



Children's National™

Holy Days of February 2017 Celebrations, Observances, and Information Religious, Spiritual, and Cultural Occasions

Chaplaincy Services

February 1 Vasant Panjami Hindu Vasant Panchami is an important Indian festival celebrated every year in the month of Magh according to the Hindu calendar. Celebrated on the fifth day of Magh, the day falls somewhere in the months of February or March according to the Gregorian calendar. The significance of the day lies in the worship of Goddess Saraswati, symbol of wisdom and also the onset of spring season.

According to the popular belief, the origins of this festival lie in Aryan period. Aryans came and settled in India through Khyber Pass, crossing the Saraswati River among many others. Being a primitive civilization, most of their development took place along the banks of the River Saraswati. Thus, River Saraswati began to be associated with fertility and knowledge. It is then that the day began to be celebrated.

In today's times, the festival is celebrated by farmers as the on-coming of the spring season. The day is largely celebrated in Northern Parts of India. Here, people offer food to the Brahmins and organize rituals in the name of Goddess Saraswati.

The color yellow is the predominant color associated with the festival, the origins of which are supposed to be the fields of mustard which can be seen in Punjab and Haryana during this period. Kite flying is also commonly associated with this festival. Children as well as adults fly kites on this day to celebrate freedom and enjoyment.

Another tradition associated with this day is that of initiating studies in the young. Young children often begin learning on this day, which is believed to be the reason why the school sessions start in the month of March. Sweets with a yellow hue are also distributed on this day and people can also be seen donating books and other literary material to the poor.



Office of InterFaith Pastoral and Spiritual Care

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Margarita Roque 202-476-2626/ room 4115

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Saturday at 4:00 pm (Main Chapel, room 3201, 3rd floor)*

Rev. Matthew Schlageter
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Speaks: Portuguese/Spanish

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February 2 *Candlemas/Presentation of Christ in the Temple* *Christian*

Candlemas is a Christian holiday celebrated annually on February 2. It celebrates three occasions according to Christian belief: the presentation of the child Jesus; Jesus' first entry into the temple; and it celebrates the Virgin Mary's purification (mainly in Catholic churches).

Many Christians consider Jesus as the "light of the world" so it is fitting that candles are blessed on this day and that a candle-lit procession precedes the mass. It is traditional to eat crepes on Candlemas in some parts of Europe, such as France. Each family member prepares and cooks a crepe while holding a coin in hand. This is believed to assure wealth and happiness until the next Candlemas celebration.

Candlemas is also known as Candelaria in Spanish speaking countries. Whoever finds baby figures hidden inside the Rosca de Reyes (Kings Cake) on Epiphany on January 6 is obliged to bring food to a gathering held on February 2. Many Orthodox Christians celebrate this event by bringing beeswax candles to their local church and requesting for these candles to be blessed to be used in the church or at home. Some Christians observe the practice of leaving Christmas decorations up until Candlemas.

Candlemas primarily focuses on Jesus' early life. Many Christians believe that Jesus' mother Mary presented him to God at the Temple in Jerusalem after observing the traditional 40-day period of purification (of mothers) following his birth. According to a New Testament gospel, a Jewish man named Simeon held the baby in his arms and said that he would be a light for the Gentiles (Luke 2:32). It is for this reason that this event is called Candlemas.

Many people believe that some of Candlemas' activities stem from pagan observances such as Imbolc, a Gaelic festival, or the Roman feast of Lupercalia. However, others have argued that there is too little evidence to shed light on Candlemas' substitution for these festivals. Either way, Candlemas occurs at a period between the December solstice and the March equinox, so many people traditionally marked that time of the year as winter's "halfway point" while waiting for the spring.

According to some sources, Christians began Candlemas in Jerusalem as early as the fourth century and the lighting of candles began in the fifth century. Other sources say that Candlemas was observed by blessing candles since the 11th century. An early writing dating back to around 380 CE mentioned that a feast of the Presentation occurred in a church in Jerusalem. It was observed on February 14. The feast was observed on February 2 in regions where Christ's birth was celebrated on December 25.

Candlemas is known as the "Feast of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple" in many eastern churches. Other traditional names in the western churches include the "Feast for the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary" as well as the "Meeting of the Lord". It is also Groundhog Day in the United States and Canada on February 2. According to folklore, the badger comes out to test the weather in the United Kingdom.

