

Name _____



Global Reflections

Directions: Read the short descriptions below about how Ash Wednesday is observed in different countries. Then, answer the reflection questions to compare the traditions and share your thoughts.

The Philippines: In the Philippines, large crowds attend Mass early in the morning. Priests mark people's foreheads with ashes made from burned palm leaves. Some churches even sprinkle the ashes on top of people's heads to remind them of humility and renewal. Families often spend the rest of the day quietly, reflecting on their faith.

Italy: In Italy, Ash Wednesday follows lively Carnival celebrations. Once Lent begins, people attend church and receive ashes in the shape of a cross on their foreheads. Many Italians begin fasting from sweets or rich foods as a sign of repentance. The contrast between Carnival joy and Lenten reflection helps them remember life's balance between celebration and sacrifice.

Mexico: In Mexico, Ash Wednesday is a day of deep reflection and community. Churches are filled with people of all ages, and the day is often spent in prayer. Some families prepare simple meals and choose to give up something meaningful for Lent. The ashes are viewed as a symbol of both repentance and hope for spiritual growth.

Reflection Questions:

1. What is one similarity between how Ash Wednesday is observed in these countries?
2. What is one major difference you noticed?
3. Why do you think ashes are such an important symbol for this day?
4. Which country's tradition do you connect with most, and why?
5. What does comparing these traditions teach us about faith around the world?