



Vatican  
Observatory  
Foundation

# 2025 ANNUAL REPORT



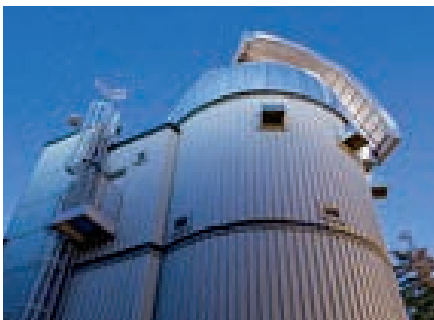
**INSIDE: PECULIAR STARS AND THE VATT**

Vatican Observatory Foundation  
2017 East Lee Street  
Tucson, AZ 85719 USA

 [vaticanobservatory.org](http://vaticanobservatory.org)



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## THE FOUNDATION

The Vatican Observatory Foundation (VOF) is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization created to support the scientific and educational endeavors of the Vatican Observatory, including the maintenance and modernization of the Vatican Advanced Technology Telescope (VATT).

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# 2025 DIRECTORS

## EX OFFICIO

Br. Guy J. Consolmagno, SJ, Director, Vatican Observatory; President, Vatican Observatory Foundation

Sr. Raffaella Petrini, FSE, President of the Governorate of Vatican City State

## OFFICERS

Mr. Paul Pohl, Chairman | Of Counsel, Jones Day

Fr. Christopher Corbally, SJ, Secretary | Astronomer, Vatican Observatory Research Group

Mr. John M. Lally, Treasurer | Partner, Lally & Co.

## MEMBERS

Fr. Richard D'Souza, SJ | Jesuit Community Superior; Astronomer, Vatican Observatory

Fr. Paul Gabor, SJ | Vice Director of the Vatican Observatory Research Group

Msgr. David A. Rubino | Diocese of Erie (retired)

Dr. Guy Di Spigno | President, Executive Synergies, Inc. (retired)

Dr. Linda Lapos | Gastrointestinal Surgeon (retired)

Mrs. Stacye DeJulius | Catholic Schools Advancement

## COUNCIL OF ADVISORS

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Mr. Patrick J. Finneran, Jr. | President, Accelerated Performance Solutions

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Mr. Paul Wirth | Communications Director, Diocese of Allentown (retired)

## EPISCOPAL ADVISORS

Most Reverend John Barres, Bishop of Rockville Centre

Most Reverend William Byrne, Bishop of Springfield, Massachusetts

His Eminence Cardinal Blase Cupich, Archbishop of Chicago

Most Reverend José Gomez, Archbishop of Los Angeles

Most Reverend Gregory Hartmayer, OFM, Conv., Archbishop of Atlanta

Most Reverend Bernard Hebda, Archbishop of St. Paul and Minneapolis

Most Reverend Edward Malesic, Bishop of Cleveland

His Eminence Cardinal Sean O'Malley, OFM, Cap., Archbishop Emeritus of Boston

His Eminence Cardinal Joseph Tobin, CSsR, Archbishop of Newark

Most Reverend Edward J. Weisenburger, Archbishop of Detroit

His Eminence Cardinal Donald Wuerl, Archbishop Emeritus of Washington

Most Reverend David Zubik, Bishop of Pittsburgh



Pope Leo XIV and Fr. David Brown at Castel Gandolfo's Visual Telescope in July

# CHAIRMAN'S REPORT



## GROWTH, PROGRESS AND EXCITING TRANSITIONS

2025 brought Vatican Observatory Foundation (VOF) continued growth, improvement on all fronts, financial stability and exciting transitions.

VOF exists to support the global work of the Vatican Observatory. Our Foundation is an Arizona non-profit corporation with 501 (c)(3) status under the U.S. Internal Revenue Code. The Foundation's primary purpose is to raise funds and provide resources for the works of the Vatican Observatory.

VOF has responsibility for funding the operation, maintenance and upgrade of the Alice P. Lennon Vatican Advanced Technology Telescope (VATT) which is part of the Steward Observatory on Mt.

Graham, Arizona. VOF also is responsible for funding the Vatican Observatory Summer Schools which bring together some of the world's most promising astronomy students from around the globe. The summer school is held at the Vatican Observatory's headquarters at Castel Gandolfo, outside of Rome.