Snowdrops (*galanthus nivalis*) are known as Candlemas Bells because they often bloom early in the year, even before Candlemas. Some varieties bloom all winter (in the northern hemisphere). The superstitious used to

believe that these flowers should not be brought into the house prior to Candlemas. However, it is also believed in more recent times that these flowers purify a home.

According to folklore, an angel helped these Candlemas bells to bloom and pointed them as a sign of hope to Eve, who wept in repentance and in despair over the cold and death that entered the world. Many Christians see the flower as a symbol of Jesus Christ being this hope for the world. Candles that are lit during Candlemas also symbolize Jesus as the "light of the world".

Note: Please note that the seasons and seasonal changes mentioned in relation to Candlemas refer to the northern hemisphere.



February 2 Imbolc Wicca/Pagan Imbolc (Imbolg) - Cross Quarter Day

The festival marking the beginning of spring has been celebrated since ancient times. It is a Cross Quarter Day, midpoint between the Winter Solstice and the Spring Equinox, it can fall between the 2nd & 7th of February when calculated as the mid point between the astronomical Winter Solstice and the astronomical Spring Equinox, in 2017 it falls on February 3rd. The astronomically derived date is later than the traditional date of January 31st / February 1st.

Imbolc derives from the Old Irish *i mbolg* meaning in the belly, a time when sheep began to lactate and their udders filled and the grass began to grow.

At the Mound of the Hostages on the Hill of Tara the rising sun at Imbolc illuminates the chamber. The sun also illuminates the chamber at Samhain, the cross quarter day between the Autumn Equinox and the Winter Solstice.

The Mound of the Hostages at Tara is a Neolithic Period passage tomb, contemporary with Newgrange which is over 5000 years old, so the Cross Quarter Days were important to the Neolithic (New Stone Age) people who aligned the chamber with the Imbolc and Samhain sunrise. In early Celtic times around 2000 years ago, Imbolc was a time to celebrate the Celtic Goddess Brigid. Brigid was the Celtic Goddess of inspiration, healing, and smithcraft with associations to fire, the hearth and poetry.

When Ireland was Christianized in the 5th century, the mantle of the Goddess Brigid was passed on to Saint Brigid, born at Faughart, near Dundalk, Co. Louth. She founded a monastery in Kildare and ended her days there. The goddess Brigid festival was Christianized to become Saint Brigid's Day.

The Saint Brigid's Cross is one of the archetypal symbols of Ireland, while it is considered a Christian symbol, it may well have its roots in the pre-Christian goddess Brigid. It is usually made from rushes and comprises a woven square in the center and four radials tied at the ends.

The Saint Brigid's Cross was traditionally hung on the kitchen wall to protect the house from fire and evil. Even today a Brigid's Cross can be found in many Irish homes, especially in rural areas. *Photo from Boyne Valley Tours of the illumination of The Mound of Hostages on Imbolc.*



February 2 St. Brigid of Kildare Celtic Christian Saint Brigid of Kildare or Brigid of Ireland c. 451–525, was an Irish nun, abbess, and founder of several convents and a school. She is venerated as a saint in Catholic, Anglican, and Orthodox tradition. Considered one of Ireland's three patron saints along with saints Patrick and Columba, her feast day is February 1, the traditional first day of spring in Ireland.

Brigid was reportedly a disciple of Patrick's nephew, Saint Mel. One tradition holds that she was consecrated by him not only as an abbess, but also as a bishop. Her work as a missionary and teacher was highly successful, and by the time of her death, the abbey at Kildare had grown into a cathedral that became famous throughout Europe as a center of learning.

Legend has it that Brigid made her cross from rushes she found on the ground beside a dying man, fashioning the cross in order to convert him. It is still the custom in many houses in Ireland to have a Saint Brigid's Cross in honor of the saint.



According to tradition, a new cross is made each Saint Brigid's Day (February 1), and the old one is burned to keep fire from the house, yet customs vary by locality, and family. Many homes have multiple crosses preserved in the ceiling, the oldest blackened by many years of hearth fires. Some believe that keeping a cross in the ceiling or roof is a good way to preserve the home from fire, which was a major threat in houses with thatch and wood roofs.

Photo: from Blarney Woolen Mills

February 3 St. Blaise Day Christian Little is known about Saint Blaise prior to his mention in a court physician's medical journal. The physician, Aëtius Amidenus, spoke of Saint Blaise's aid in treating objects caught in the throat. He was also mentioned in the book of Acts, where he was aided by animals and treated people and beasts alike. Saint Blaise is believed to begin as a healer then, eventually, became a "physician of souls." He then retired to a cave, where he remained in prayer. People often turned to Saint Blaise for healing miracles.

