

The Imposition of Ashes

In the Bible, the putting on of ashes symbolizes purification (Num. 19:9; Heb. 9:13), repentance (Jonah 3 :6), or sorrow (Esther 4:1-3), and sometimes recognition of our own mortality (Job 30:19). All three strands of meaning are intertwined in the imposition of ashes.

This ceremony, from which Ash Wednesday takes its name, has been practiced by the Church in some form from ancient times to the present day. Palm branches saved from the previous year are burnt and a mark is made with the ash on the forehead of each penitent with the words: **“Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return. Turn away from sin and be faithful to Christ.”**

The Liturgy of Penitence

Minister God the Father,
All have mercy on us.

Minister God the Son,
All have mercy on us.

Minister God the Holy Spirit,
All have mercy on us.

Minister Holy, blessed and glorious Trinity,
All have mercy on us.

Minister From all evil and mischief;
from pride, vanity and hypocrisy;
from envy, hatred and malice,
and from all evil intent,
All good Lord, deliver us.

Minister From sloth, worldliness and love of money;
From hardness of heart
And from contempt for your word and your laws,
All good Lord, deliver us.

Minister From sins of body and mind;
from the deceits of the world, the flesh
and the devil,
All good Lord, deliver us.

Minister In all times of sorrow;
in all times of joy;
in the hour of death,
and at the day of judgement,
All good Lord, deliver us.

Minister By the mystery of your holy incarnation;
by your birth, childhood and obedience;
by your baptism, fasting, and temptation,
All good Lord, deliver us.

Minister By your ministry in word and work
by your mighty acts of power;
and by your preaching of the kingdom,
All good Lord, deliver us.

Minister By your agony and trial;
by your cross and passion;
and by your precious death and burial,
All good Lord, deliver us.

Minister By your mighty resurrection;
by your glorious ascension;
and by your sending of the Holy Spirit,
All good Lord, deliver us.

Minister Give us true repentance;
forgive us our sins of negligence and ignorance
and our deliberate sins;
and grant us the grace of your Holy Spirit
to amend our lives according to your holy word.
**All Holy God,
holy and strong,
holy and immortal,
have mercy on us.**

SILENCE

**All Make our hearts clean, O God;
And renew a right spirit within us.**

A further period of silence is kept

***All Father Eternal, giver of light and grace,
we have sinned against you and against our neighbour
in what we have thought,
in what we have said and done,
through ignorance, through weakness,
through our own deliberate fault.
We have wounded your love
and marred your image in us
We are sorry and ashamed,
and repent of all our sins,
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,
who died for us,
Forgive us all that is past;
and lead us to from darkness
to walk as children of light. Amen***