THE SEASON OF LENT – ASH WEDNESDAY

Lent is a 40 day season of penance, prayer, fasting, abstinence and almsgiving that begins on Ash Wednesday and ends at sundown on Holy Thursday. It's a period of preparation to celebrate the Lord's Resurrection at Easter. During Lent, we seek the Lord in prayer by reading Sacred Scripture; we serve by giving alms; and we practice self-control through fasting and abstinence. We are called not only to abstain from luxuries during Lent, but to a true inner conversion of heart as we seek to follow Christ's will more faithfully. We recall the waters of baptism in which we were also baptized into Christ's death, died to sin and evil, and began new life in Christ.

Ash Wednesday is one of two yearly days of obligatory fasting and abstinence for Roman Catholics, along with Good Friday. Fasting means a person is permitted to eat one full meal. Two smaller meals may also be taken, but they are not to equal that of a full meal. Abstinence is the Sacred Tradition of not consuming any meat or fowl (fish excluded) specifically on all Fridays of the year and not just during the Season of Lent. All Catholics age 18 to 59, that are in good health are required to follow the practice of fasting and abstinence. All Catholics 14 and older are required to follow the practice of abstinence. Catholics that are over the age of 59 that are in good health are encouraged to follow these Lenten practices as well. Pregnant or breast feeding mothers are not required to fast.