



DIOCESE OF DES MOINES

PRESSRELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Lent begins this week with Ash Wednesday

Ash Wednesday is this week, March 9, kicking off the Lenten season. This is a significant day in the Catholic Church year beginning a period of forty days of prayer, fasting and charity. Catholics traditionally are marked with ashes of burnt palm branches as a sign of their recognition of their sinfulness and need for repentance in their lifelong journey of conversion.

Ash Wednesday and Good Friday (April 22) are days of fasting within the Church for those between the ages of 18 and 59. They may eat only one full meal and two other meals consisting of substantially less food. There should be no food taken between meals. Anyone whose health is threatened by fasting is exempted. Catholics age 14 and older also abstain from meat on Ash Wednesday, Good Friday and all Fridays of Lent.

Distribution of ashes will be held throughout the diocese on Ash Wednesday. People can call their local church for times. Bishop Richard Pates will distribute ashes on Wednesday during the 12:10 p.m. Mass at St. Ambrose Cathedral, at 6th and High Streets in Des Moines.

Please note: Anyone may be marked with ashes on Ash Wednesday if they desire it. Membership in the Catholic Church is not a prerequisite.

The Diocese of Des Moines includes 83 parishes in 23 counties in central and southwest Iowa.