



From the Pastor's Desk

Ash Wednesday 2021

Dear Fellow Parishioners:

We are about to enter the Season of Lent, the church's annual 40-day retreat which prepares us for the celebration of Easter. It is a time of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. It is a time of renewal, repentance and self-denial. It is a time during which the church invites us to turn back to the Lord with all our hearts.

As Pope Francis said in his Lenten message: *"Lent is the favorable season for renewing our encounter with Christ, living in his word, in the sacraments and in our neighbor. The Lord, who overcame the deceptions of the Tempter during the forty days in the desert, shows us the path we must take. May the Holy Spirit lead us on a true journey of conversion, so that we can rediscover the gift of God's word, be purified of the sin that blinds us, and serve Christ present in our brothers and sisters in need ... Let us pray for one another so that, by sharing in the victory of Christ, we may open our doors to the weak and poor. Then we will be able to experience and share in full the joy of Easter."*



This year, Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, February 17, the customary day for the distribution of ashes as a sign of our desire to live and act differently so as to better ourselves during this penitential time.

On Ash Wednesday we will have Mass and Distribution of Ashes at 8:30 a.m. We will have Prayer Services with Distribution of Ashes at 12:30 p.m. and 6 p.m. Attendance

at these services will be by prior registration for 1/2 of our seating. In other words, parishioners must either sign-up on our parish website or call in to Parish Office 302.652.6800 for these seats. The other 1/2 of our seating will be by first come first serve day of. Once we reach our maximum capacity, people will be turned away. **I would like to remind everyone that the reception of ashes on Ash Wednesday is NOT required or obligatory. It is an expression of personal piety and of one's desire to enter fully and prayerfully into the spirit of Lent**. Sign-ups will begin on Monday, February 8th.

Bishop Malooly's directive for Ash Wednesday noted the following: *"The faithful should recognize that their own internal disposition and intention to repent is the importance of Ash Wednesday and that the ashes are an external sign of that internal reality. Individuals who cannot or who choose not to receive ashes can still enter into Lent with a repentant heart. Ashes can be distributed to the faithful, as long as there is no direct contact."*

In other words, the prayer for the imposition of ashes will be said only *once* prior to the general distribution of ashes to those assembled. Ashes will be distributed in silence via cotton swab, making the sign of the cross on each person's forehead (one swab per person.) Both the minister and the recipient must wear masks.

Additional directives for the celebration of Holy Week and the Triduum will be forthcoming.

Thank you all for your faithful participation (virtually or in-person) in our parish Masses and other events and services.

May this Lenten season be a blessed time for our parish!

-Father Kirk

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