



DIOCESE OF BUFFALO
OFFICE OF WORSHIP

Reminders for the Season of Lent

*This is a supplement to the "Precepts for Celebrating the Liturgical Calendar."
Please refer to that document for more complete information regarding the Season of Lent.*

Ash Wednesday

Ash Wednesday will be celebrated on February 22, 2023. On Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent, which is observed everywhere as a fast day, ashes are distributed." (General Instruction of the Roman Missal, nos. 27-29)

Ashes are blessed and imposed after the homily. These ashes are of branches of the olive tree, or, according to custom, of the palm tree or other trees, which have been blessed the previous year.

Apart from Mass, a Liturgy of the Word precedes the rite of blessing, concluding with general intercessions, the Lord's Prayer, a concluding prayer, a blessing, and a hymn (see Book of Blessings, nos. 1656-1678).

The ordinary minister for the blessing of ashes is a priest or deacon. Others (e.g., extraordinary ministers of holy communion) may assist with the imposition of ashes where there is genuine need, especially for the sick and shut-ins. One of the following formulas is used:

"Repent, and believe in the Gospel."

or

"Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

Administration of Ashes

Ashes *may be* imposed on a person's forehead in the usual manner or by means of the European custom of sprinkling ashes on the crown of a person's head. Advance notice and catechesis that these options are allowable by the ritual should be communicated to parishioners before Ash Wednesday.

The Season of Lent

“Lent is ordered to preparing for the celebration of Easter, since the Lenten liturgy prepares for celebration of the Paschal Mystery both catechumens, by the various stages of Christian Initiation, and the faithful, who recall their own Baptism and do penance.

The forty days of Lent run from Ash Wednesday up to but excluding the Mass of the Lord’s Supper. From the beginning of Lent until the Paschal Vigil, the *Alleluia* is not said or sung.

Abstinence

All Catholics who have reached their 14th birthday are bound to abstain totally from meat on the following days: Ash Wednesday, all Fridays of Lent and Good Friday.

Fasting

All Catholics between their 18th and 59th birthdays are also bound to observe the Law of Fast on the following days: Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. This practice involves limiting oneself to a single full meal and avoiding food between meals. Light sustenance may be taken on two other occasions in the course of the day.

Easter Duty

After they have been initiated into the Most Holy Eucharist, all the faithful are bound by the obligation of receiving Communion at least once a year. This precept must be fulfilled during the Easter season, unless for a good reason it is fulfilled at another time during the year. This obligation may be fulfilled between February 26, 2023 (First Sunday of Lent) and June 4, 2023 (Trinity Sunday).

Baptism

There is no universal rule that would forbid the practice of baptism during Lent. However, given that Lent is traditionally focused on the preparation for baptism, many parishes have policies that discourage it. This is left to the discretion of the pastor / staff.

Holy Matrimony

While weddings may be celebrated during the Season of Lent (except for the Sundays of Lent), the priest/ deacon preparing the couple should make the couple aware of the special nature of the proposed date for celebration and its penitential character. They should be discouraged from too much pomp or display. (See *Order of Celebrating Holy Matrimony* #32)

Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA)

The Rite of Election will occur on the First Sunday of Lent, February 26, 2023, at 3:00 PM at Saint Joseph Cathedral in the context of a Liturgy of the Word. The Rite of Sending should be celebrated in the context of regular parish Masses.

Scrutinies seek to remove all obstacles to holistic conversion of the elect (unbaptized) and deepen their resolve to bind themselves to Christ, to carry out their mission to love God above all else. (They are distinctly offered for the elect, not our candidates.)

The Scrutinies must be celebrated with the congregation of your parish/family on the Third, Fourth, and Fifth Sundays of Lent. Any dispensation from them requires the permission of the Bishop. (Please email worship@buffalodiocese.org with details and questions/concerns.)

Year A readings with appropriate chants are used. The *Roman Missal* contains specific orations and prefaces suited to these celebrations. (See *Roman Missal*, "Ritual Masses: 2. For the Celebration of the Scrutinies")

If anyone over the age of reason is to be baptized, then all the Sacraments of Initiation are to be celebrated at once. They may not be delayed or separated in any way (i.e. First Communion for a 9- or 10-year old in May instead of at the Easter Vigil). The only adaptation made is in the style/age-appropriate level of catechesis; these "younger adults" will receive the sacraments along with the other elect.

Forms will be distributed from the chancery for pastors to request the faculty to Confirm those baptized in the Catholic Church, in accord with Canons 883 and 884.

The Presentation of the Creed takes place in the Third Week of Lent; The Presentation of the Lord's Prayer takes place in the Fifth Week Lent. Both would preferably be completed with a community of faithful present, within Mass. Please note that, according to the rite, the proclamation of these sacred texts is the method of reception, not a scroll or other written form.

Anointing with the Oil of Catechumens may be done in the period of the Catechumenate, prior to the Rite of Election. Anointing may be used whenever it seems beneficial—at a milestone of discernment, experience of weakness or weariness in faith or life, when faith is challenged, or entering into final discernment for baptism. *Please note that unlike infant baptism, this oil is not used at the time of baptism.*

Scheduling Notes for Lent and Easter 2023

- The new *Order of Penance* may be used as of Ash Wednesday, February 22, 2023; it must be used as of April 16, 2023. Pastoral guides will be provided to parishes by the Office of Worship to prepare the faithful for this change.
- Sunday, February 26, 2023 — The Rite of Election — 3:00 PM at Saint Joseph Cathedral

**** Please encourage RCIA Team Members to visit <http://www.buffalodiocese.org/catechumenate/> to update contact information and to register catechumens and candidates for the Rite of Election and the Call to Continuing Conversion.
- Tuesday, April 4, 2023 — Chrism Mass — 7:00 PM at Saint Joseph Cathedral

**** **Please empty, clean, and return your oil bottle set as you enter the Cathedral. Thank you to those who have already returned their bottles. A new set will be issued this year, and the current set will be reused next year.**
- Sunset will be at approximately 7:50 PM on Saturday, April 8, 2023. This means that the Easter Vigil should not begin before 8:20 PM.
- Please note that weddings are not permitted from Thursday, April 6, 2023 through Sunday, April 16, 2023 (the Triduum and Octave of Easter).
- Monday, May 29, 2023, the Monday after Pentecost, is the Memorial of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church. (See usccb.org/motherofthechurch)