In 316, the governor of Cappadocia and of Lesser Armenia, Agricola, arrested then-bishop Blaise for being a Christian. On their way to the jail, a woman set her only son, who was choking to death on a fish bone, at his feet. Blaise cured the child, and though Agricola was amazed, he could not get Blaise to renounce his faith. Therefore, Agricola beat Blaise with a stick and tore at his flesh with wool combs before beheading him.

Many German churches are dedicated to Saint Blaise, sometimes called Saint Blasius.

In Great Britain, the village of St. Blazey got its name from Saint Blaise, and a church dedicated to the saint can be found in Decon hamlet of Haccombe, near Newton Abbot.

There is a Saint Blaise's Well in Kent, and the water is believed to have medicinal properties. A Blessing of the Throats ceremony is held every February 3 at Saint Etheldreda's Church in London and Balve, Germany.

A Catholic middle school was named after Saint Blaise in Bradford, West Yorkshire. The name was decided upon when the link between Bradford and the woolen industry was connected to the way St. Blaise was martyred: with woolcomb.

Saint Blaise is often depicted holding two crossed candles in his hand, or in a cave with wild animals. He is also often shown with steel combs. The similarity of the steel combs and the wool combs made a large contribution to Saint Blaise's leadership as the patron saint of wool combers and the wool trade.



Photo: Catholic Online.com

February 3 Setsubun sai Shinto Setsubun ("seasonal division") is a festival held on February 3 or 4, one day before the start of spring according to the Japanese lunar calendar. Setsubun is not a national holiday.

For many centuries, the people of Japan have been performing rituals with the purpose of chasing away evil spirits at the start of spring.

Around the 13th century, for example, it became a custom to drive away evil spirits by the strong smell of burning dried sardine heads, the smoke of burning wood and the noise of drums. While this custom is not popular anymore, a few people still decorate their house entrances with fish heads and holy tree leaves in order to deter evil spirits from entering.

In modern days, the most commonly performed setsbun ritual is the throwing of roasted beans around one's house and at temples and shrines across the country. When throwing the beans, you are supposed to shout "*Oni wa soto! Fuku wa uchi!*" ("Devils out, happiness in"). Afterwards you should pick up and eat the number of beans, which corresponds to your age.

As all traditional festivals, setsbun is celebrated in many variations throughout the country.

February 5 Four Chaplains' Sunday Interfaith February 3, 2017, marks the 74th anniversary of the sinking of the USAT Dorchester and a very special display of bravery. On that day in 1943, a torpedo struck the ship reducing its time afloat on the surface of the Atlantic to only an additional 20 minutes. What happened during those few minutes is the reason we remember this day and the acts of courage and sacrifice that took place on her deck every year since.

Four first lieutenants gave the supreme sacrifice that day; each one an Army chaplain. They included Methodist minister, The Reverend George L. Fox, Reform-Rabbi Alexander D. Goode (Ph.D.), Roman Catholic priest the Reverend John P. Washington, and Reformed Church in America minister, The Reverend Clark V. Poling. Their backgrounds, personalities and faiths were different. They had met at Army Chaplains School at Harvard University where they became friends as they prepared for service in the European theater, all sailing on board USAT Dorchester to report to their new assignments. All having one God as their father. (continued)

The torpedo knocked out the Dorchester's electrical system, leaving the ship dark. Panic set in among the men on board, many of them trapped below decks. The chaplains sought to calm the men and organize an orderly evacuation of the ship and helped guide wounded men to safety. As life jackets were passed out to the men, the supply ran out before each man had one. The chaplains removed their own life jackets and gave them to others. They helped as many men as they could into lifeboats and then linked arms and, saying prayers and singing hymns, went down with the ship.



February 11 Tu BiShvat Jewish Tu BiSh'vat or the "New Year of the Trees" is Jewish Arbor Day. The holiday is observed on the 15th (tu) of the Hebrew month of Sh'vat. Scholars believe that originally Tu BiSh'vat was an agricultural festival, marking the emergence of spring. In the 17th century, Kabbalists created a ritual for Tu BiSh'vat that is similar to a Passover seder. Today, many Jews hold a modern version of the Tu BiSh'vat seder each year. The holiday also has become a tree-planting festival in Israel, in which Israelis and Jews around the world plant trees in honor or in memory of loved ones and friends. Read more at: <http://www.reformjudaism.org/jewish-holidays/tu-bishvat>

February 12 Triodion Orthodox Christian This is the Orthodox liturgical book that contains the variable portions of the Liturgy and other services for a particular period of the Orthodox ecclesiastical calendar. It begins on the fourth Sunday before the Great Lent, the Sunday of the Prodigal, and ends on Saturday of the Holy Week. Triodion is also called the period between the Sunday of the Prodigal and Holy Pascha. The name derives from the fact that during the season the Canons contain only three odes instead of the usual nine. The canon is a series of nine hymns, 'odes' used at the Orthros (Matins). The nine odes vary so as to correspond with the theme of the particular feast.

