

Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2026

Message on the Observance of Ash Wednesday

February 18, 2026

Today the First Lady and I join the millions of Christians in the United States and around the world in observing Ash Wednesday, a solemn day of prayer and repentance and the beginning of the Lenten season.

Every Ash Wednesday, Christians receive ashes in the shape of a cross on their foreheads as a visible reminder of our belonging to Jesus Christ and our enduring need for penance. For the next 40 days, in remembrance of Jesus' 40 days of temptation in the desert, followers of Christ will pray, fast, and give alms to deepen their faith, reflect on His redeeming passion and death, and prepare their hearts for the coming Easter miracle.

As the holy season of Lent begins, we are reminded that the practices of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving have been foundational to our strength from the earliest days of our national story. From the colonists who turned to prayer and fasting in the heart of the Revolutionary War to the unmatched compassion and generosity of America's churches, hospitals, and charitable institutions, these righteous acts of faith over the centuries have always stood at the center of our identity, our heritage, and our way of life.

This Ash Wednesday, as we remember the passion and ultimate sacrifice of Christ on the cross, we send our best wishes for a meaningful Lenten season. Above all, as we prepare for the triumphant resurrection of Jesus Christ on Easter Sunday—the greatest miracle in the history of mankind—we pause to remember those sacred words: "This is the time of fulfillment. The Kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the Gospel."

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