

## LENT AND EASTER GUIDELINES

The Lent and Easter regulations are provided here for use during Lent and the Easter Triduum.

### ASH WEDNESDAY

#### BLESSING AND DISTRIBUTION OF ASHES

The blessing and imposition of ashes takes place only on Ash Wednesday, ordinarily during the celebration of the Eucharist. The Roman Missal contains the Rite for the Blessing of Ashes within Mass. The Order for the Blessing and Distribution of Ashes outside of Mass is found in the *Book of Blessings*. If the Eucharist is not celebrated, the blessing and distribution is to take place within the celebration of the Liturgy of the Word. The minister for the blessing of ashes within the Mass is a bishop or priest. The minister for the blessing of ashes during a Liturgy of the Word is a bishop, priest or deacon. Other persons may be associated with the bishop or priest or deacon in the imposition of ashes: e.g. extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion, and other lay persons, when there is a true pastoral need. These persons do not, however, bless the ashes. Extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion may bring blessed ashes to the sick and those confined to their home. If a minister is not available, a member of the family or another person may bring blessed ashes to a shut-in, using one of the formulas in the Roman Missal to impose the ashes.

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#### THE LENTEN SEASON

A distinction is to be made between Lent and the Easter Triduum. Strictly speaking, Lent ends with the beginning of the Triduum on Holy Thursday. The Ordo notes: "Lent runs from Ash Wednesday until the Mass of the Lord's Supper exclusive on Holy Thursday".

#### FASTING AND ABSTINENCE

Fasting is to be observed on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday by all Catholics who are 18 years of age but not yet 59. Those who are bound to fast may take only one full meal. Two smaller meals are permitted if necessary to maintain strength according to each one's needs, but eating solid foods between meals is not permitted.

Abstinence from meat is to be observed by all Catholics 14 years or older on Ash Wednesday, Good Friday and on all Fridays of Lent. The determination of certain days as obligatory days of penance should not be understood as limiting the occasions for Christian penance.