February 14 St. Valentine's Day Christian The history of Valentine's Day—and the story of its patron saint—is shrouded in mystery. We do know that February has long been celebrated as a month of romance, and that St. Valentine's Day, as we know it today, contains vestiges of both Christian and ancient Roman tradition. But who was Saint Valentine, and how did he become associated with this ancient rite?

The Catholic Church recognizes at least three different saints named Valentine or Valentinus, all of whom were martyred. One legend contends that Valentine was a priest who served during the third century in Rome. When Emperor Claudius II decided that single men made better soldiers than those with wives and families, he outlawed marriage for young men. Valentine, realizing the injustice of the decree, defied Claudius and continued to perform marriages for young lovers in secret. When Valentine's actions were discovered, Claudius ordered that he be put to death.

Other stories suggest that Valentine may have been killed for attempting to help Christians escape harsh Roman prisons, where they were often beaten and tortured. According to one legend, an imprisoned Valentine actually sent the first "valentine" greeting himself after he fell in love with a young girl—possibly his jailor's daughter—who visited him during his confinement. Before his death, it is alleged that he wrote her a letter signed "From your Valentine," an expression that is still in use today. Although the truth behind the Valentine legends is murky, the stories all emphasize his appeal as a sympathetic, heroic and—most importantly—romantic figure. By the Middle Ages, perhaps thanks to this reputation, Valentine would become one of the most popular saints in England and France.

Approximately 150 million Valentine's Day cards are exchanged annually, making Valentine's Day the second most popular card-sending holiday after Christmas. Americans probably began exchanging hand-made valentines in the early 1700s. In the 1840s, Esther A. Howland began selling the first mass-produced valentines in America. Howland, known as the "Mother of the Valentine," made elaborate creations with real lace, ribbons and colorful pictures known as "scrap." Photo: Massachusetts Historical Society



February 15 Nirvana Day Buddhist Nirvana Day is an annual Buddhist festival that remembers the death of the Buddha when he reached Nirvana at the age of 80. It is also known as Parinirvana Day. It is celebrated by some Buddhists on February 15th.



Nirvana is believed to be the end of the cycle of death and rebirth. Buddhism teaches that Nirvana is reached when all want and suffering is gone. Celebrations

Buddhists may celebrate Nirvana Day by meditating or by going to Buddhist temples or monasteries. As with other Buddhist festivals, celebrations vary throughout the world.

In monasteries Nirvana Day is treated as a social occasion. Food is prepared and some people bring presents such as money, household goods or clothes.

On Nirvana Day, Buddhists think about their lives and how they can work towards gaining the perfect peace of Nirvana. They remember friends or relations who have recently died and reflect on the fact that death is a part of life for everyone.

The idea that nothing stays the same is central to Buddhism. Buddhists believe that loss and change are things to be accepted rather than causes of sadness.

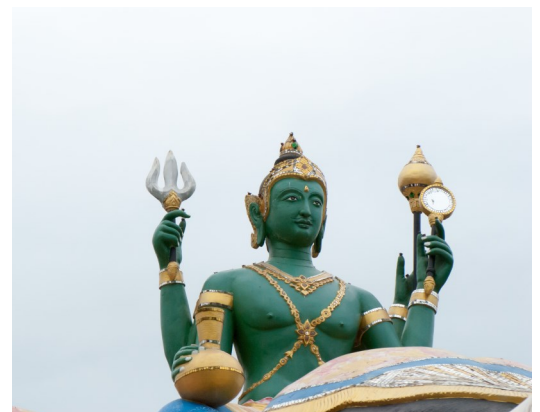
February 19 Meatfare Sunday Orthodox Christian The Sunday of the Last Judgment or Meatfare Sunday is the third Sunday using the Lenten Triodion, the liturgical book used in the services of Great Lent. It is the Sunday after the Sunday of the Prodigal Son and Sunday before Forgiveness Sunday. This is the third week of the pre-Lenten start of the Easter cycle of worship in the Orthodox Church.

