

Tuesday,
March 4, 2014

Mardi Gras...Today is the celebration that occurs in many places of Mardi Gras.

Mardi Gras is French for Fat Tuesdays and refers to the practice of the last night of eating richer, fatty foods before the ritual fasting of the Lenten season, which starts on Ash Wednesday. It is a celebration of prosperity, wealth, provision and indulgence.

Wikipedia defines Mardi Gras traditions as being associated with popular practices including the wearing of masks and costumes, overturning social conventions, dancing, sports competitions, and parades. In many locales, most famously in the French Quarter of New Orleans and in Rio de Janeiro, Mardi Gras is accompanied by a raucous celebration and debauchery.

The Lenten season is a period of 40 days prior to the celebration of Easter where Christians are called upon to make some sort of religious or spiritual sacrifice in preparation for the observance of Good Friday and Easter. In effect, it is a demonstration of piety to show appreciation and understanding of the suffering of Jesus Christ.

Ok...let me be real for a moment. Mardi Gras is simply the party before the sacrifice or the religious exercise. For instance, if I decide to give up pork for lent as a way of demonstrating commitment to Christ, then on Fat Tuesday or Mardi Gras, I am going to have a large breakfast of bacon and eggs with a side of ham and sausage. I am also going to celebrate with a large bacon cheeseburger (preferably the one at Jack in the Box where there are bacon chunks in the meat, bacon on top and more bacon in the sauce). I choose to end the day having BBQ with a pulled pork sandwich with all the fixins.

Now there is nothing wrong with the above meals (except for the hardening of the arteries that may accompany such a diet). However, I suspect that it becomes spiritually problematic when we combine it with our religious observance – sacrifice for lent, party on Tuesday.

I do not believe it is right to make a religious sacrifice on Wednesday and in preparation for the sacrifice do everything to party and enjoy the very sacrifice being made.

I believe that it is more honoring of God that in every day of our lives, we live out our values and our commitments. It is more important that for the 40 days of lent we live as followers of Jesus as well as the other 325 days of the year.

Instead of throwing a party today, just commit yourself to living out your calling as a follower of Jesus Christ. When you live with Jesus, every day is a celebration of commitment and surrender!

And, by the way, go ahead and enjoy that bacon cheeseburger today and any day!