

Did You Know? An Anglican Glossary



“Ash Wednesday, End of the Carnival.”
Carl Spitzweg, 1855-1860.

Time to take stock and to know
your priorities.

Ash Wednesday

Ash Wednesday is the beginning of Lent.

The service for the blessing of the ashes takes place before Mass. The ashes, previously ground to a powder from the palms blessed for the previous Palm Sunday, are placed on the altar at the epistle end and should be covered.

On the credence table, in addition to the requirements for the Mass, are a piece of bread, an ewer of water and a small towel. Also, holy water with a sprinkler. Six altar candles are lighted. The priest, wearing a purple cope, uncovers the ashes and after a prescribed number of prayers, blesses and asperges them three times.

Imposition of ashes on clergy and faithful precedes the Mass.