The Blessing of Ashes
on the First Day of the Lenten Fast

ON Ash Wednesday, at the beginning of Lent, before Divine Service, the ashes are blessed. These are to be prepared by burning the branches blessed the previous year on Palmarum.

Therefore let the pastor, wearing either cassock surplice with stole or, if he is to celebrate, alb and stole (without chasuble, in place of which the cope may be used), standing at the Altar on which the ashes have been placed, say firstly:

℣. The Lord be with you.

℟. **And with thy spirit.**

Let us pray.

ALmighty and everlasting God, we implore You to spare the penitent, and to be favorable to all who call upon You. Be pleased, we pray, to send Your holy Angel to ble✠ss and sanc✠tify these ashes, that they may be a salutary medicine to all who humbly call upon Your holy Name, who in their consciences are accused by sin, and in the sight of Your divine clemency lament their sins and earnestly and meekly implore Your most gracious lovingkindness. And we implore You to grant that all who call upon Your holy Name, being sprinkled with these ashes, may by faith in Your forgiveness receive health of body and defense of soul. Through Christ our Lord. ℟. **Amen.**
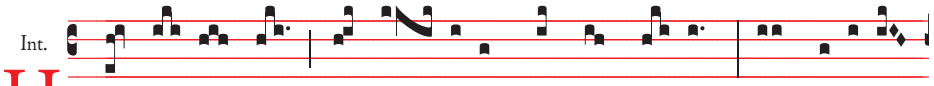
Let us pray.

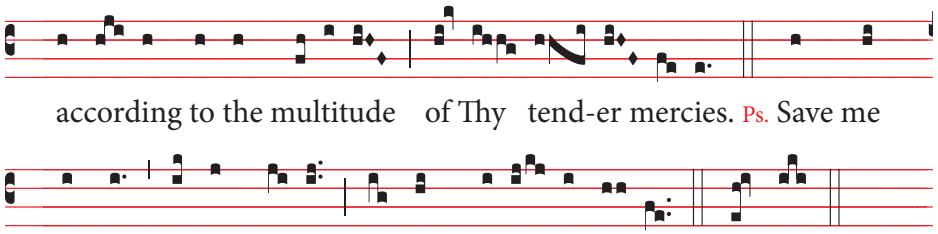
O GOD, who desire not the death, but the conversion, of sinners: we implore You graciously to consider the frailty of our mortal nature, and of Your goodness ble✠ss these ashes which we now intend to have placed upon our heads as a sign of our humility and the remission of our sins: that we, who know that we are but dust, and must return to dust by reason of our wickedness, may by Your mercy obtain the pardon of our offenses and the reward promised to the penitent. Through Christ our Lord. ℟. **Amen.**

Let us pray.

O GOD, who are moved by the humiliation of faith, and pleased by the satisfaction of Your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ: incline the ear of Your mercy to our prayers; and of Your favor pour forth upon the heads of Your servants now sprinkled with these ashes the grace of Your heav-enly bene✠diction; fill them with the spirit of remorse, and grant to them in truth those things which they justly desire; and having granted these, let them abide steadfast and undefiled forever. Through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns, &c. ℟. **Amen.**

Then let the blessed ashes be censed and the following Antiphon sung:



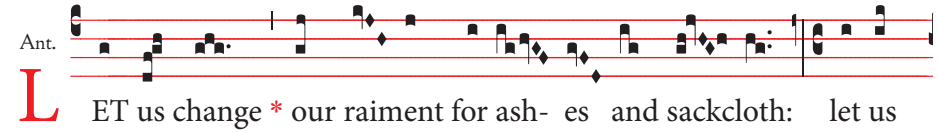


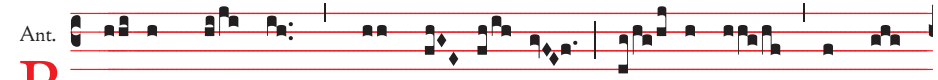
Let the Antiphon be repeated without Gloria Patri, &c. Then let the pastor say, without Salutation:

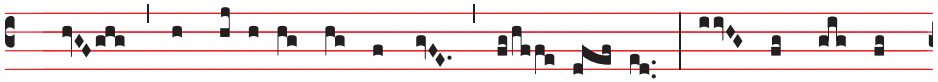
Let us pray.

GRANT us, we implore You, O Lord, to enter our Christian warfare with holy fasts; that by the reinforcement of self-control we may be fortified to fight against spiritual evils. Through. ℟. **Amen.**

Antiphons to be sung during the reception of the ashes.



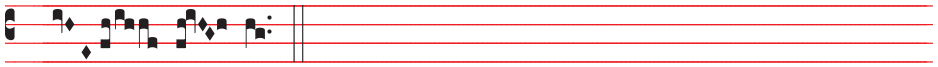




ites, the ministers of the Lord, weep and say, Spare Thy people,



O Lord, and destroy not the mouths of them that call to Thee



O Lord.

Meanwhile, as these Antiphons are being sung, let the pastor see that the people approach the Altar in an orderly and decent manner, and let him place the ashes on their bared heads in the form of a cross, saying:

Remember, O man, that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.

And the one receiving the ashes may reply humbly and with a soft voice:

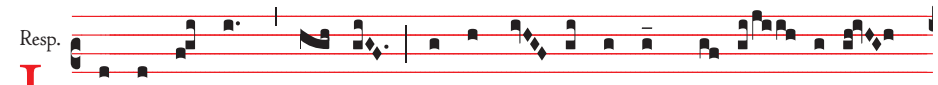
A broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise.

When the distribution of ashes is complete, let the pastor say the Collect following:

Let us pray.

ALmighty, everlasting God, who bestowed the healing of Your lovingkindness upon the people of Nineveh when they repented in dust and ashes: mercifully grant that we who now imitate them outwardly may be made like them in the obtaining of Your pardon. Through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns, &c. ℟. **Amen.**
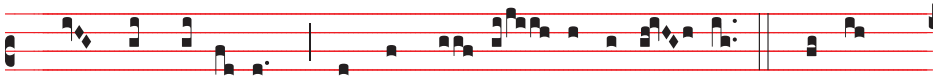
When this Collect has been said, let the Responsory be sung:



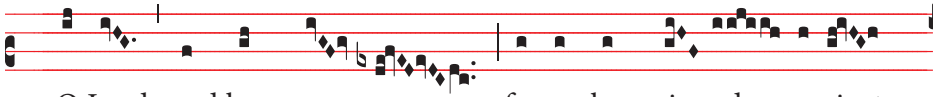
Resp. LET us amend * the sins that in our ignorance we have commit-
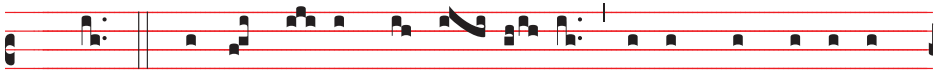


ted: lest suddenly overtak- en by the day of death, we seek for



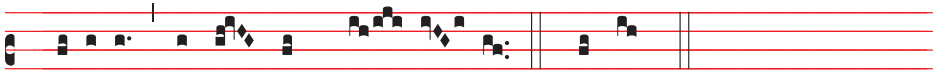
time for repentance, but are not a- ble to find it. † Hearken,



O Lord, and have mer-cy, for we have sinned against



Thee. ℣. We have sinned with our fath-ers, we have committed in-



iquity, we have done wick- ed- ly. † Hearken, &c.

Following this Responsory, the Litany is sung, whereupon the divine service begins immediately with the Introit.

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