

# LITURGY BYTES

## It is Here Again!



Yes, it is that time of the year again – the Lenten season. Lent officially gets started February 22<sup>nd</sup> with Ash Wednesday. Ash Wednesday falls six and half weeks before Easter.

Ash Wednesday dates back to the 11<sup>th</sup> century. Yet, the tradition of receiving ashes has seen earlier roots with the ancient Hebrew custom of clothing oneself in sackcloth and dusting oneself with ashes as a sign of penance. The Bible does not explicitly mention this first day of Lent, but there are many instances of repentance in both the Old and New Testaments.

Ash Wednesday is not a holyday of obligation, yet receiving ashes is a practice among many Christians to begin their Lenten journey. Ash Wednesday awakens us to Jesus' entry into the desert preceding his death. We begin to prepare our hearts for Easter by recognizing our brokenness and need for turning our hearts to God.

The ashes come from the leftover palms from Palm Sunday which are burned from last year's palms. These ashes symbolize our mortality. They are a physical reminder that our bodies will decay but our souls will live on in eternal life.

As this day gets closer, may we think about making a commitment to turn things around in our lives for the better, embracing the love that our God has for each of us and truly celebrating our Faith come Easter Sunday.

Have a safe, healthy and blessed week ahead!~~~~*Michele Hall*