

On the Distribution of Ashes to Catechumens

There are no restrictions for catechumens for the celebration or reception of most sacramentals, including blessed ashes. The *Code of Canon Law 1917* and the revised *Code of Canon Law, 1170* permits blessings to be imparted to catechumens. This pertains not only to the blessings found in the section of the RCIA pertaining to the period of the catechumenate, but to all blessings of the church whether public or private. In the year 1919 the Holy See declared that other sacramentals publicly administered were included in the interpretation of this canon such that catechumens may be admitted to the imposition of ashes and the giving of candles and palms.¹ Now the liturgical law says explicitly that catechumens may “receive blessings and other sacramentals” (RCIA, 47). **Catechumens may be admitted to the imposition of ashes.**

Adapted from: *The Catechumenate and the Law*, John M. Huels

CODE OF CANON LAW 1170

Blessings, to be imparted especially to Catholics, can also be given to catechumens and even to non-Catholics unless a church prohibition precludes this.

RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS, 47

From this time on the Church embraces the catechumens as its own with a mother's love and concern. Joined to the Church, the catechumens are joined to the household of God, since the Church nourishes them with the word of God and sustains them by means of liturgical celebrations. The catechumens should be eager, then, to take part in celebrations of the word of God and to receive blessings and other sacramental.

1. Congregation of Rites, reply, March 8, 1919, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* (AAS) 11 (1919), 144.

