

Large Group Of Students Attend Ash Wednesday Services

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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ALTON - St. Mary's Catholic and Marquette Catholic students were out in large groups for Ash Wednesday services at St. Mary's Catholic Church.

The full student participation in the Ash Wednesday service meant a lot to Rev. Paul M. Nguyen, OMV, of St. Mary's Catholic Church and the other parish priests.

"We are very grateful that we are able to offer this traditional Catholic devotion for our students," he said. "Our St. Mary's Middle School students received ashes at a morning Mass held on their campus across town, and our Elementary School students received them at a mid-morning Mass in church.

"The students respond very well to the ritual and more importantly what it symbolizes: the personal reform of life according to Jesus's teaching and example," he said. "We also welcomed the entire student body and faculty of Marquette Catholic High School, who nearly fill the seating capacity of the church."

Nguyen said although several students who attend Marquette are not Catholic, "we are so happy to celebrate these traditions for the Catholic students from a dozen different surrounding parishes and give the students who are not Catholic an authentic experience of how we believe and worship.

"In the evening, the parish school of religion program welcomed Catholic students who attend public schools to also participate with their families here. It was a wonderful day seeing the practice of the faith rekindled in so many hearts."