

Fasting

Pope Francis (Ash Wednesday)

Fast from hurtful words and speak kind words.
Fast from sadness and be filled with gratitude.
Fast from anger and be filled with patience.
Fast from pessimism and be filled with hope.
Fast from worries and have trust in God.
Fast from complaints and contemplate simplicity.
Fast from pressures and be prayerful.
Fast from bitterness and fill your heart with joy.
Fast from selfishness and be compassionate.
Fast from grudges and be reconciled.
Fast from words and be silent so you can listen.



Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of the season of Lent and is the first of the forty days of Lent leading up to Easter. In the first centuries of the Christian Church, Lent began on the first Sunday of Lent but the celebration of Ash Wednesday was introduced in the seventh century to ensure Lent consisted of 40 days exactly. The forty days refer to the time Jesus spent in the desert after being baptised in the Jordan by John and before beginning his public ministry (cf. Matthew 4:1-11, Mark 1:12-13, Luke 4:1-13).

The ashes used in the liturgy on Ash Wednesday are traditionally made from the palms used on Palm Sunday the previous year.

Ash Wednesday is a day of fasting and abstinence. Abstinence from eating meat applies to everyone age 14 and above. Fasting applies to everyone age 18-59.

During the season of Lent, Christians traditionally engage in three practices:

- *prayer*
- *fasting*
- *alms-giving*