

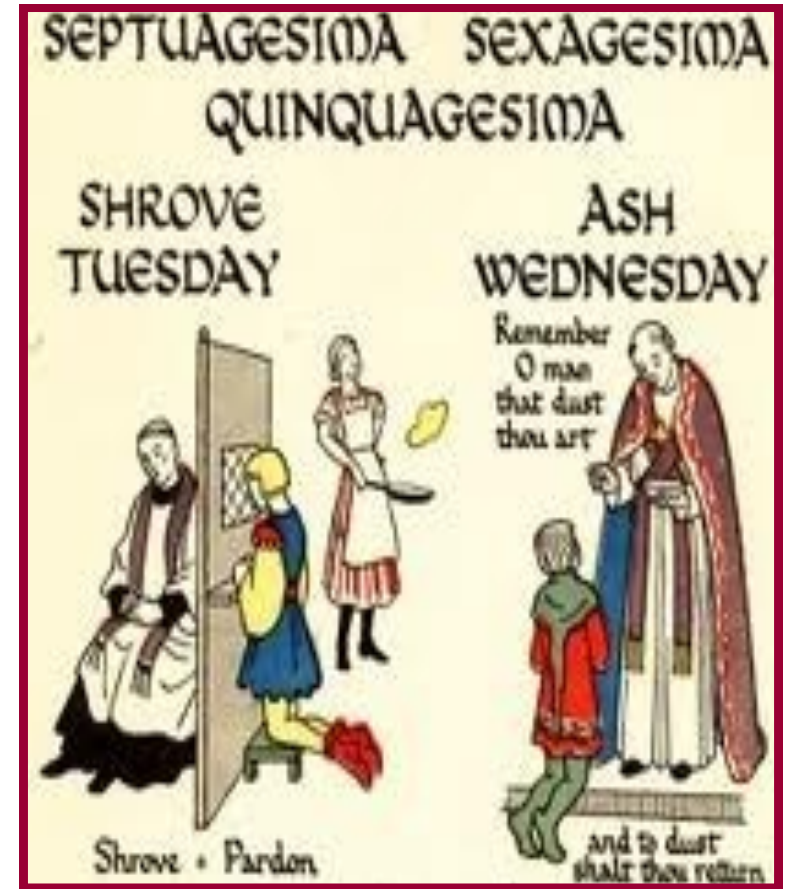
mourning, we shall have the bright Easter with its seven weeks of gladness, foreshadowing the happiness and bliss of heaven. After having fasted with our Jesus, and suffered with Him, the day will come when we shall rise together with him, and our hearts shall follow him to the highest heavens; and then after a brief interval, we shall feel the Holy Ghost descending upon us, with His seven Gifts. The celebration of all these wondrous joys will take us seven weeks, as the great liturgists observe in their interpretation of the rites of the Church. The seven joyous weeks from Easter to Pentecost will not be too long for the future glad mysteries, which, after all, will be but figures of a still gladder future, the future of eternity.

Having heard these sweet whisperings of hope, let us now bravely face the realities brought before us by our dear mother the Church. We are sojourners upon this earth; we are exiles and captives in Babylon, that city which plots our ruin. If we love our country, if we long to return to it, we must be proof against the lying allurements of this strange land, and refuse the cup she proffers us, and with which she maddens so many of our fellow captives. She invites us to join in her feasts and her songs; but we must unstring our harps, and hang them on the willow that grow on her river's bank, till the signal be given for our return to Jerusalem. She will ask us to sing to her the melodies of our dear Sion; but how shall we, who are so far from home, have heart to "sing the song of the Lord in a strange land?" No, there must be no sign that we are content to be in bondage, or we shall deserve to be slaves forever.

These are the sentiments wherewith the Church would inspire us during the penitential season which we are now beginning. She wishes us to reflect on the dangers that beset us; dangers which arise from ourselves and from creatures. During the rest of the year she loves to hear us chant the song of heaven, the sweet Alleluia; but now, she bids us close our lips to this word of joy, because we are in Babylon. We are pilgrims absent from our Lord, let us keep our glad hymn for the day of His return. We are sinners, and have but too often held fellowship with the world of God's enemies; let us become purified by repentance, for it is written that "praise is unseemly in the mouth of a sinner."

***(excerpted from: "The Mystery of Septuagesima" from Dom Gueranger's "The Liturgical Year")*

The Mystery of Septuagesima



**Saint Augustine, gave us information regarding the
Season's Mysteries,
and what they should mean to us...**

The Mystery of Septuagesima

*Septuagesima and lent are both times of penance.

Septuagesima being a time of voluntary fasting in preparation for the obligatory Great Fast of lent. The theme is the Babylonian exile, the "mortal coil" we must endure as we await the Heavenly Jerusalem. Sobriety and somberness reign liturgically; the Alleluia and Gloria are banished. The Sundays of Septuagesima are named for their distance away from Easter: The first Sunday gives its name to the entire season and comes roughly seventy days before Easter. This seventy represents the seventy years of the Babylonian Captivity. The second Sunday is known as Sexagesima or sixty and comes roughly sixty days before Easter. The third Sunday of Septuagesima is known as Quinquagesima or fifty and comes roughly fifty days before Easter. Quadragesima means forty and this is the name of the first Sunday of Lent and the Latin name for the entire season of Lent.

*(excerpted from: www.fisheaters.com)

**The season upon which we are now entering is expressive of several profound mysteries. These mysteries belong not only to the three weeks which are preparatory to Lent: they continue throughout the whole period of time which separates us from the great feast of Easter. The number seven is the basis of all these mysteries...first, let us listen to St. Augustine, who thus gives us the clue to the whole of our season's mysteries. "There are two times," says the holy Doctor: "one which is now, and is spent in the temptations and tribulations of this life; the other which shall by then, and shall be spent in eternal security and joy...we celebrate two periods: the time before Easter, and the time after Easter. That which is before Easter signifies the sorrow of this present life; that which is after Easter, the blessedness of our future state...Hence it is, that we spend the first in fasting and prayer; and in the second we give up our fasting, and give ourselves to praise."

The Church, the interpreter of the sacred Scriptures, often speaks to us of the two places, which correspond with these two times of St. Augustine. These two places are Babylon and Jerusalem. Babylon is the image of this world of sin, in the midst whereof the Christian has to spend his years of probation; Jerusalem is the heavenly country, where he is to repose after all his trials. The people of Israel, whose whole history is but one great type of the human race, was banished from Jerusalem and kept in bondage in Babylon.

Now, this captivity, which kept the Israelites exiles from Sion, lasted seventy years; and it is to express this mystery, as Alcuin, Amalarius, Ivo of Chartres, and all the great liturgists tell us, that the Church fixed the number of seventy for the days of expiation. It is true, there are but sixty-three days between Septuagesima and Easter; but the Church, according to the style so continually used in the sacred Scriptures, uses the round number instead of the literal and precise one.

The duration of the world itself, according to the ancient Christian tradition, is divided into seven ages. The human race must pass through the seven ages before the dawning of the day of eternal life. The first age included the time from the creation of Adam to Noah...Then, finally, comes the seventh age; it starts with the rising of this merciful Redeemer, the Sun of justice, and is to continue till the dread coming of the Judge of the living and the dead...

In order to console us in the midst of the combats, which so thickly beset our path, the Church, like a beacon shining amidst the darkness of this earthly abode, shows us another seven, which is to succeed the one we are now preparing to pass through. After the Septuagesima of