



Ash Wednesday is a time for spiritual fasting so that we can cleanse our souls and renew our faith as we prepare for the resurrection of Jesus on Easter Sunday.

Ash Wednesday is important because it marks the start of the Lenten period leading up to Easter, when Christians believe Jesus was resurrected.

Ash Wednesday comes from the ancient Jewish tradition of penance and fasting. The practice includes the wearing of ashes on the head.

Ash Wednesday is a solemn reminder of human mortality and the need for reconciliation with God and marks the beginning of the penitential Lenten season. It is commonly observed with the distribution of ashes and with fasting.

The ash cross marking observers' foreheads is meant to represent mortality and penance for their sins. It is applied by a priest during a morning mass. Often along with a small blessing: 'Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return.' Many choose to keep it on all day. The holiday didn't have a biblical origin but owing to the Council of Nicea implementing a 40 day fasting period prior to Easter.

Lent is a 40-day season of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving that begins on Ash Wednesday and ends at sundown on Holy Thursday. It's a period of preparation to celebrate the Lord's Resurrection at Easter.

The ash itself is made from the burned palm leaves used during the previous year's Palm Sunday Services, which commemorate Jesus' arrival to Jerusalem a week before he was crucified and resurrected. It's believed that residents welcomed him by waving palm fronds.

Ash Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday and 6 times 6 equals 40 days. (Monday through Saturday.)