

THE RITE OF BLESSING PALMS TO ASHES

Evening of the Tuesday before Ash Wednesday. This rite is the beginning of the Mass.

SIGN OF THE CROSS AND GREETING

The Presider makes the sign of the cross and greets those assembled, hoping that God calls the faithful to do penance and show mercy.

In the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

All answer Amen.

The presider says **The Lord be with you.**

The people answer **And with your spirit.**

The presider says

Tonight we bless and burn these palms to make ashes for tomorrow.

The burning of these palms remind us that all earthly glory is passing.

These palms were used to welcome the Lord in his triumphant entry into Jerusalem.

Now they are to be burned into ashes.

Human life and earthly glory fades, what remains is our faith in God.

May Lent remind us to live out our faith in God so that we may partake worthily of his life.

Let us pray that God may bless these palms to ashes and those who will receive them tomorrow.

All remain silent for a brief period.

OPENING PRAYER

The presider says

**God of tender mercy,
you fashioned us from the dust of the earth
and bid us follow your Gospel call
in the company of the Church.
Look on us with kindness
as we prepare the ashes which will mark
the beginning of our Lenten journey
grant that we who make the desert pilgrimage
might come to the font of rebirth
with a renewed passion for justice.
May our aims serve your people
and bring us peace,
may prayer sanctify all our needs,
and may we come at last to the table you set
in the place where you reign with Christ
and the Holy Spirit for ever and ever.**

The people answer

Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING

ISAIAH 58: 5 - 10

The lector says

A reading from the book of the Prophet Isaiah.

**Is this the manner of fasting I wish,
of keeping a day of penance:
that a man bow his head like a reed,
and lie in sackcloth and ashes?**

Do you call this a fast, a day acceptable to the Lord?

**This, rather, is the fasting that I wish:
releasing those bound unjustly,
untying the thongs of the yoke,
free the oppressed breaking every yoke;
sharing your bread with the hungry,
sheltering the oppressed and the homeless;
clothing the naked when you see them,
and not turning your back on your own.**

**Then your light shall break forth like the dawn,
and your wound shall quickly be healed;
your vindication shall go before you,
and the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard.**

**Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer,
you shall cry for help,
and he will say: Here I am!
If you remove from your midst
oppression, false accusation and malicious
speech;
if you bestow your bread to the hungry
and satisfy the afflicted;
then light shall rise for you in the darkness,
and the gloom shall become for you like midday.**

The Word of the Lord.

The people answer

Thanks be to God.

PSALM AND BURNING OF ASHES

Everyone gathered will recite Psalm 51

Have mercy on me, God in Your kindness.
In Your compassion blot out my offense.
O wash me more and more from my guilt
and cleanse me from my sin.

My offenses truly I know them;
my sin is always before me.
Against You, You alone, have I sinned;
what is evil in Your sight I have done.

That You may be justified when You give
sentence
and be without reproach when You judge.
O see, in guilt I was born,
a sinner was I conceived.

Indeed You love truth in the heart;
then in the secret of my heart teach me wisdom.
O purify me, then I shall be clean;
O wash me, I shall be whiter than snow.

Make me hear rejoicing and gladness,
that the bones You have crushed may revive.
From my sins turn away Your face
and blot out all my guilt.

A pure heart create for me, O God,
put a steadfast spirit within me.
Do not cast me away from Your presence,
nor deprive me of Your Holy Spirit.

Give me again the joy of Your help;
with a spirit of fervor sustain me,
that I may teach transgressors Your ways
and sinners may return to You.

O rescue me, God my helper,
and my tongue shall ring out Your goodness.
O Lord, open my lips
and my mouth shall declare Your praise.

For in sacrifice You take no delight,
burnt offering from me You would refuse,
my sacrifice, a contrite spirit.
A humbled, contrite heart You will not spurn.

In Your goodness, show favor to Zion:
rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.
Then You will be pleased with lawful sacrifice,
holocausts offered on Your altar.

BLESSING

The ritual concludes with the blessing of ashes.
The presider says with hands extended

Lord,
bless these ashes ✠
by which we show that we are dust.
Pardon our sins
and keep us faithful to the discipline of Lent,
for you do not want sinners to die
but to live with the risen Christ,
who reigns with you for ever and ever.

The people answer

Amen.

After the blessing, the presider together with the people, make a procession towards the Church. The people may sing an appropriate hymn. When the presider has reached his place in the sanctuary, he faces the people and begins the opening prayer of the Mass. The Mass continues in the usual manner.