

## Tony Thinking Aloud cxxxix

I have been asked a great deal just recently about the background to Ash Wednesday ... this Musing is therefore a rather more informative one ....

So are the pancakes ready? The Vicar advanced the Pancake Race in the Main Street this year to Friday. – it being before half term, Thomas Russell Infant School children could take part as usual.

I can always remember Pancakes on Shrove Tuesday, but people do have different traditions. I think we had them as the main meal or part of lunch when I was a boy. Extra at tea time if there were some left over. In the war time you had to save your egg! Then someone in the family discovered -- you can get them at the supermarket and make them instantly from a packet ... then a little later, you could buy them ready made ... and all the year round. How times change.

Shrove Tuesday stays the same, the day before Lent starts. The Mardi Gras festival is Shrovetide too. There was always a Shrovetide fair in Lichfield on the Tuesday too. Maybe still is!

This is all in contrast to Ash Wednesday. The first day of Lent. Frequently people who attend the Holy Communion will have ash put on their foreheads.

I was asked but a couple of days ago where the ash comes from. If we go to church on Palm Sunday, the Sunday before Easter, we hear of Jesus being heralded with palms as he makes his way into Jerusalem. You will probably be given a palm cross that day. The church will burn a few of these crosses the next Ash Wednesday for the ash to put on worshippers' foreheads.

So what of Lent... a quiet reflective time of about 40 days before Easter. Saint Matthew's Gospel in the New Testament of the Bible Chapter 4, verse 1 – 11 explains. The main focus of Lent is prayer, to a degree fasting or simpler food and remembering others in almsgiving. (The appeals for those suffering as a consequence of the earthquake is a good focus).

A time for smartening up ourselves shall we say in our day to day concern for others? I have heard it called pulling your spiritual socks up!

This Musing is focused on the Bible and how Lent is observed. As I have said I have been asked about this so many times I thought I would share my thoughts with you.

If God Is not for you, I am sure we all can reflect on the way we live with one another. How positive it is and reflective it is to have concern for one another.

For the appeal to support those suffering as a consequence for the earthquake go to <https://www.dec.org.uk/appeal/turkey-syria-earthquake-appeal>.