

Lent, Ash Wednesday, and Holy Week

Lent, which takes place during February or March, stands for the forty days before Easter, not counting Sundays. It is a time of repentance for one's sins and mistakes. The season of Lent was once strictly observed through fasting, emulating the forty days Jesus spent in the wilderness. Now, many people choose to be of service during Lent, to give to others rather than bring sacrifice upon themselves.

Ash Wednesday is the first day of Lent. On this day, Catholics and other Christians have a cross made of ashes brushed on their foreheads. This is symbolic of their mortality and need for purification.

Holy Week is the week preceding Easter. Four of these days have special significance:

- **Palm Sunday** (one week before Easter Sunday) commemorates the day Jesus entered Jerusalem. People celebrated his coming by lining the streets and waving palm branches. Many churches distribute palm leaves on this day.
- **Holy Thursday** commemorates the Last Supper.
- **Good Friday** commemorates the day of the crucifixion. In Jerusalem, Christians walk the Way of the Cross on Good Friday.
- **Holy Saturday** is symbolic of the day Jesus rested in the tomb before his resurrection on Easter Sunday.