

**From the Pastoral Directives issued by Bishop Wayne Kirkpatrick
January 26, 2021**

Ash Wednesday – Distribution of Ashes in Time of Pandemic

The CCCB General Secretariat received from the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments a document concerning Ash Wednesday (17 February 2021) and the Distribution of Ashes in the Time of the Pandemic.

In accordance with the Note from the Congregation, this year the ashes are to be imposed by sprinkling them on the head of the faithful. The rite of sprinkling ashes on the head of the penitents is already a well-established and common practice in many countries across the world.

The Priest says the prayer for blessing the ashes. He sprinkles the ashes with holy water, without saying anything. Then he addresses all those present and only once says the formula as it appears in the Roman Missal, applying it to all in general: “Repent, and believe in the Gospel”, or “Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return”.

The Priest then cleanses his hands, puts on a face mask and distributes the ashes to those who come to him or, if appropriate, he goes to those who are standing in their places. The Priest or Deacon takes the ashes and sprinkles them on the head of each one without saying anything.

Following this directive from Rome, we can sprinkle ashes on the top of the head or we could distribute ashes on the forehead using a cotton ball or maybe use a moistened Q-Tip that has to ensure that the ashes adhere to it. Obviously, you would need a good supply of them since you cannot reuse them.