

GTCC 2017 Spiritual & Fiscal Report

Dear Alumni, Parents, and Friends of the Catholic Center,

I hope that as you receive this year's annual report that you are doing well and enjoying these cool days as we approach the holiday season. I was recently reflecting on the fact that I am starting my fourth year here as Chaplain at the Catholic Center. It has been my longest priestly assignment, and after this year, the Catholic Center will be the place I have lived the longest since I started seminary almost 13 years ago. I think of the 38 years that Fr. Mario DiLella spent as Chaplain here: the memories I have made already seem so complex, and those early memories so distant. I can't imagine what he must remember: how many layers of memories he has with students and their children, and even their grandchildren. He was a blessing to the Catholic Church at Georgia Tech, and we continue to remember him fondly in our prayers as he enjoys his retirement in Florida. I hope that one day, wherever the Lord (and the Archbishop) may send me, that I will be able to look back at as grace-filled a legacy.

We have so much for which to be grateful. Our new year is off to an amazing start. My friends, each year I have been here we have seen the same kind of pattern—the first few weeks of school, our Masses are packed, but after a little while, as Georgia Tech begins to set in—and it does set in—the Mass numbers dwindle a bit. This year, it has been the opposite. One of our slowest weeks was the first week of school. Now, it was still really busy, but rather than the typical falloff we normally see, in fact our numbers have been steady and even increasing! Our 5:30 and 9PM Masses have been so full that beginning on the weekend of November 5, we added an additional Mass in the evening. We now have Masses at 9:30AM, 11:30AM, 5PM, 7PM, and 9PM, with confessions before each Mass. I don't know what things look like on other campuses—but we are thrilled beyond words to need to add more capacity for students to join us on Sundays.

Confessions have also been on the rise. They have always been strong here, but this year the increased demand is palpable. We currently have 9 different hours of confessions a week, and it seems I can never make it through the line. We are studying times when we can offer more. I hear stories that Confession is a dying Sacrament in some places. My friends, I can assure you that it is alive and well here.

In our report this year, you will hear about many of the wonderful things that have gone on here in the past year. I'm very happy that you will hear that 6 men entered into seminary formation and 3 men and women became FOCUS missionaries this year. This means that in the last 4 years, 19 GT men have gone to seminary, 4 women to religious life, and 8 graduates to become FOCUS missionaries. My friends, this is an incredible gift to the Church—not to mention the dozens of beautiful marriages, baptisms, and our enormous RCIA classes.

This was the first year we did not do any major renovations, though we went through a lot getting our air conditioning working in the chapel (everyone freezes on Sundays now...it's glorious). We are in the initial stages of planning some renovations and upgrades to our main chapel. Because we are so early in the process, we have not included plans in the Annual Report. Please ensure that you receive our e-newsletter, The Good Word, if you are interested in receiving updates on this exciting project (email Patty Schmitt at pschmitt@gtcatholic.org).

So many difficult things have happened this year throughout our world—natural disasters, terrorist attacks, uncertainty in international relations, turmoil in some areas of the Church. But God remains faithful through it all. I want to remind you that we really do seek to pray for your intentions. All of our benefactors and friends are remembered every day in our communal rosary and in every Sunday Mass. If you are in need of a Mass said for a special intention, please let us know. It gives me great joy to offer Masses in support of those who have supported this mission so loyally.

To all of you who have supported and continue to support us financially, thank you. We depend on your support. We receive no funding from the Archdiocese of Atlanta. Our ministry is made possible only by the donations of parents, alumni, and friends. I thank you for your generosity and your commitment to our mission to help make GT students into missionary disciples of Christ.

Please let me know if I can do anything for you, and please be assured of my prayers.

Yours In Christ,

Fr. Josh

Fr. Josh Allen, Chaplain



Pictured: Nick Wiliams, Fr. Josh Allen and Harrison Butker

STUDENTS RESPOND TO GOD'S CALL

This past year was a banner year for GTCC alums entering into the service of the Church both as seminarians studying to be priests and as missionaries for FOCUS. We are very intentional about praying for vocations. Each Monday we offer a Mass for vocations and all of our alumni who have entered into some kind of religious formation. In the past four years, we have sent 19 men to seminary, 4 women to religious life, and 8 men and women to become FOCUS missionaries. This is an incredible gift to the Church and a testament to the profound honesty and openness of Georgia Tech alumni in considering God's will. We invite you to pray for all our men and women in formation, but especially the group from this year.

