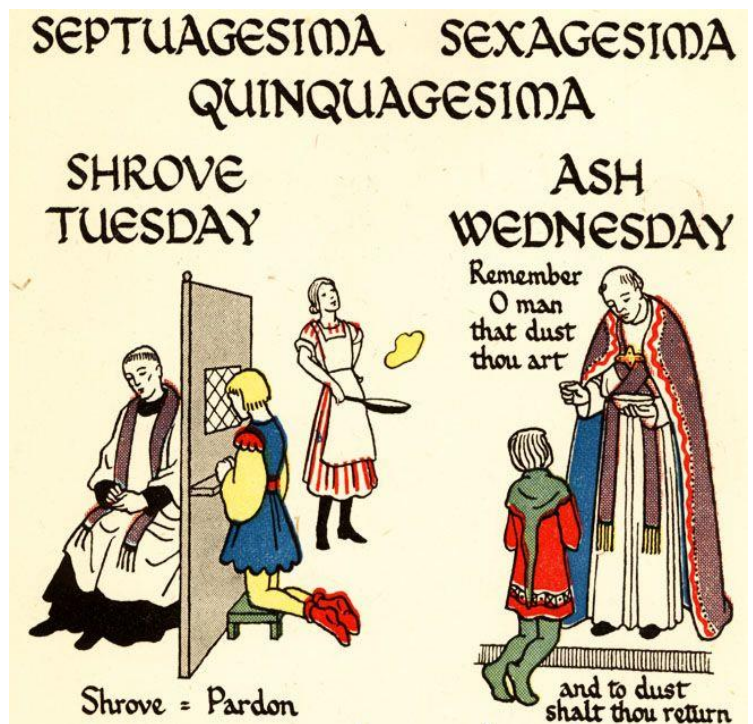


# SEPTUAGESIMA

The season of Septuagesima is mentioned in the annals of the First Council of Orleans in the year AD 511 where there is a reference to many pious lay persons fasting, in the primitive Church, for seventy days before Easter, perhaps in memory of the seventy years of exile and penance suffered by the Jewish people in Babylon. So, we know that Septuagesima, in one form or another, goes back to before the sixth century.

Septuagesima is a mini season that helps us get ready for Lent. Some people ask that as Lent is a season of preparation, why should we have a season to prepare for a season of preparation? As a result, the season of Septuagesima was dropped in the liturgical changes in 1969. But whilst Lent is indeed a season of preparation, it is also a season in its own right, a season of penance and penitence. Given the rigours of Lent, it seems a good idea to prepare for those fasts and abstinences with a sort of halfway house season.



Septuagesima Sunday (still observed by those who attend the Traditional Latin Mass) falls on the third Sunday before Ash Wednesday. Its name comes from the Latin for seventieth because the seventieth day before Easter (the ancient seventy day fast) falls at around this time. Similarly, the next two Sundays are traditionally called Sexagesima (sixtieth) and Quinquagesima (fiftieth), whereas Lent itself is called Quadragesima.

Even though in the post 1969 liturgy the Church does not officially observe Septuagesima as a season, it is a good opportunity to start thinking about Lent so that, once Ash Wednesday arrives, we are ready to hit the ground running, as it were, with whatever Lenten resolutions we have chosen to adopt this year.

In 2024 Septuagesima Sunday falls on 28<sup>th</sup> January.