

Draft Bulletin Insert

As we approach the Season of Lent we enter this Season with the distribution of ashes on Ash Wednesday. Though this is not a Holy Day of Obligation, it is commonly a well-attended Mass and an ancient tradition where we all join together as a community to be reminded – as one of the invocations for the imposition of ashes states – that “Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”

This Ash Wednesday, like much this year, will look a bit different. We want to take the time to inform you of some of the changes as well as give you a little history and understanding of the changes that will occur. *(For parishes who will have added Masses and who might be having a distribution of Ashes outside of Mass as prescribed in the Book of Blessings, nos. 1656-1678, you will want to include here those times and information.)*

Because we would like to reduce the opportunity for potential contamination, the distribution of ashes will be done by sprinkling ashes on the top of the head rather than distributed in the accustomed way. This is a more ancient form of the distribution of ashes that continues in the Church today in much of Italy and provides for a decreased opportunity to spread COVID 19. As Rome instructs, the Rite of distribution of Ashes will be done in the following way:

Prot. N. 17/21

NOTE ON ASH WEDNESDAY Distribution of Ashes in Time of Pandemic

The Priest says the prayer for blessing the ashes. He sprinkles the ashes with holy water, without saying anything. Then he addresses all those present and only once says the formula as it appears in the Roman Missal, applying it to all in general: “Repent, and believe in the Gospel”, or “Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return”.

The Priest then cleanses his hands, puts on a face mask and distributes the ashes to those who come to him or, if appropriate, he goes to those who are standing in their places. The Priest takes the ashes and sprinkles them on the head of each one without saying anything.

From the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, 12 January 2021.

Robert Card. Sarah
Prefect

+Arthur Roche
Archbishop Secretary

The following image is a demonstration of how this is to be done with the exception of proper social distancing:



Pulpit Speaking Points:

The following are a few things that could be added in the midst of a homily or in an announcement in preparation for Ash Wednesday:

- We continue to be in unprecedented times which call us to continue to care for the common good and health of one another. As such, when it comes to the distribution of Ashes this year for Ash Wednesday, we will have a little bit of a different procedure than we may be used to...
- It is important to remember that ashes are used as a sacramental to remind us of our need to be humbled before our God. In our humility, we place ourselves before our God with hearts open to be filled by His love, His compassion, and His fullness. And so, just as in ancient Israel, our ancestors received the imposition of ashes by a sprinkling of ashes on the crown of the head as a sign of penance, we too enter this time of penance marked by an imposition of ashes...
- The way ashes will be distributed this year is the following:
The Priest says the prayer for blessing the ashes. He sprinkles the ashes with holy water, without saying anything. Then he addresses all those present and only once says the formula as it appears in the Roman Missal, applying it to all in general: "Repent, and believe in the Gospel", or "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return".

The Priest then cleanses his hands, puts on a face mask and distributes the ashes to those who come to him or, if appropriate, he goes to those who are standing in their places. The Priest takes the ashes and sprinkles them on the head of each one without saying anything.