Patrick Lamar (BA '17) is in his first year of Pre-Theology at St. Vincent de Paul seminary in Boynton Beach, FL. Jared Kleinwaechter (ChemE '17) is in his first year at St. Mary of the Lake Seminary in Mundelein, IL. David DesPres (EE, '17), Grant Aasen (IE, '17), and Anthony Haskin (HTS, '16), the former pastoral lackey, are all in their first year of seminary at Notre Dame Seminary in New Orleans, LA. Antonio Moualeu is studying with the Franciscans (OFM Conv.), and is in his first year of formation.

We miss all of these men and always enjoy seeing them when the come to visit.

In addition to seminarians, we had three graduates join FOCUS in this past year. Natalie Larkins (ID '17) is currently serving and Western Kentucky University. Stephen Wang (EE '17) is serving at Vanderbilt University, and Jessica Allison (CS and BIO '16) is serving at Georgia College and State University. We are so proud of all our missionaries from Georgia Tech and we look forward to seeing the profound effect they will have in the world. Please pray for vocations!



Grant Aasen
Archdiocese of Atlanta



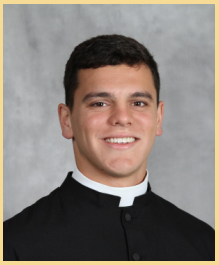
David DesPres
Archdiocese of Atlanta



Anthony Haskins
Archdiocese of Atlanta



Jared Kleinwaechter
Archdiocese of Atlanta



Patrick Lamar
Archdiocese of Atlanta



Antonio Moualeu
OFM Conv.



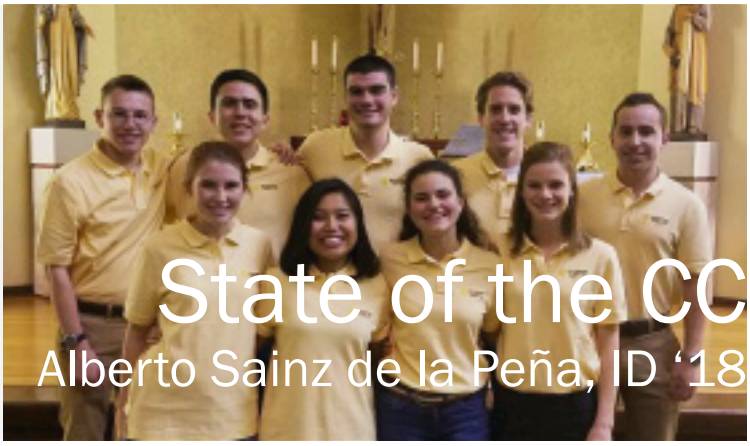
Jessica Allison
FOCUS



Natalie Larkins
FOCUS



Stephen Wang
FOCUS



State of the CC

Alberto Sainz de la Peña, ID '18

How can I describe the state of the CC? Hmm… If I had to boil it down to one statement, I would have to say that the Georgia Tech Catholic Center is on fire. Now, before Fr. Josh gets a heart attack, let me clarify: We're not talking arson here; we're talking about a vibrant, dynamic, loving, growing community that you can just feel is absolutely ablaze with the love of Christ.

We kicked off 2017 by sending more than 80 students to the SEEK conference in San Antonio, Texas in January. This FOCUS-run conference gave our students the opportunity to attend many, many talks by world-renown Catholic speakers, receive the sacraments, and experience a great spiritual kickstart for the year. Later that month, 60 of our students boarded a bus and braved the cold to march in the annual March for Life in Washington D.C.

Vocational discernment was in the air as February rolled in. The Catholic Center basement was transformed into a 5-star restaurant for the annual Valentines Dinner and Dance. The ladies of the CC were treated to a gourmet sit-down dinner (cooked by the men of the CC), followed by musical serenades, dancing, and a fun time for all. Later that month, the men's and women's discernment retreats allowed our students to escape away from clatter of Tech and arm themselves with the tools to better hear God's call.