In the first half of calendar year 2025, we mourned the passing of Pope Francis and later welcomed with joy the new Pontiff, Leo XIV. Under our bylaws, the Holy See essentially appoints two members to our Board. One is the Director of the Vatican Observatory and the other has been the Secretary General of the Vatican City State.

As was mentioned in a prior report, in late 2021, Sr. Raffaella Petrini, FSE, was appointed by Pope Francis to be the Secretary General of The Vatican City State and she began serving on the Foundation's Board in early 2022. She was the first woman in history to hold the Secretary General's office. Since joining the Foundation's Board, she has been an enthusiastic, conscientious and brilliant participant in the works of the Foundation. She has become a great friend to so many of us. For those reasons, we were exceedingly pleased when Pope Francis made her the President of the Vatican City State, effective March 1, 2025. We are also most pleased that she has chosen to remain on our Foundation's Board.

And, continuing the theme that 2025 was a year of transition, Br. Guy Consolmagno, S.J., served as Director of the Vatican Observatory since 2015. Effective September 19, 2025, Father Richard D'Souza, S.J. became the Director of the Vatican Observatory. Father D'Souza has been a valued member of our Board of Directors and all of us at the Foundation have enthusiastically welcomed him in

his new role. I met with him in Rome a few days after his appointment became effective. We are excited about his plans for the Observatory, his ideas for the Foundation and how he and his team will continue to build on the great work done by the Observatory and the Foundation under Br. Guy's leadership. To say he served brilliantly in that position would be an understatement. Br. Guy was a shining star in every respect - pun intended! Notwithstanding the demands made on his time as Director of the Observatory, he also served as President of our Foundation since 2015. We are blessed that Brother Guy now remains as President of our Foundation.

These transitions have brought an atmosphere of excitement to the Foundation and those who assist it. A wonderful exclamation point to this year of excitement has been the two visits by Pope Leo XIV to the Observatory headquarters at Castel Gandolfo – one of which was on July 20, 2025, to commemorate the 56th anniversary of the first astronaut to land on the moon. (Pope Paul VI watched the moon landing in 1969 on a television set at the Vatican Observatory.) Pope Leo also had a private audience during the summer with our Vatican Observatory Summer School (VOSS) students. We are obviously delighted that the Holy Father “knows who we are and what we do.”

On the organizational front, I am pleased to report that our program for growth and renewal, which we began to develop about 4 years ago, continues to make great progress. Our fundraising is increasing nicely (but there is always more to be done on that front); our balance sheet is healthy; our investments had an excellent year; our audited financials have been released; our Council of Advisors has brought added talent to our Board Committees; and with the help of Cardinal Donald W. Wuerl we have enlisted a distinguished group of twelve Episcopal Advisors from around the country to assist and advise the Foundation without multi-faceted activities in support of the Observatory's sacred mission to show the harmony between faith and reason.

I am optimistic about the future of our Foundation. I express my heartfelt gratitude to our Foundation's Board members, officers, staff, volunteers, advisors and the Jesuit Astronomers.

We have done much, but when it comes to exploring the science of the heavens, there is always so much more to do.



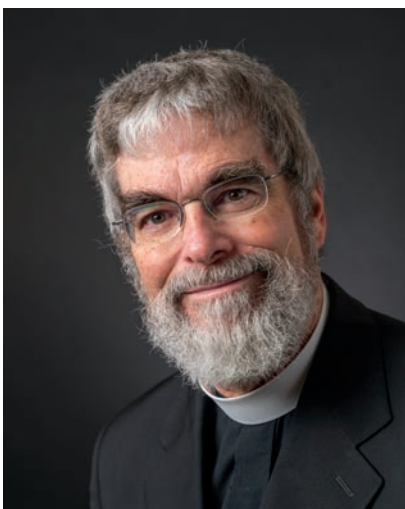
**PAUL M. POHL**

Chairman of the Board  
Vatican Observatory Foundation



A private audience with Pope Leo XIV (and Sr. Raffaella Petrini, FSE ) for our VOSS 2025 students

# PRESIDENT'S REPORT



## EXPLORING THE UNIVERSE, ONE STUDENT, ONE DISCOVERY, ONE CONVERSATION AT A TIME

It's become a running joke between our esteemed board chair, Mickey Pohl, and me. He looks at my travel schedule and wonders why I'm speaking in, say, North Dakota when in fact we need to be engaging with possible donors in the big cities. "Think of the work we want to do at the Observatory; we can't do it without their support!" he reminds me. Then I point out where I first met him... at a little school called Gannon University in Erie, Pennsylvania. Not a place you'd expect to find big donors.

