



# **A Sacred Day: St. Mary's Catholic Church Marks Ash Wednesday Slightly Different This Year With COVID-19**

by Dan Brannan, Content Director  
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ALTON - Each Ash Wednesday is always a sacred day at St. Mary's Catholic Church in Alton.

This Ash Wednesday at St. Mary's Catholic Church in Alton had a different twist today. The St. Mary's priests delivered the majority of ashes by sprinkling them on parishioners' foreheads, not touching them because of COVID-19.

"We are not putting them on with our thumbs, instead we sprinkle the ashes on them with our fingers," Father Jeremy Paulin, OMV, said. "We also only said 'Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return' once before we sprinkled ashes on everyone. We are also saying much fewer words because of COVID-19."

Ash Wednesday is a reminder of human mortality and the need for reconciliation with God and marks the beginning of the Lenten season. Lent is mostly observed by Roman Catholics, Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian and Anglican Churches on this day.

While different Father Jeremy said the morning services and the noon service and ash distribution went well.

Father Jeremy said Ash Wednesday is “a beloved day” in the church.

“It seems like it has been a long time since our last Ash Wednesday,” he said. “We are here to show our love to the Lord and what we have fallen short on and what we need to tackle. We all need to be forgiven and changed.

“This begins the 40 days of Lent to purify our hearts and embrace prayer and prepare for Holy Week and our walk with Jesus through his death and resurrection.”

St. Mary’s Catholic Church in Alton had Mass today at 6:30 a.m., 8 a.m., noon and has another one set for 5:15 p.m.









[Chris Rhodes also contributed to this story.](#)