March brought a great sense community and solidarity at the CC as we began the Lenten season. The CC was fortunate enough to host Sister Bethany Madonna and Sister Gemma Grace Marie (a GTCC alum!) from the Sisters of Life. Sister Bethany, who was one of the keynote speakers at the 2016 World Youth Day, sat as a guest panelist in our monthly "Ask a Priest" event with Fr. Josh, and gave a powerful talk the following night that had our chapel absolutely packed!

Lent was brought to a close in April with Holy Week and the Easter Triduum. For those who have not experienced a Holy Week at the Catholic Center, let me tell you… I believe it was the most beautiful liturgy in the Archdiocese. The GTCC welcomed 20 RCIA candidates and catechumens into the Catholic Church!

May brought a great semester to a close, as we said goodbye to over 30 graduates from our community. We were sad to see them go, but wish them the best in their endeavors! The summer semester began, and a strong group of students at Tech for the summer kept our community of Faith strong!

After a long and unusually-wet Atlanta summer, we were absolutely thrilled to welcome back students and meet the next generation of GT Catholics in August! Our annual Welcome Week reunited and strengthened our community with faith, friendship, and lots of fun! After an amazing week, the number of students officially registered under the Catholic Student Organization had doubled!

I have been absolutely blessed to serve as President of the Catholic Student Organization for the year of 2017. We have exciting plans and new programs coming in these next couple of months! I cannot wait to see how the GTCC continues to grow and continues to be a beacon of Love, Truth and Faith in Christ on this campus!



Largest RCIA Class

Clare Botti, PSYC ' 17

Joining RCIA as a sponsor for the second year in a row was one of the best decisions I have ever made. The 2016-2017 program had the biggest class in the history of the CC, numbering 20 candidates and catechumens, and 20 sponsors. Every Sunday, this group filled the main floor of the CC to grow in knowledge through intense discussion. It was truly remarkable to witness the desire to understand Truth held by so many. Sponsors were eager to help and share their own experiences in support. We couldn't wait to welcome this class into our flourishing community of Georgia Tech Catholics.

The moment I will cherish the most happened during the retreat that we hold every Spring semester before the conclusion of the RCIA program at Easter. A fellow CC alum addressed the Eucharist, my favorite sacrament. With passion and unmatched charisma for speaking, she explained the uniqueness of this Most Blessed Sacrament and illustrated the beauty in its establishment through Christ's passion. She set the stage for my candidate to experience her first real encounter with Christ's loving presence in the Eucharist at Mass and adoration. Being able to share that moment with her, was a blessing that I will never forget. This story is only one example of many special moments. It was easy to see the success of the program in the beaming smiles on all the freshly-Confirmed faces at the conclusion of the Easter Vigil Mass.

Embarking on this journey with this group of students helped me to appreciate the thirst for Truth, Beauty, and Goodness shared by so many young people today. We came seeking answers to life's questions and found them in the Catholic Church. To say that I'm thankful for the RCIA program at the CC would be an understatement – I love it so much that I am now a leader in 2017-2018 class!

GTCC ABOVE



Faith in Greek Life

Morgan Stephens, BME '18

For over 125 years, the Georgia Tech Greek community has been an influential part of student life for many undergraduates. This community has expanded to over 50 fraternities and sororities and continues to grow. Thankfully, the Catholic Center has provided resources and opportunities for faith and Greek life to come together.

I have always been a person of faith, but at the start of my junior year of high school my parents let my spiritual life be my decision. I was responsible for getting myself to Mass, LifeTeen, and all other church activities. I made the choice to continue in my faith and developed good habits of acting upon my faith independently from my parents.

This independence helped me during the college transition, but my spiritual life was not yet a part of my daily routine.

During the first few weeks of college, the Catholic Center provided a way to keep my faith alive. I discovered relatable and thought provoking homilies from Fr. Josh, quiet study spaces with coffee, social gatherings, and specific events for Greeks put on by FOCUS (Fellowship of Catholic University Students) such as bible studies. I was quickly surrounded by other Greek students who were determined to find a bigger purpose during their years at Tech while balancing their school work and Greek involvement. I was shown practical ways for my faith to be intertwined with so many parts of my life as a student.

