The season of Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, March 2, 2022 and concludes on Thursday April 14, 2022 before the Mass of the Lord’s Supper (usually celebrated in the evening).

**While we are still battling the pandemic, we are able to return to more traditional rites.** Below is a summary of regulations and suggestions for implementation in care facilities:

- The regulations regarding Fasting and Abstinence have not changed. Abstinence from meat on Ash Wednesday and all the Fridays of Lent (for those 14 and older) is required. Also on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday Catholics should fast; those between 18 and 59 should eat less (take no solid food between meals and only one full meal that day.)
  
  **Serious health conditions excuse a person from these regulations.**

- Catholics are reminded that the reception of ashes, as always, is optional and not required.

**All regulations established by the facility for the health and safety of staff and residents should be considered in determining if/how ashes are distributed.**

- Since some facilities may need to restrict visitors, you may continue the practice of requesting ashes from the local Catholic parish assigned to the facility.
- Ashes received from the parish are blessed and should be treated with all respect.
- A facility staff member, preferably one who is a practicing Catholic, will be designated by the Facility Administration/Activities Coordinator to distribute ashes to the residents and staff who choose to receive.
- **Wearing a mask**, the designated staff member will enter the resident’s room. One of the following two prayers is offered:
  - “Repent and believe in the Gospel” OR “Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return”
  - Approach the resident/staff member and apply/smear ashes to the forehead. If requested or required due to health and safety, the ashes may be lightly sprinkled on the head.
  - Any remaining ashes, and the container for the ashes, should be returned to the parish, as soon as feasible.

A statewide listing of all long term care facilities and the Catholic parish assigned to the facility is available on the Diocesan web site [https://dioceseofprovidence.org/ministry-healthcare-facilities](https://dioceseofprovidence.org/ministry-healthcare-facilities)

**As always please feel free to contact our office with any questions:**

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**God Bless!**