

Symbols of Lent

Ashes: Made from palm leaves of the previous year, ashes can remind us both of the baptismal and penitential character of Lent. They not only represent our own mortality and utter dependence on God, but also symbolize our efforts of dying to sin (and rising to new life in Christ).

Violet (deep purple): Violet is the liturgical color of the season and symbolizes its repentant character, as well as Christ as the King of the world. (Deep purple was a color reserved for royalty in Jesus' time.)

Fish: As a Lenten symbol, fish stands for the obligation to fast on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. We also abstain from meat on other Fridays of the season.

Barren stones: Stones call to mind the desert, and Jesus' testing by the devil there.

Pretzels: Made from simple dough which has no dairy or fat, pretzels remind us of fasting and, shaped like two arms crossed, of prayer.

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