Fr. Josh once said that core virtues of Greek life call us to be a holier individual if we truly live by them. My sorority is built upon the core virtues of Love, Honor, and Truth. Regardless of the specific virtues of each Greek organization, the idea that there are virtues to aspire towards and commonality among members is also seen in the Catholic Church. For me, these similarities led to real friendships based on accountability and growth in my faith and my Greek involvement.

It has been through my sorority that I have found sisters who push me to embody the virtues that reflect my faith, and I have learned what it means to be a part of something bigger than myself.



FOCUS @ GT

Deidre Merrill, Team Director

FOCUS (Fellowship of Catholic University Students) has been present on the Georgia Tech campus since 2013. Our mission is to give freely and joyfully of ourselves to invite students onto the journey to Christ's kingdom. At Georgia Tech, our team of five is responsible for building up faithful followers of Jesus Christ through discipleship and bible studies.

Discipleship is the beautiful method modeled by Jesus Christ: "And what you have heard from me before many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also" (2 Timothy 2:2). We invest in students by praying through scripture together and developing different skills that help them live out their faith and evangelize. We currently have 60 students in discipleship.

Bible studies have grown immensely in the last few years. Currently, we have approximately 26 bible studies and 200 participants lead by missionaries and students. Eleven of those bible studies are specifically for the Greek community (fraternity/sorority). In addition, we are trying to grow the men and women's athletic movement. We have men and women's bible studies specifically for athletes that have been incredibly successful so far.

Every January, FOCUS hosts SEEK, a national conference which brings together thousands of college students from all across the country. This five-day conference is packed with mass, adoration, confession, and over 50 incredible breakout session speakers where students could chose from a plethora of topics. This past January, the delegation from Georgia Tech Catholic Center numbered 80! So many students had amazing life changing experiences. One 4th year student signed up at the last minute, conflicted about whether or not to stay in the faith. After attending SEEK, he encountered the Lord in a deeply beautiful way through Reconciliation after being absent from this Sacrament for ten years! He is now a part of a men's accountability group. Many students made lifelong friends and came back super energized and ready to get more involved at the Catholic Center and in FOCUS activities.

It has been incredible to watch the Georgia Tech FOCUS movement grow since its inception. We look forward to seeing how God will work in the hearts of our students and bless them in this school year!

& BEYOND



Returning to Peru

Cat Edwards, BME ‘16

I had the privilege of being one of a few students who returned to the shantytowns of Lima, Peru during Spring Break 2017. I first learned about the circumstances of the poor in Pamplona Alta in 2016. Our job was to help them build stairs so they could reach their home without fear of sliding down the steep, rocky mountainside. This year, we arrived in Lima in the middle of a terrible natural disaster to help build a retaining wall over a section of the city that would provide a barrier to rockslides and a foundation for a road. Peru had seen record amounts of rainfall, and severe flooding had completely washed away communities out in the highlands. The entire city of Lima did not have running water. Pamplona Alta had gone four days without it. It amazed me, how even in the most destitute of times, these families prayed for their poorer counterparts that were suffering from the results of the floods. They always thought of the needs of others first. I compared this to my own prayer life, and realized how much I truly have to learn.

Our mission was special and much more than building a structure. We truly encountered the locals as we worked alongside them, building stairs and building community in Christ. “The neighbors” as we affectionately called the members of the community, were ecstatic each day upon our arrival, had begun work hours before we arrived each morning, and continued hours beyond our departure in the evening. Every day we tried our best to remind these marginalized people that they are loved, they are cared for, and they are remembered.

I have never in my life felt more close to Christ than in the collective 10 days that I’ve spent in Lima. Father Josh and the FOCUS missionaries helped us keep Jesus and see Jesus before us at all times. Each day, we began with morning prayers, celebrated the Mass, spent a holy hour with our Lord, were offered the opportunity to go to Confession, encouraged to spend additional time in prayer, and shared our experiences with one another at night. We visited the homes of families in Pamplona who had never been to a Mass, but spoke deeply of Christ’s love and mercy. We taught children to pray the Rosary. I didn’t have to go to Lima to do any of these things, but this experience has left a burning desire to come home and apply the same principles in my much busier, daily life in Atlanta. Please pray for our brothers and sisters in Lima, that they may always know the love that Christ has for them, and that we, as His stewards, may share this love in our daily lives. For a peek into what our trip was like, check out this video:
https://tinyurl.com/GTCCperu2017



A Packed House

Connor Nies, BA ‘18

Last November, the GTCC hosted Catholic writer and speaker Matt Fradd who led an exciting and enriching three-night mission. Matt is best known for his work in the fight against pornography. He has authored several books, including best-seller The Porn Myth, and also has two podcasts: Integrity Restored and Pints with Aquinas.