Having him on our board, and as chair, has made all the difference in the world to us. As you can see from the figures reported in this Annual Report, we are continuing to rebuild our endowment at an

encouraging rate. Thanks to support from the new donors who have joined us in the past four years, we have been able to upgrade our telescope (with the Don automated system, installed last year). The Vatican Advanced Technology Telescope (the Alice P. Lennon Telescope and the Thomas J. Bannan Astrophysics Facility) is now more reliable than ever, doing great science: the cover article about Fr. Chris Corbally's work is but one example of its research.

What's more, thanks to your support, this past year the Foundation fully funded our biennial Vatican Observatory Summer School (VOSS). For four weeks last June, twenty-four bright young astronomers from twenty-two different countries attended classes at the Observatory's headquarters in Castel Gandolfo.

The topic of this year's school was "Exploring the Universe with the James Webb Space Telescope (JWST): the First Three Years". The school was chaired by Dr. Eiichi Egami (University of Arizona), a distinguished member of JWST near infrared camera team... and an alumnus of VOSS 1990. Other faculty members included Dr. Almudena Alonso-Herrero (VOSS 1993, now at Centro de Astrobiologia in Madrid, a part of the JWST mid-infrared camera team); Dr. Tom Greene (IPAC/Caltech, US, of the JWST, on both near and mid infrared camera teams); Dr. Roberto Maiolino (also VOSS 1993, now at the University of Cambridge, and on the JWST near infrared spectrometer team); and Dr. Maria Drozdovskaya (Physikalisch-Meteorologisches Observatorium Davos und Weltstrahlungszentrum,



“Exploring Faith, Science, and the Universe” with Busted Halo’s Father Dave in February 2025 at the LA Religious Education Congress

Switzerland, a science collaborator of JWST observing programs investigating the chemical composition of stars and planet formation regions).

That 1993 VOSS was something special. Also among its alumni are Dr. Heino Falcke, responsible for the famous first image of a black hole, and Ray Jayawardhana, who has just been named president of Cal Tech. These summer schools began in 1986 as a part of the Vatican Observatory’s commitment to astronomical research and education, particularly in the context of providing career opportunities for younger scientists. Since then, some 450 students have graduated from the program and have gone on to contribute richly to their fields of research.

Connected to these schools, the Foundation also funds the McCarthy-Stoeger Fellowship for a select VOSS student. The 2023 recipient, Rafael Bertolotto from Uruguay, is now finishing up his second year

on the fellowship. From fall 2026, his studies will be supported by his advisor at the University of Arizona, and the fellowship will be taken up by 2025 VOSS attendee Hugo Cortés Muñoz, from Chile.

But Mickey does have a valid point about all my travel. He knows that I love to talk about the work of the Vatican Observatory. This past year I gave public lectures at about 40 different locations, including events at a dozen universities around the world, along with other venues like parishes and high schools. It’s an essential part of the mission that Pope Leo XIII gave us back in 1891, confirmed by every Pope since then through our new pontiff, Leo XIV: to show the world that the Church supports good science. (Incidentally, the new Pope Leo met with our students during the VOSS!)

Speaking of showing the world, we’ve also been seen in several national media outlets. On June 29,

