

Ash Wednesday at Home

We begin the sacred season of Lent by celebrating Ash Wednesday. Lent is a time to seriously review and renew our lives in advance of the annual celebration of the death and resurrection of Jesus at Easter. Traditionally, the ashes we use are made by burning the palm that was blessed on Palm Sunday the previous year. They remind us of the frailty of our human condition and the call of Jesus to turn away from sin and to be faithful to the Gospel.

At a suitable time on Ash Wednesday, pause either alone or with your household for this time of prayer. Place the blessed ashes in a bowl and mix them with some water (Holy Water, if available). Have nearby a small bowl of soapy water and a cloth. Light a candle to signal God is present.

As we begin ...

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen

Pause for a moment to become aware of God's presence.

Let us Listen to God's Word ...

"The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news"! (Mk 1:15)

Let us Pray...

O God, you ask us to turn back to you with all our hearts. We ask you now to hear our prayer as we begin this season of Lent.

Pour out your blessing on us as we use this symbol of blessed ashes, so that, out of our smallness and sinfulness, we may come to be what you have called us to be; that we may live faithfully the vocation of our Baptism and come to celebrate with joy the Easter mystery.

Members of the household put ashes on one another, in turn, saying:

Turn away from sin and be faithful to the Gospel.



The small bowl of soapy water and the cloth should be used to wash and dry one's thumb afterwards.

Let us Take Time...

Take a little time either aloud or in silence to pray for your needs and the needs of the whole world. Ask God to walk with you during this year's Lenten pilgrimage of renewal.

As Jesus Taught us, we pray...

Our Father, Who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name;
Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen

A blessing...

May the Lord bless us and keep us;
May the Lord make his face to shine upon us and be
gracious to us;
May the Lord lift up his face upon us and grant us his peace.
Amen

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

The left over ashes and the soapy water should be disposed of reverently in soil.

Ash Wednesday is one of the few days of fast and abstinence in the Church year. Fasting is the reduction of one's intake of food. Abstinence is the abstaining from the eating of meat. This exterior penance is, with God's help, both a symbol of and stimulus for an interior change of heart and spiritual renewal. Fasting, praying and giving to the poor have always been seen as important tools to help us on our Lenten pilgrimage of renewal.

Prepared by the Diocese of Clonfert and the Diocese of Elphin.