Matt’s mission focused on the theme of “Finding Beauty in a Broken World” and covered a variety of different topics related to persevering and overcoming the challenges we face on a day to day basis. Each night of the mission started with a home-cooked dinner in the CC’s basement followed by Matt’s keynote talk, and ended with some combination of small-group breakout chats, adoration, and community bonding.

The first night, titled “God, the Universe, and Everything” centered on God’s plan for humanity and included many hilarious tidbits from Matt’s life. Students packed the sanctuary and, within a few minutes, Matt had everyone dying of laughter. The talk covered many different aspects of our faith and had students pondering all sorts of questions during small group discussions following the talk. The night didn’t stop there as everyone came out to enjoy a bon-fire and s’mores on the patio afterwards.

The second evening did not disappoint. Many new and returning faces, all excited, filled the Catholic center for the mission’s keynote talk: “Porn: 7 Myths Exposed”. Matt gave an emotional and relatable personal testimony which was followed by group sessions where students discussed the epidemic of pornography.

The third and final night was all about Mary. In a talk titled “My Mother is a Virgin”, Matt gave some of the key arguments supporting our Blessed Mother’s importance to our faith. The night was capped off by Patrick Williams (our very own Director of Music) leading praise and worship. Over 40 students stuck around after the event, this time to partake in an unsurprisingly popular chocolate fondue.

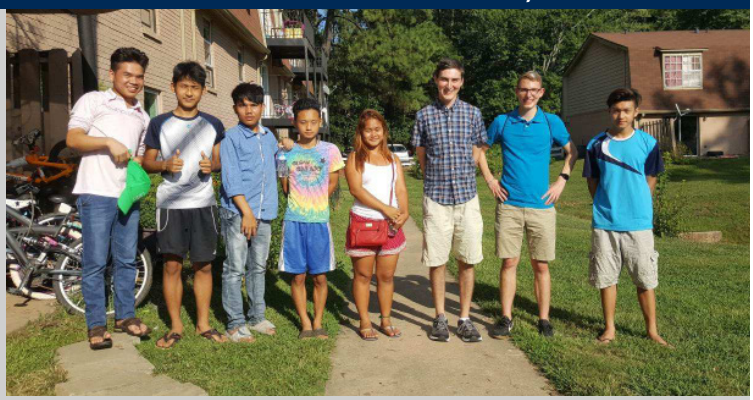
The mission was a huge success, bringing in an average of over 200 people a night; well over our expectations and highest goals. All three nights were filled with memorable experiences, great laughs, and informative points to help us grow in our faith and in virtue. Most importantly, the mission succeeded in bringing students together, further building the GTCC community and expanding the Catholic presence on Georgia Tech’s campus.

Serving refugees with the

Missionaries of Charity

Patrick Creamer, PhD ME '20





God works in mysterious and often amusing ways. My friend and fellow Georgia Tech graduate student, David Arellano, was making his way through the shopping aisles of Kroger when he ran into four Missionaries of Charity purchasing "a lot of milk and bananas." Based out of Gift of Grace House, the sisters' primary ministry here in Atlanta is focused on caring for homeless women who have AIDS and are often very sick or dying. After a short conversation with them, they invited David and any friends (where I come in) to join them for a Holy Hour at Gift of Grace House. After joining them for the Holy Hour, David and I discussed opportunities to volunteer with them. To our amusement, before we actually volunteered with them, they invited us to a volunteer appreciation day, which we naturally objected to since we hadn't helped them yet. Sister Justus, the house mother, laughed at us though and responded "we see where this is going."

