



"CHRIST MADE HIMSELF POOR FOR YOU"
(2 COR 8,9)

Ash Wednesday

Young Eritrean Catholics of Central Ohio

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ASH WEDNESDAY

- Ash Wednesday is the first day of Lent for Western Catholics. It occurs forty days before Easter.
- Ash Wednesday derives from the Latin word *dies cinerum* which means day of ashes.

- This practice dates back to the eight century and is first mentioned in the earliest existing copies of the Gregorian Sacramentary.
- Ashes were used in ancient times, according to the bible to express penitence.

- The ashes used in the ceremony are made by burning the remains of palms blessed on Palm Sunday of the previous year. The ashes are then sprinkled with holy water and fumigated with incenses. Four ancient prayers are then used to bless the ashes.
- During the mass a priest marks the forehead with the ashes in the shape of a cross.

- Traditionally the mark must be left on the forehead until evening.
- While being marked the priest says ***“remember you are dust and unto dust you shall return”*** a verse from Genesis 3:19. Other verses such as ***“turn away from sin and be faithful to the gospel”*** (Mark 1:15) and ***“repent and hear the good news”*** (Mark 1:15) are also used during the ceremony.

- In the Roman Catholic Church, ashes may be given to any Christian as opposed to Catholic sacraments which are generally reserved for church members.
- This act of marking a cross with ashes symbolizes Christ's sacrifice on the cross as well our baptism in to the Church.