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Derek DeBruin, a first-year computer science student, portrays Jesus Christ in a mobile Passion on Tuesday.

Students act out stages of 'Cross'

'Jesus,' others do Passion play across campus

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It might not have been "The Passion of the Christ," but various religious student groups presented a mobile Passion play Tuesday.

In "The Living Stations of the Cross," students and other community members made their way from the State House to the women's quad, reenacting the last day of Jesus Christ's life.

The Rev. Timothy Lijewski, campus minister at St. Thomas More Catholic Center, said they began doing the traditional Lent play in Columbia a few years ago.

"We started doing it here six years ago, but it's a tradition that dates back 800 or 900 years," Lijewski said.

Lijewski said some of the details in the play came strictly from Catholic oral tradition and scripture. However, the play included contemporary moral lessons.

Leesa Poag, a first-year political science student, said she was pleased to see people embracing their culture.

"It's good to see people who aren't ashamed of their religion," Poag said.

Alex Brown, a third-year religious studies student who played Pontius Pilate, said the play serves as a reminder to all Christians.

"It's a reminder of the sacrifice that Jesus gave his life for the cleansing of our sins," Brown said.

Franklin Rainesford, a USC alumnus, said the event helped him to remember why Easter is celebrated.

"This is to fully realize the importance of Easter," Rainesford said.

Lijewski said the event has something for everyone, including the non-religious.

"I think that there's something at least relatively intriguing about it," Lijewski said.

About 40 people attended the opening at the State House at 7 p.m. Lijewski said it was the largest crowd they'd had thus far.

The event was marketed to local churches and campus ministries with both children and adults attending.

Lijewski said the procession was an opportunity for people to "walk with Jesus" on his last day.

One bystander asked, "Shouldn't they do this on Friday?" This Friday is known as Good Friday in the Catholic tradition, the day that the Vatican keeps as the anniversary of Christ's crucifixion.

Lijewski said it was only natural to stage the event Tuesday because several campus ministries meet on that day.

One audience member said the procession was "kind of silly."

Many passing motorists slowed to see what was happening, while some pedestrians stopped to observe the procession.

After giving up his viewing spot, another bystander said he wasn't really worried about missing the procession.

"I saw the movie," he said.

The play ended in front of the cemetery at Trinity Cathedral where Jesus, played by first-year computer science student and Newman Club member Derek DeBruin, is laid in the tomb.

Other stops included the Russell House, Davis Field and the School of Public Health.

"The Living Stations of the Cross" was presented by the Newman Club, Canterbury of Columbia, the Lutheran Campus Ministry, the Methodist Student Network and the Presbyterian Students Association.