

Addendum: Ash Wednesday Guidelines for Sacramental Celebrations in a Health Care Setting

In light of ongoing concerns about the transmission of coronavirus in group and close settings, the Vatican has released guidance around the distribution of ashes for this year. You can find the statement here: <http://www.cultodivino.va/content/cultodivino/it/documenti/note/nota-mercoledi-delle-ceneri/english.html>

Mindful of the dignity and value of those entrusted to our care as well as the unique vulnerabilities of those who are sick, elderly and immune compromised, the guidelines suggested for health care facilities are more restrictive than the Vatican guidance due to their greater risk for infection than the general population.

General Guidelines			
	Phase One	Phase Two	Phase Three
	<i>Phase 1 refers to the period of “surge” or extreme pandemic response</i>	<i>Phase 2 refers to the short-term recovery phases in which both COVID-19 positive and non-COVID-19 patients are in a facility.</i>	<i>Phase 3 refers to the long-term recovery phase in which a facility may or may not have COVID-19 positive patients, but measures are required to mitigate exposure and possible transmission.</i>
Imposition of Ashes	Consider alternative prayer opportunities and include language common to the imposition of ashes without physical contact	Consider alternative prayer opportunities and include language common to the imposition of ashes without physical contact	The imposition of ashes may go on as described by the Vatican 1.12.21 instruction, i.e. blessing of ashes and distribution via sprinkling over the person's head. Ministers must sanitize their hands before and after the ritual, per person.
	<p>General Considerations for decision making</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most chapels are currently closed to due to occupancy and space issues. Items brought into one patients' room may not be brought into a another. Communal containers of ashes should not be used. Many facilities may still have restrictions on volunteer ministries at this time. Oftentimes volunteers lead Ash Wednesday prayer services or distribute ashes to patients. 		

You can find the full document Guidelines for Sacramental Celebrations in a Health Care Setting offered through CHA and NACC here: https://www.chausa.org/docs/default-source/pastoral-care/guidelines-for-sacramental-celebrations-in-health-care-setting_jan2021.pdf?sfvrsn=4