

Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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The Christian and Mardi Gras

(Jerry Fite)

The Mardi Gras season is underway in Galveston. For twelve days celebrations will draw crowds to the Island. There is no doubt that the culture has connected Mardi Gras or “Fat Tuesday” to the Catholic Church’s religious season because the time of celebration moves in accordance to the days leading up to the celebration of Easter. In New Orleans, the streets are immediately cleared at midnight to usher in the Catholic’s observance of Lent. You have had your “last hurrah” in satisfying your fleshly desires on “Fat Tuesday,” and now you give them up as “Lent” begins.

The Catholic Church appears to have embraced Mardi Gras, because their web sites sell “Mardi Gras Greeting Cards”. Religious words such as justice (purple), faith (green) and power (gold) are connected with Mardi Gras’ official colors. Connecting Mardi Gras with cultural traditions, religion or even “family fun” cannot masquerade its true character.

Drinking alcohol which lessens inhibitions and self-control takes place on the celebration of Fat Tuesday, or the French, “mardi gras”. Connect drink with the lively music, boisterous merry making and suggestive bodily movements and you have the ingredients for “reveling”.

Those walking in the light of the Gospel do not practice “*reveling and drunkenness*” (*Romans 13:13*). Giving way to lasciviousness and fleshly lusts; drinking alcoholic beverages while parading through the streets with loud merrymaking; and becoming drunk was a practice of idolatrous people condemned by the apostle Peter (*I Peter 4:3-4*). The Christian is not to be lured into such lascivious merrymaking for it characterizes those who fulfill “*the lusts of men*” instead of following “*the will of God*” (*I Peter 4:2*).

On the surface the colorful costumes and floats seem harmless, and even something you would like to enjoy with your

children and loved ones. Is throwing beads a sin?

It is the atmosphere characterizing the celebrations that should cause the Christian to pause, think and act in godly wisdom. Alcohol flows freely as the revelers pass through the streets. Inhibitions fade. Fights break out, and girls on a dare flash their breasts for the prize of beads. Parents, do you want your children to see someone extemporaneously parade their body in some sexually suggestive way along the parade route?

Dear Christian, the Catholic Church may not speak out in condemnation of Mardi Gras, for at least the masses will have some sins of the flesh to confess on “Shrove Tuesday”, and lusts to give up on “Ash Wednesday”, but this is not Christianity.

Pillow your head with good thoughts (*Phil. 4:8*), instead of holding your head in shame over some toilet. “Live up” to the standards of God’s word, instead of having to “live down” the embarrassing moments of reveling.