



## Diocese of Birmingham in Alabama

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Office of the Bishop

January 29, 2018

Diocese of Birmingham in Alabama  
Re: Ash Wednesday — February 14, 2018

For the first time since 1945, Valentine's Day falls this year on Ash Wednesday. Some have wondered whether a dispensation from the standard laws of fast and abstinence would be granted.

Out of respect for the importance of Ash Wednesday in the lives of so many – including our non-Catholic brethren – and the way this custom underlines the importance of the Lenten season at its outset, a dispensation will not be given.

Those who wish to celebrate Valentine's Day may fittingly do so the day before (Mardi Gras) or on another non-penitential day. The good Lord, who suffered so much out of love for us, will surely reward our fidelity and sacrifice! A blessed Lenten season to all!

Most Reverend Robert J. Baker, S.T.D.  
Bishop of Birmingham in Alabama