Fast forward a few weeks, and we were exactly where Sister Justus wanted us to be. The sisters' ministry also extends to caring for and catechizing a large group of Burmese refugee children in Clarkston, GA. In Clarkston, there is a series of townhomes where Catholic Burmese families will open them up for the children in the community to attend Sunday school. When we first arrived, we were excited to find that other Georgia Tech students had also connected with the Missionaries and were helping teach the children already. A fellow student, James, as well as his fiancée Sydney, have been helping teach the students going back two summers when James assisted the sisters with a summer camp for the children. As the year progressed, God continued to provide as more students from the GT Catholic Center heard about the Missionaries' work with the children and began helping teach other grades.

The sisters split the children up roughly by grade and dedicate one or two volunteers to teach them every Sunday. David and I primarily help teach the communion class, where every week we work through the catechism, explaining teachings ranging from Adam and Eves' fall and the Eucharist, to more amusing topics such as angels and demons. The children are all very excited to be there with friends, the trick is finding the most hands on way to share the faith with them! We have perfected the art of trading a small recess to play sports with the children, in exchange for attention and participation. At the end of class, the sisters' encourage leading the children in the rosary. It is an incredible blessing to witness so many young girls and boys share their intentions and to unite our prayers together to the Blessed Mother. I always leave Clarkston, extremely peaceful and thankful to have been able to witness and be a small part of building up the Kingdom.



Pictured: The Forinash Family

Alumni Spotlight

David Forinash, MSME ' 15 and Laura Forinash, MSCE '13

Whether students come to the Catholic Center for community or faith building (or free food), they find a home away from home. In a college culture where many feel isolated and overburdened, the GTCC provides fellowship and nourishment. Our financial support ensures that the center will continue to bless young people as it has blessed our family.

Laura and I met at the Catholic Center at the fall cookout in 2012. Far from our families (NC, TX), the center quickly became a home for us and a place to cultivate our faiths. Laura received the sacrament of Confirmation there, and we both became regulars in the graduate student Bible study. Through midnight Easter vigils, Habitat for Humanity, and corn maze trips, we grew closer to God, our fellow students, and each other. We benefitted from renovated facilities and engaging new ministries (FOCUS, Theology of the Body, Apologetics) made possible by the generosity of benefactors. These ministries, along with the frequent offering of sacraments and prayer (confession, adoration, Rosary) equipped us to face graduation and employment with a foundation of faith.

Five years later, we're married with a daughter and involved in the young adult Catholic ministry in Los Angeles. We hope to help form a faith community as vibrant and welcoming as the Catholic Center at Georgia Tech. The GTCC gave us a lifelong group of friends, many of which have been blessed with marriage, children, or calls to religious life. It is wonderful to see God's love spread far and wide by alumni who once called Georgia Tech home.



Pictured: The Schutz Family and Fr. Josh Allen

Building A Legacy

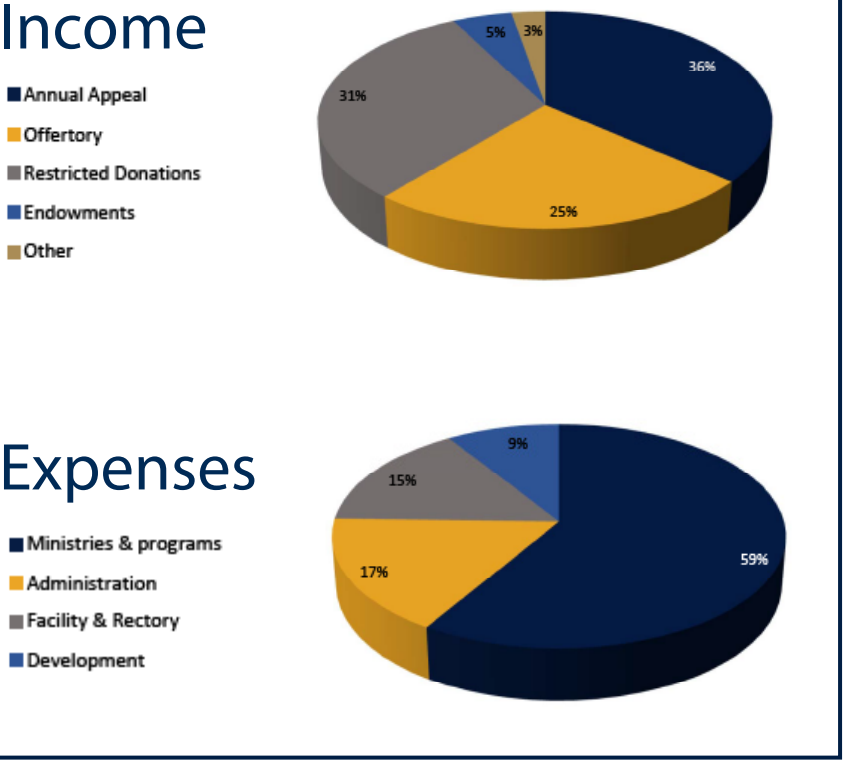
Jim Schutz, EE '96, MSEE '97 and Joselyn Schutz, EE '97

