



## Ash Wednesday 2021

7 January 2021

Regarding the distribution of ashes this coming Ash Wednesday, this office recognizes the inability, due to the pandemic, to make the sign of the cross on parishioners' foreheads as is the tradition in the United States.

The more ancient method, still used throughout much of the world, should be adopted. This method allows for a small amount (pinch) of dry ashes to be sprinkled on the crown of the head, ensuring that there is no physical contact. The current rubrics of the Roman Missal state: *Then the Priest places ashes on the head of all those present who come to him....*

Priest, deacons, and other ministers should always wear a face mask during the distribution of ashes.

Update 12 January

*The Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments have just issued this note:*

After blessing the ashes and sprinkling them with holy water in silence, the priest addresses those present, reciting once the formula found in the Roman Missal: "Repent, and believe in the Gospel" or "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return". At that point, the note continues, the priest "cleanses his hands, puts on a face mask, and distributes ashes to those who come to him or, if appropriate, he goes to those who are standing in their places." He then sprinkles the ashes on each person's head "without saying anything."