

ASF Guidance for 2021 Lent/RCIA Liturgies

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Ash Wednesday

- 1) Remind people that Ash Wednesday is not a holy day of obligation, and they should not feel obligated to attend if in a “danger” category for COVID.
- 2) Distribute ashes by separate swab for each recipient, or by sprinkling a small amount of ashes on the crown of the head; is by priest, deacon or Extraordinary Minister of the Eucharist (“EME”)
- 3) Several Liturgies of the Word may be scheduled to diminish numbers at each celebration.
- 4) Small packets of ashes may be prepared for families/EMEs to take home to homebound, or persons bring small baggie for ashes.
- 5) Gloves should be worn by those distributing and discarded safely after the rite.
- 6) *Additional recommendations:*
 - a. *Parents apply ashes to forehead of ages 5 and under in case they move and eye is poked.*
 - b. *Distribute ashes at stated hours without liturgies; just with simple prayer.*
 - c. *If have Mass, 1 procession for both ashes and Communion—receive ashes, then Eucharist.*

RCIA

- 1) **Rite of Election** (RCIA Manual paras. 118-128)
 - a. Pastors are delegated to conduct the rite.
 - b. Can be celebrated in Mass or in a separate Liturgy of the Word.
 - c. Can be celebrated on a day other than the 1st Sunday of Lent (e.g., a weekday).
- 2) **Rite of Calling Candidates to Continuing Conversion** (RCIA Manual paras. 446-449)
 - a. This is an optional rite according to the manual.
 - b. May be combined with Rite of Election of Catechumens or done separately.
- 3) **Scrutinies**
 - a. Catechumens should not be required to participate in optional/dispensed rites if they are uncomfortable being present in groups.
 - b. 1st and 2nd scrutinies are dispensed if pastor desires (RCIA Manual para. 20). 3rd scrutiny cannot be dispensed, but should be celebrated with briefest rite.
 - c. Highly recommended that any celebrated scrutinies be done during a weekday Mass— or even in a Liturgy of the Word—to decrease numbers in the church
- 4) **Presentations:** These are optional rites even normally. Should be celebrated during the week (as normally done) if desired.
- 5) **Sacraments of Initiation:** to be discussed at Presbyteral Council

Of course, the general COVID sanitation/protection/attendance protocols are to be observed.