My husband and I consider it an honor and a duty to help support the GTCC financially. As alumni, we're profoundly grateful for the work God is doing at our alma mater to ignite Catholics on campus with the rich fire of the Catholic faith, and we're proud of the amazing history of Georgia Tech in blessing the Church with dozens of priests and religious sisters to date, with many more in formation.

As parents of a current student, we feel an obligation to support the work the GTCC is doing to continue the spiritual, social, and service formation we began, and to reach hundreds of other students, Catholic and otherwise, who may never have had that formation at home. And as parents of (God & Admissions willing!) future students, we're investing in a strong campus parish family that will be a home for them for years to come, one which will feed them so that they in turn can enrich the world around them with their vocations to marriage, family, a robust single life, the priesthood, and the religious life.

One of the most important considerations in our decision to make not just a one-time contribution, but to become regular donors, is that the GTCC receives no funding from either the Archdiocese or Georgia Tech. If alumni, parents, students and other Catholics don't contribute to, and even sacrifice for, this vital campus ministry, it will disappear along with the critical work it's doing. We need courageous, authentically Catholic leaders with servant's hearts in business, politics, service, health care, technology, and ministry now more than ever - exactly like the ones graduating after 4 (or 5 or maybe 6 ...) years in the heart of the vigorous, unabashedly faithful, fearlessly apostolic environment of the Georgia Tech Catholic Center.

Income



Expenses

Income	
Annual Appeal	$212,996.58
Offertory	$143,065.92
Restricted Donations	$183,552.60
Endowments	$28,170.69
Other	$16,034.54
Total	$583,520.33

Expenses	
Ministries & Programs	$291,726.48
Administration	$82,678.85
Facility & Rectory	$76,742.81
Development	$45,315.39
Total	$466,463.43

FINANCIALS

Wish List

Paschal candle stick	$1000
Depository Safe	$500
Thanksgiving Dinner	$1000
Shredder	$500
Rolling cart	$250
Sound System for Chapel:	
Microphone/speaker stands & cables	$850
Digital Mixer	$600
Amplifier	$400
iPad Pro	$1200
Speakers & Monitors	$1600
Microphones	$1000
Rack Mount Case	$500
Direct Input Box	$400

Welcome, Patrick!



The Catholic Center would like to introduce our new Director of Music/ Campus Minister, Mr. Patrick Williams. Patrick is a local Georgian, born and raised in Stone Mountain. He graduated from Franciscan University of Steubenville in 2011 with a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and Philosophy. Since college, Patrick has been a missionary, a music minister and music teacher at St. Brigid Catholic Church in Johns Creek, a seminarian for the Diocese of Houma-Thibodaux, LA; and a full-time freelance musician touring and recording across the U.S. He and his wife, Emily, were recently married in St. Louis, MO. Emily is a Youth Minister at Christ the King in Buckhead.

Patrick is glad to be able to call the Catholic Center his new home and to invest in the good students of Georgia Tech as he continues to develop the music and campus ministry endeavors at the CC. He joins Chris Martineck, Office Manager, and Patty Schmitt, Development Director, on the CC staff.

STAY IN TOUCH!

Get the latest news in our bimonthly e-newsletter

THE GOOD WORD

Email pschmitt@gtcatholic.org to get on the mailing list!

Open now to find out how the Lord is changing lives at Georgia Tech!

Look for us online!

GTCatholic.org

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

(404) 892-6759

172 4th Street NW
Atlanta, GA 30313

Georgia Tech Catholic Center