

THE LITURGY FOR SHROVE TUESDAY CELEBRATION

[The Burning Of Dried Palm Fronds For Use On Ash Wednesday]

This liturgical material is suggested to be used as introductory activity for Shrove Tuesday celebration at all parish churches in the IFI within the context of the Holy Eucharist. The Shrove Tuesday is a vesper celebration for Ash Wednesday, upon which the ashes to be used for imposition on Ash Wednesday celebration is solemnly prepared and the congregation is introduced to Lent, a season which features, among others, penitence, confession and absolution of sin, praying and fasting. It is also the day where Christian homes traditionally consumed all meat and dairy products as symbol of the practice of fasting and abstinence during the whole Season of Lent.

The service starts outside the church building. The priest stands before the congregation, with the other ministers holding the Paschal Candle, the thurible and incense and the cross standing at his right and left sides. The members of the congregation are also standing, holding in their hands the dried palm fronds from last year's Palm Sunday celebration. In the midst of the gathering is placed beforehand a pan where the dried palm fronds are to be burned later. The liturgy starts with the singing of an appropriate song or hymn.

The Preparation

After the singing of the hymn, the priest says the following words to the congregation assembled.

Celebrant : In the Name of God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
 People : Amen.

Celebrant : Dear People of God: We are here gathered in order to invoke for God's grace so that in our preparation to start the Lenten Season, we may all be filled with meekness of life and enthusiasm in faith to confess our sins and ask for forgiveness, to give loving service to others, and to live a life in prayer and meditation.

We are expected to gather again tomorrow as a church in the celebration of the Holy Eucharist in order to receive the imposition of the ash on our foreheads as sign for the holy observance of the Lenten Season for forty days. Today we are assembled in order to burn the dried palm fronds to gather ashes to be used for our celebration tomorrow.

Silence is kept for a moment. The celebrant says the following prayer.

Celebrant : Let us pray: O merciful God, you made us from the dust and called us to follow you in accordance with the preaching of our Lord Jesus Christ and of the whole Church. Look upon us with

mercy in our preparation for these ashes to become the sign to begin with our journey in the Season of Lent.

Grant that we who shall undertake this holy journey may come to the source of our rebirth towards our renewed efforts to live in your righteousness. May our sacrifice bring us to serve your people and lead us to your peace. May our prayers sanctify our work, and our worship enable us to sit in the heavenly banquet of perfect joy with your Son Jesus Christ our Lord in the power of the Holy Spirit.

People : Amen.

The Reading

All shall continue to stand while listening to the bible reading done before the congregation taken from the book of Prophet Isaiah 58:5-10

The Homily

After the reading, the celebrant gives the homily or reflection on the meaning of the liturgical celebration to prepare the ashes.

The Burning of the Dried Palm Fronds

After the homily or reflection, an appropriate song or hymn is sung. While singing, the members of the congregation get ready with their dried palm fronds for burning. The minister holding the Paschal Candle stands near the place where the pan is located. Then the celebrant invites the people by saying:

Celebrant : We now burn the dried palm fronds we have brought today. We invite everyone to individually and solemnly go and place on the pan these fronds after being lit from the Paschal Candle. And as we do this, let us each say our silent prayers.

While the burning is done, Psalm 51 is either read or sung, repeating the Antiphon: "The love of God for us endures forever" every after the following verses: 1-2, 3-5, 6-7, 8-9, 10-11, 12-13, 14-15, 16-17, 18-19. Or an appropriate song or hymn is sung if the burning takes longer.

The Blessing of the Burnt Fronds

When all had burned their fronds, the celebrant says the following prayer for the blessing

Celebrant : Almighty God, bless these ashes [+] that they may be used to show forth that we your people are created from dust and to dust we shall return. Forgive us from our sins and keep us faithful in the observance of the holy Season of Lent.

People : Amen.

The celebrant sprinkles with holy water the burnt fronds now turn to ashes, after which the censuring is done.

The Prayers

The liturgy continues with the singing of an appropriate song or hymn. Then the celebrant says the following prayer:

- Celebrant : The almighty God is our creator, and we know that we are created from the dust. We now pray to ask him pardon and forgiveness of our sins and heal the wounds we have made because of our sins.
- Leader : Give us the grace for the truthful confession of our sins.
 People : Lord, hear our prayer.
- Leader : Strengthen us with the power of your Holy Spirit.
 People : Lord, hear our prayer.
- Leader : Grant us the courage to stand firm against all temptations.
 People : Lord, hear our prayer.
- Leader : Help us to become more respectful to the dignity and human rights of others.
 People : Lord, hear our prayer.
- Leader : Renew your love in our hearts and make us your faithful witnesses day by day.
 People : Lord, hear our prayer.
- Celebrant : O Lord our God: It is your desire that we may not die for sin but instead repent and turn away from it. In your mercy, look upon our sinfulness brought by our human nature. We know in ourselves that we are from dust and to the dust we shall return through death. But have mercy upon us, forgive us from our sins, and grant to us the reward which you promised to all that repented. Through Jesus Christ our Lord.
 People : Amen.

An appropriate song or hymn is sung and the members of the congregation slowly process in order to enter into the church building for the start of the Holy Eucharist.

INSTRUCTIONS:

When the burnt fronds and their ashes cool off, keep them at the sacristy. After the Holy Eucharist, the priest, with the help of an assistant, strain the burnt fronds and ashes in order to sift and gather the more refined ashes. Place these ashes in proper receptacles and mix it with some amount of "Oil for the Catechumens" ready for the imposition on the following day, Ash Wednesday.