This Sunday is called Meatfare Sunday since it is traditionally the last day before Easter for eating meat. Orthodox Christians observe a fast from meat all week, but still eat dairy products and eggs till the start of Great Lent. The Gospel reading this Sunday remembers Christ's parable of the Last Judgment (Matthew 25:31-46). This adds to the previous pre-Lent Sundays and teaches that it is not enough to see Jesus, to see ourselves as we are, and to come home to God as his prodigal sons. The Church teaches that, in addition, one must also be God's sons by following Christ, his only-begotten divine Son, and by seeing Christ in everyone and by serving Christ through them. Salvation and final judgment will depend upon deeds, not merely on intentions or even on the mercies of God apart from personal cooperation and obedience. All piety and prayer is ultimately directed towards the goal of serving Christ through his people.

From the reading, the faithful hear:

... for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you took me in, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and in prison and you visited me. For truly I say to you, if you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me (Matthew 25).

February 26 Maha Shivratri Hindu Mahashivaratri Festival or the 'The Night of Shiva' is celebrated with devotion and religious fervor in honor of Lord Shiva, one of the deities of Hindu Trinity. Shivaratri falls on the moonless 14th night of the new moon in the Hindu month of Phalgun, which corresponds to the month of February - March in English Calendar. Celebrating the festival of Shivaratri devotees observe day and night fast and perform ritual worship of Shiva Lingam to appease Lord Shiva. (continued)



There are various interesting legends related to the festival of Maha Shivaratri. According to one of the most popular legends, Shivaratri marks the wedding day of Lord Shiva and Parvati. Some believe that it was on the auspicious night of Shivaratri that Lord Shiva performed the '*Tandava*', the dance of the primal creation, preservation and destruction. Another popular Shivratri legend stated in Linga Purana states that it was on Shivaratri that Lord Shiva manifested himself in the form of a Linga. Hence the day is considered to be extremely auspicious by Shiva devotees and they celebrate it as Mahashivaratri - the grand night of Shiva.

Mahashivaratri Festival Various traditions and customs related to Shivaratri Festival are dutifully followed by the worshippers of Lord Shiva. Devotees observe strict fast in honor of Shiva, though many go on a diet of fruits and milk some do not consume even a drop of water. Devotees strongly believe that sincere worship of Lord Shiva on the auspicious day of Shivaratri, absolves a person of sins and liberates him from the cycle of birth and death. Shivaratri is considered especially auspicious for women. While married women pray for the well being of their husbands unmarried women pray for a husband like Lord Shiva, who is regarded as the ideal husband.

To mark the Shivratri festival, devotees wake up early and take a ritual bath, preferably in river Ganga. After wearing fresh new clothes devotees visit the nearest Shiva temple to give ritual bath to the Shiva Lingum with milk, honey, water etc.

On Shivaratri, worship of Lord Shiva continues all through the day and night. Every three hours priests perform ritual pooja of Shivalingam by bathing it with milk, yoghurt, honey, ghee, sugar and water amidst the chanting of '*Om Namah Shivaya*' and ringing of temple bells. Nightlong vigil or *jaagran* is also observed in Shiva temples where large number of devotees spend the night singing hymns and devotional songs in praise of Lord Shiva. It is only on the following morning that devotee break their fast by partaking prasad offered to the deity.

February 26 Cheese Fare Sunday Orthodox Christian Forgiveness Sunday, also called Cheesefare Sunday, is the final day of pre-Lent. It is the Sunday after Meatfare Sunday and the Sunday before the Sunday of Orthodoxy. As meat disappeared from the diet after Meatfare Sunday, all dairy disappears after cheese fare Sunday.

On this last Sunday before Great Lent, the last day that traditionally Orthodox Christians eat dairy products until Easter, the Church remembers the expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise. God commanded them to fast from the fruit of a tree (Gen. 2:16), but they did not obey. In this way Adam and Eve and their descendants became heirs of death and corruption.

On Forgiveness Sunday many attend Forgiveness Vespers on the eve of Great Lent. They hear on the Lord's teaching about fasting and forgiveness and enter the season of the fast forgiving one another so that God will forgive them. If you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will forgive you; but if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your heavenly Father forgive you your trespasses (Matthew 6:14). The Gospel reading of the day also gives advice on fasting. *Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. (Matthew 6:16-18).*

After the dismissal at Vespers, the priest stands beside the analogion, or before the ambon, and the faithful come up one by one and venerate the icon, after which each makes a prostration before the priest, saying, "Forgive me, a sinner." The priest also makes a prostration before each, saying, "God forgives. Forgive me." The person responds, "God forgives," and receives a blessing from the priest. Meanwhile the choir sings quietly the irmoi of the Paschal Canon, or else the Paschal Stichera. After receiving the priest's blessing, the faithful also ask forgiveness of each other.

