

Faithful observe Ash Wednesday with mark of faith

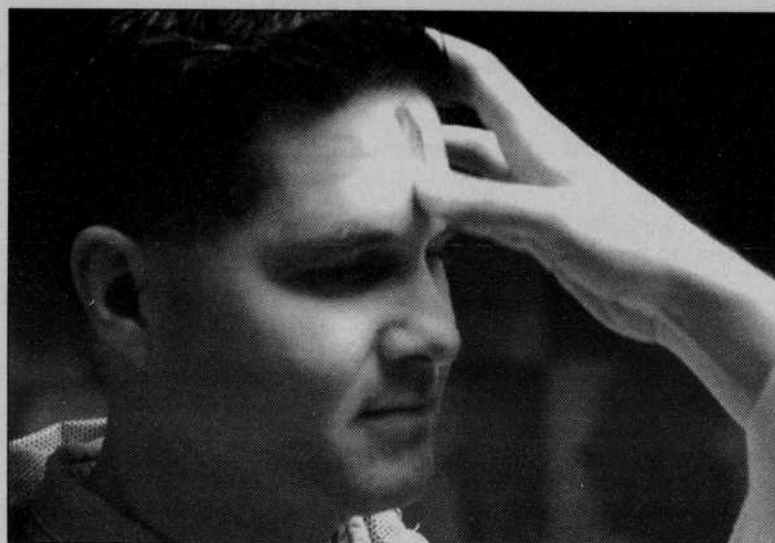
Adherants had an ash cross placed on their foreheads during Mass in the EMU

By Lennon Bergland
Freelance Reporter

Giving up a beloved thing for 40 days may be impossible for some, but starting Wednesday, Christians around the world are taking that challenge as part of Lent, a time when Christians fast, pray and give alms.

Hundreds of students and faculty were marked with a cross of ash on their foreheads to represent the beginning of Lent during Ash Wednesday ceremonies on campus. Mass was held at noon in the EMU's Ben Linder Room, where participants took communion, prayed and sang to celebrate the holy day.

Lent holds the tradition of sacrificing a bad habit. For freshman Emily Casey — a member of the Newman Center, the University's Catholic Church — the goal is to eat more healthfully.



Tim Bobosky Photographer

Father David Orique from the Newman Center applies ash to Recreational Sports Director Brent Harrison. An Ash Wednesday observance was held in the Ben Linder Room at noon.

"I will be giving up candy," she said. She added that Lent is about more than giving up sweets.

"It is about becoming closer with

God through sacrificing something that you enjoy," she said.

Lent ends at Easter when Christians celebrate the resurrection of Jesus

Christ. Easter is April 11 this year.

Graduate student applicant Elisha Monger has been attending the Newman Center for six years and said he learns from the ritual.

"It is about self-sacrifice," he said. "It is a time to reflect and connect with God."

Having an ash cross applied to the forehead is a visible statement to show an outward declaration of faith and an inner promise of penance. For some Christians, the mark is a symbol of belonging and feeling connected to a group that shares their views.

"It is wonderful to be in a community where I feel connected with other believers," Casey said. "It can be difficult when people don't understand my beliefs and just think I have dirt on my forehead."

Father David Orique of the Newman Center stressed the importance of Lent.

"It is a time to ask ourselves 'Are we living up to our Christian values?'" he said. "Every member of the church is called to examine and renew your life through prayer, fasting and alms giving."

"There is so much negative attention given to Catholicism these days that it feels good to be a positive representation of the faith," Casey said.

Casey said she enjoys the community service aspect of the religion, particularly gathering friends to donate blood at the campus blood drive.

The Newman Center is located at 1850 Emerald St. and boasts 1,000 members, 45 percent of whom are students.

"Student Mass is wonderful because it is directed at people my age and the challenges we face; things like finals and issues of morality" Casey said.

Other religions have rituals that focus on sacrifice and physical separation. Members of the Islamic faith observe Ramadan, which requires fasting from sunrise to sunset for one month. Buddhists fast as a way to cleanse and reflect, and members of the Hindu religion wear a bindi to represent the third eye.

Lennon Bergland is a freelance reporter for the Emerald.

MEMORIES

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An example of a continuous memory vignette that students rated was: "A college friend, David, confides in you that he was forced by his father to have sex with him when he was 9 years old. David tells you that he has always remembered this aspect of his childhood, but he has never told anyone until now."

The recovered memory version of that was: "A college friend, David, confides in you that he was forced by his father to have sex with him when he was 9 years old. David tells you that he has only recently remembered this aspect of his childhood, and also that he has never told anyone until now."

The results showed that more students believed the first vignette for both male and female victims.

The study revealed that recovered memories were less believable than those memories a person had all along. The average believability rating for females with a recovered memory was about 3.5, while males were given about 3.65. Females with a continuous memory were rated about 3.95, while males were rated about 4.05.

Freyd said she began thinking about the notion of bias in recovered memories through what she heard from students and the media.

"People had a tendency to disbelieve memories that were recovered, compared to memories that people said they had all along," she said.

University Professor Pam Birrell, a licensed clinical psychologist, heard the same from students in her Culture and Mental Health class.

Birrell summed up the reason for the research when she said, "We're trying to

scientifically test what I think we kind of all know."

She added that this research has some harsh side effects on those dealing with recovered memories.

"The worst part of this is people who have been abused and then doubt themselves and begin to think that they're crazy," she said. "I think there are people who've been wrongly accused, but I think they're in the minority."

Birrell said this is an issue of "social denial of child sexual abuse."

"Society as a whole does not want to look at this," she said. "I would like to believe that child sexual abuse does not happen as frequently as it does."

Robin Tiedeman, support group program coordinator for Sexual Assault Support Services, said she sees recovered memories frequently in her clients.

"Most clients that we see that have

survived childhood trauma are dealing with full repressed memories or partial ones," she said.

She added that many of them struggle with bias against recovered memories.

"As a culture, we don't want to face what really happens," she said. "We as a culture want to be in denial."

She also said it is vital to create a safe environment for survivors of abuse to recover their memories, and it is equally important that they are believed.

Now that Freyd and others have done research on the topic they plan to work hard to provide accurate information so they can focus on other research topics, such as the devastation of child abuse.

Freyd will conduct a follow-up study in the spring.

Contact the crime/health/safety reporter at lisacatto@dailymerald.com.

CAMPUS BUZZ

Thursday

Conflict resolution brown bag entitled "Mediation as a Profession," Room 461, Oregon Hall, 12:15 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.

2004 Stan and Joan Pierson Lecture featuring a discussion by Paul Pierson from Harvard University entitled "Politics in Time: History, Institutions and Social Analysis," Alumni Lounge, Gerlinger Hall, 3:30-5:30 p.m.

AAA Faculty Lecture Series featuring Mike Hibbard from Planning, Public Policy and Management and Colin Ives from the art department, Room 206, Lawrence Hall, 4 p.m.

Romance Languages lecture featuring a discussion by Cristiana Fordyce from Brown University entitled "Medieval Writing and Contemporary Reading: Boccaccio, Poetry and the Web," Room 221, Friendly Hall, 5 p.m.

Final Poetry Slam open only to University students, Agate Hall, 7 p.m.

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