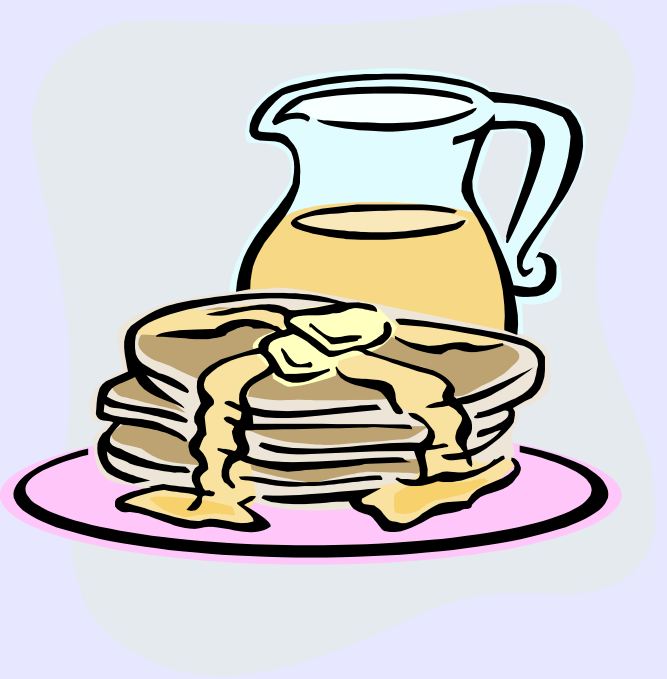


# Shrove Tuesday & Ash Wednesday

Ash Wednesday signals the beginning of the season of Lent. Lent is a time to prepare for Easter. There are forty days in Lent, not counting Sundays. If you look at our Church Calendar, you can count these days.

The day before Ash Wednesday is called Shrove Tuesday ("shrove" comes from a word that means to have our sins forgiven), or Mardi Gras (which means "Fat Tuesday" in the French language), or Pancake Day. It is called Pancake Day, because people usually eat pancakes on this day. They eat these delicious pancakes, which might be covered in butter and syrup, on Shrove Tuesday because pancakes are made with eggs and milk and oil. A long time ago people didn't eat any eggs, milk or oil at all during the season of Lent! So the day before Ash Wednesday they used up all of their eggs and milk and oil by making pancakes!



On Ash Wednesday we go to Mass. Something

special happens at Mass on this day. We receive ashes on our forehead in the sign of a cross. These ashes come from the blessed palm branches we received at Church last year on Palm Sunday.



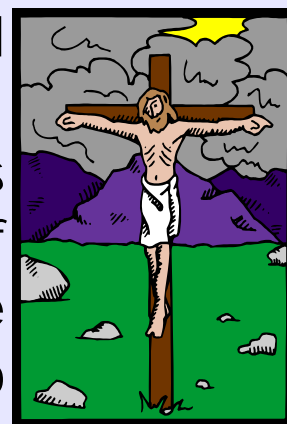
Do you remember being at church on Palm Sunday?



Did you take a palm branch home with you? You might have kept this palm branch in a special place at home. You can bring these palm branches back to your church the week before Ash Wednesday. These palm branches will

then be burned on Shrove Tuesday, which is the day before Ash Wednesday. Your church might even burn this palm at a special prayer service which you and your family can attend. Check your parish bulletin to see if there will be such a prayer service at your church this year. The ashes from the blessed palm branches that are burned are cooled overnight, so they are not hot on Ash Wednesday.

When the ashes are put on our forehead on Ash Wednesday in the shape of a cross, this reminds us that Jesus died on the cross for us. It reminds us that we are followers of Jesus. It also reminds us that we are beginning the season of Lent. In Lent we do



special good deeds to help us follow Jesus more closely. Maybe we will say special prayers during Lent. You could say an extra Hail Mary or Our Father each day during Lent, and ask God to help you follow Jesus more closely. Maybe you could watch less television, and spend that extra time helping your mom or dad. Or maybe if you get an allowance, you could use some of your money each week to buy a can of soup for a food pantry to help people who are hungry. You can also participate in any special Lenten projects your parish or school might do, such as CRS Rice Bowl.

You and your family can celebrate Shrove Tuesday in another special way. You can eat pancakes and celebrate Mardi Gras! Maybe your parish will have a Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper and Mardi Gras Celebration. But if not, you can celebrate in your own home! You can eat pancakes and participate in Mardi Gras activities, such as decorating a Mardi Gras mask and making a jester's hat.



So get ready...because it's almost Mardi Gras and Ash Wednesday!

1. On Palm Sunday we receive blessed palm branches.



2. On Shrove Tuesday, the palm branches we received on Palm Sunday are burned.



3. On Ash Wednesday, the cooled ashes from the burned palm branches are placed on our forehead in the Sign of a Cross.



# My Shrove Tuesday/Ash Wednesday Mural

Draw a picture here of you and your family with your palm branches on Palm Sunday.

Draw a picture here of your palm branches being burned on Shrove Tuesday.

Draw a picture here of you receiving ashes on your forehead at Mass on Ash Wednesday.

Draw a picture here of one thing you will do this Lent to follow Jesus more closely.