February 26 Transfiguration Sunday Christian Transfiguration Sunday celebrates the glorious revelation of God in Jesus Christ and Christ's manifestation as the fulfillment of the law and the prophets. Jesus' radiant appearance on the mountaintop evokes the devouring fire of the glory of the LORD at Mount Sinai (Exodus 24.17). Here, as at Jesus' baptism, God claims him as a beloved child, in whom God is well pleased.

In their account of this event, the synoptic gospels offer an enlightening tableau vivant, with Christ flanked by Moses, representing the law, and Elijah, representing the prophetic tradition. With this vivid image, the gospel writers demonstrate the relationship of the human Word of God to the tradition of Israel and set forth the hermeneutic by which they read the Hebrew Scriptures.



February 28 Shrove Tuesday Christian Shrove Tuesday occurs the first Tuesday before Ash Wednesday, usually February 2nd or March 9th. It officially ends the season of Epiphany and is the vigil for the starting of Lent. Traditionally viewed as a day of repentance, Shrove Tuesday has become the last day for celebration and feasting before the period of fasting required during the Lenten season. The name "Shrove Tuesday" is derived from the word "shrive", which means to confess and receive absolution. The name denotes a period of cleansing, wherein a person brings their lusts and appetites under subjection through abstention and self-sacrifice.

The concept behind this practice is found in 1 Corinthians 9:27, where the Apostle Paul states: "I buffet my body and make it my slave..." Ironically, Shrove Tuesday has evolved into a day of frivolity and indulgence, during which people participate in as much pleasure and self-gratification as they can before Lent begins.

Shrove Tuesday originated during the Middle Ages. As in contemporary times, food items like meats, fats, eggs, milk, and fish were regarded as restricted during Lent. To keep such food from being wasted, many families would have big feasts on Shrove Tuesday in order to consume those items that would inevitably become spoiled during the next forty days. The English tradition of eating pancakes on Shrove Tuesday came about as a way to use as much milk, fats, and eggs as possible before Ash Wednesday began. In France, the consumption of all fats and fatty foods on this day coined the name "Fat Tuesday" or Mardi Gras.

Originally beginning on Sunday, Shrove Tuesday was a three-day celebration that culminated in large feasts on Tuesday night. By the beginning of the 20th century, however, the event was restricted to the Tuesday observance.

Shrove Tuesday has a variety of customs that have derived from different regions around Europe and the Americas. As previously mentioned, England began the tradition of serving pancakes, and for this reason the day is known as "Pancake Day". In addition, there are the annual Pancake Day Races, where contestants dress in aprons and scarves and race down a course flipping a pancake in a frying pan or skillet.

In Eastern Europe, the Carnival celebrations include boisterous processions where people in large masks parade around and play jokes on bystanders. The masks are often caricatures of individuals from traditional folklore. Men and women will dress as one another and engage in gendered mimicry. The day is filled with eating, drinking, fortune telling, and practical jokes. (continued)

Perhaps the most prominent customs are the balls and pageants in New Orleans and Rio de Janeiro. Like Eastern European celebrations, participants wear masks and costumes, many of which are quite flamboyant and elaborate. Rio has a parade of multi-colored feathers, which include hundreds of dancers dressed in costumes decked with feathers, all dancing the samba. In New Orleans, Mardi Gras includes a variety of parades featuring grand floats and giant effigies of eccentric characters. There is much eating, drinking, and dancing, as well as practical jokes and humorous street plays.

For many Protestant believers, Shrove Tuesday holds no particular significance. For Catholics and Anglicans, however, the day is still observed with confession and absolution, in addition to modest feasting and rejoicing.

Sources for this newsletter: calendarlabs.com, timeanddate.com, newworldencyclopedia.org, catholic.org, japan-guide.com, americanlegion.org, serfes.org, history.com, bbc.co.uk, orthowiki.org, mahashivratri.org, presbyterianmission.org, sharefaith.com. All pictures are from the subscription service Shutterstock unless otherwise identified.

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Below is an example of a recent Grace Note

If your compassion
does not include
yourself,
it is incomplete.
— Jack Kornfield

