

February 20, 2020

ALD Circular 2020-9

RE: COVID-19 and Ash Wednesday

Reverend Fathers:

The CBCP Episcopal Commission on Liturgy together with experts from the World Health Organization recommend that prudent steps be taken to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Please use your **prudent pastoral judgment** on the matter.

If you find it prudent such that it will not disturb pious sensibilities and not cause undue panic or alarm, you may heed these instructions:

On Ash Wednesday, during the Imposition of Ashes, ashes can be imposed on the faithful by dropping or sprinkling a small portion of blessed ash on the crown of the head of the faithful with the prescribed formula.

In Baptism, we have been anointed on the crown of the head. The ashes to be imposed on the crown signify our repentance from sin, which has marred the grace of Baptism. This is not an innovation but in accord with the ancient practice of the Church.

Within our ecclesiastical circumscription, this is recommendatory not obligatory.

I trust your pastoral judgment. Let us continue to pray and trust in His mercy.

Sincerely yours,

+SOCRATES B. VILLEGAS
Archbishop of Lingayen Dagupan