of extreme discomfort or danger, to devote their entire lives to the single object of assuaging the sufferings of humanity. It has covered the globe with countless institutions of mercy, absolutely unknown to the whole Pagan world. It has indissolubly united, in the minds of men, the idea of supreme goodness with that of active and constant benevolence.”⁶

Unlike Mohammed, Buddah, Vishnu or any other of the pagan “gods” of history, only Christ comes to join men and join them in this vale of tears by example. This is what turns the entire tide of human history and it's all based on Charity. As Saint Paul told us in the Epistle for Quinquagesima Sunday.

If I speak with the tongues of men, and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.... Charity is patient, is kind: charity envieth not, dealeth not perversely; is not puffed up; [5] Is not

⁶ <https://oll.libertyfund.org/title/lecky-history-of-european-morals-from-augustus-to-charlemagne-vol-2>

ambitious, seeketh not her own, is not provoked to anger, thinketh no evil;... Charity never falleth away: whether prophecies shall be made void, or tongues shall cease, or knowledge shall be destroyed...And now there remain faith, hope, and charity, these three: but the greatest of these is charity.

Think about it, gentlemen. When Our Lord enters his public ministry, the first thing he does is receive baptism at the hands of Saint John The Baptist. For our purposes tonight we can call this a Holy Shroving. Then what is the very next thing he does and thus teaches us to do?

“Then Jesus was led by the spirit into the desert, **to be tempted by the devil.** [2] And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights...”⁷

Now Jesus’ temptation wasn’t going to be a double cheeseburger or bucket of fried chicken but this is an obvious “teachable moment” that from the get-go, to become per Thomas Akempis “Imitators of Christ”, mortification of the flesh is a pre-cursor. Now to the fun part of tonight and the conclusion

I FAST AND HELP OUR LADY WORK MIRACLES-WHAT’S YOUR SUPERPOWER?

Through the centuries and over hundreds of apparitions, when Our Lady appears to the least of us it is almost always to remind men to do what? Pray the Rosary and do penance. But in the 20th century She upped her game and began detailing what would happen to Man if he ignored God’s warning’s made through her. We all know what she told Sister Lucia and the seers at Fatima but much less known is Her miraculous appearances to Bruno Cornacchiola, known as Our Lady of

⁷ <https://drbo.org/chapter/47004.htm>

Revelation and even still lesser known, Our Lady appeared to a sister named Sister Ephrem as Our Lady of America.⁸

[SLIDE -OLOA FRONT] In these apparitions and warnings, Our Lady is most concerned with we ‘Muricans and gave sister specific instructions for our mortifications to be carried out and what will happen if we ignore Her. On September 26th, 1957 Our Lady told Sister Ephrem.

“Dear sons, I ask you to practice self-denial and penance in a special manner, because it is you who must lead my children in the way of peace. Yet this peace will come only by way of the sword, the flaming sword of love.”⁹

The next day she appeared and was even more specific who she was talking about.

“My beloved daughter, what I am about to tell you concerns in a particular way my children in America. Unless they do penance by mortification and self-denial and thus reform their lives, God will visit them with punishments hitherto unknown to them.”

Then she gave the warning of all warnings.

“My dear children, either you will do as I desire and reform your lives, or God Himself will need to cleanse you in the fires of untold punishment. You must be prepared to receive His great gift of peace. If you will not prepare yourselves, God will Himself be forced to do so in His justice and mercy.”

⁸ <https://catholicism.org/our-lady-of-america.html>

⁹ https://www.ourladyofamerica.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/OLOA_Messages_Booklett-V1.54.pdf

[SLIDE -OLOA BACK] But twas not all fire and brimstone and warnings of The Chastisement that since 1957 I'd say the human race on this continent has earned.

“I am pleased, my child, with the love and honor my children in America give to me, especially through my glorious and unique privilege of the Immaculate Conception. I promise to reward their love by working through the power of my Son's Heart and my Immaculate Heart miracles of grace among them. *I do not promise miracles of the body, but of the soul.* Let **America** continue and grow in its love for me, and I in return, in union with the Heart of my Son, promise to work wonders in her. My child, I desire that this be known.”

It should be clear that Our Lady has a very special interest and love for the people of this continent beginning with Our Lady of Guadalupe, through Our Lady of America and til today and the Graces received right here at Epiphany through your First Friday and Saturday devotions; but you've got a cruel, evil and despicable world all around you here to carry the burden of, so the challenge this Lent, I think is to

[SLIDE #SmileWhileFastingForTampaSaintPeteHarder]

If I'm right, that fasting is an act of Charity, then we all have an awful lot of Charitable giving ahead of us, so let's to it!

And now, as always, I finish with my Chesterton Quote.

“Charity is the power of defending that which we know to be indefensible. Hope is the power of being cheerful in circumstances which we know to be desperate. It is true that there is a state of hope which belongs to bright prospects

and the morning; but that is not the virtue of hope. The virtue of hope exists only in earthquake and, eclipse. It is true that there is a thing crudely called charity, which means charity to the deserving poor; but charity to the deserving is not charity at all, but justice. It is the undeserving who require it, and the ideal either does not exist at all, or exists wholly for them.”

Thank you, God bless and Our Lady of America keep you!