

Burning of the Palms for Ashes for Ash Wednesday

Palm leaves obtained from church on Palm Sunday are used to make ashes for Ash Wednesday.

Things you will need:

Metal container for burning
Oven-Mitts
Fireplace matches
Pot cover
Sieve or strainer
Fire extinguisher (just in case!)
Air tight container to keep the reserved ashes
Olive oil to make the paste

Instructions:

- 1 Lay or hang your palm leaves somewhere dry and well ventilated until they are brittle and dry.
- 2 Place a heat-proof container outdoors on a heat-proof surface. You can use a large, clean coffee can, cast iron pot or small metal trash bin placed on rocks, cement, or a driveway. Be sure there are no overhanging trees, foliage or awnings above.
- 3 Say a prayer over your palms, if desired, or use the liturgy for Burning of the Palms found on the Sola Online Worship Resource site. Strike a long fireplace match and light the palms at the bottom of the pot.
- 4 Allow the palm leaves to burn until they are reduced to ashes. Cover the container with a metal or glass pot lid and allow the container to cool.
- 5 Place a sieve over another container to catch the ashes. Pour the ashes into the sieve, gently, trying to preserve as much as you can. Gently rub your finger over the sieve to help the ashes crumble and fall through.
- 6 Collect all the ashes and preserve them in an airtight container until you are ready to make the ash paste for worship.
- 7 It only takes a very small amount of olive oil to wet the ashes so that they can be used for marking worshiper's foreheads. Be careful to add only a few drops of oil at a time as you slowly mix it with the ashes. Remember, this goes a long way and you don't need that much for one service.