

# **ASH WEDNESDAY**

*Wednesday, February 21, 2007*

Wednesday, February 21, will be Ash Wednesday and the beginning of the Season of Lent. The following Liturgical notes have been sent to all parishes from the Office of the Vicar General of the Archdiocese of New York.

## **Why Ashes?**

On this day the Church invites us to receive a cross of ashes on our foreheads as a sign that during the coming Season of Lent we will make sincere efforts to cleanse our lives of sin and to discipline ourselves through prayer and fasting. (See note below on Lenten Fast & Abstinence).

## **Who may receive Ashes?**

Baptized individuals who have reached the age of reason and Catechumens may receive ashes. Babies and young children who have not yet received the Sacrament of Penance should not be presented to receive ashes as ashes are traditionally intended for those who are capable of personal sin. But babies and young children can certainly be presented for a special blessing when a parent comes to receive his or her ashes.

## **Ash Wednesday Schedule in our Parish**

Ashes will be distributed after the homily at the parish Masses on Ash Wednesday at 7:00 and 8:00 a.m.; 12:15 and 5:45 p.m.

Ashes will also be distributed in conjunction with a Service of the Word at 4:00 p.m.

## **Important Note:**

In accordance with Church norms, ashes can only be distributed at Mass or at the scheduled Word Service. Please be on time as the ashes are imposed in the first part of each Mass and Service.

## **Lenten Fast and Abstinence**

During the Season of Lent, the Church urges all the faithful to reflect a spirit of penance in their daily life through performing acts of fast and abstinence.

**“Fasting”** requires that only one full meal be taken per day. Two other smaller meals may be taken during the day to maintain physical strength, but these two meals together should not equal a full meal in quantity. Fasting obliges all those who have reached the age of 18 and continues to oblige until age 59.

**“Abstinence”** prohibits individuals from eating meat on a particular day. Abstinence obliges all those who have reached the age of 14 and continues to oblige throughout their entire life.

**Ash Wednesday and Good Friday are days of fast and abstinence. Fridays in Lent are days of abstinence.**