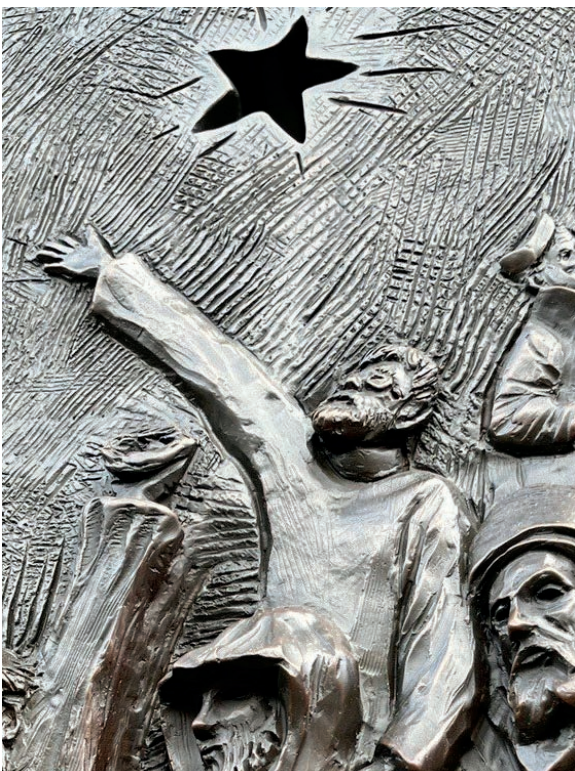


With students in Christchurch, New Zealand

2025, the Vatican Observatory's Summer School was featured in a five-minute segment of CBS Sunday Morning titled, "Scanning the Heavens at the Vatican Observatory" (watch online at [cbsnews.com](https://www.cbsnews.com)). The piece featured extended interviews with two of the students at the school, the Curator of Meteorites, Br. Robert Macke SJ, and me.

A second notable media presence for the Observatory was my extended interview with The New Yorker magazine on August 4, 2025. Titled "Annals of Inquiry", the article covered topics ranging from my personal story to the Church's activities in promoting peace in space (read online at [newyorker.com](https://www.newyorker.com)).

A third bit of publicity, somewhat to my embarrassment, is found in a monumental sculpture titled "Our Lady Queen of the Universe" by the noted Canadian artist Timothy Schmalz, installed in October at our Visitor Center in Castel Gandolfo. Among those depicted surrounding Our Lady, praising her as Queen of the Universe, is a



With Fr. Gabriele Gionti at the Spanish Embassy to the Holy See

suspicious-looking fellow with a beard, catching meteorites as shown below left corner.

Of course, I do listen to Mickey... on occasion at least. Thanks to the wonderful work of our Development Committee, I have indeed had many wonderful visits (usually over great food!) with some of the Foundation's best friends. I am thankful to all of you, not only for your assistance, but also for your friendship.

And this coming year I will be spending more time in North America getting to know you all better. As of September 2025, I have finally retired as Director of the Vatican Observatory. I am turning those duties, including the day to day running of our summer schools, to Fr. Richard D'Souza, a Jesuit astronomer from Goa with a strong research program in galactic evolution. He's already begun the process of planning the future of the Observatory, with our fellow astronomers, our colleagues at the Vatican, and with the Vatican Observatory Foundation. We've already identified several younger Jesuits from around the world who will be joining the Observatory in the next few years. That future looks promising indeed.

The future also looks like I'll be continuing my frenetic travel schedule. How much good does it all do? It's hard to say. But at the beginning of our

summer school in Rome last June, one of the students, Mia Boothroyd from New Zealand, sought me out. "You probably don't remember speaking to a crowd of high school students in Auckland back in 2019," she started. I did remember... it was a huge gymnasium full of kids, impossible to make out individuals in the crowd. "I was one of them. Hearing you then, is why I am here today."

Now, I wonder what I said...

**BR. GUY CONSOLMAGNO, SJ**

President, Vatican Observatory Foundation  
Director, Vatican Observatory



At Cristo Rey Jesuit High School in Chicago (USA)



Oakland CA Rotary Unite for Good Luncheon



With Rob Lorenz, S.J. at the LA Religious Ed Congress



Fort Story Catholic Community Event , Virginia Beach (USA)

# PECULIAR STARS AND THE VATT

## SOMETIMES THE MOST IMPORTANT DISCOVERIES BEGIN WITH A MYSTERY: A STAR THAT SIMPLY DISAPPEARS



**REV. CHRISTOPHER J.  
CORBALLY, S.J.**

**Fr. Corbally is an astronomer with the Vatican Observatory Research Group whose research focuses on Stellar Spectroscopy and Human Sentience. He serves as President of the National Committee for Astronomy in the Vatican City State for the International Astronomical Union.**

### WHEN A STAR YOU'VE BEEN WATCHING SUDDENLY FLICKERS... AND THEN VANISHES, ASTRONOMERS DON'T JUST SAY GOODBYE, THEY START ASKING WHY

This story is about TU Tau, a C-N type carbon star and its A-type companion star, "TU Tau B". (What are C-N type and A-type stars? Stars are classified by their spectra — the rainbow of colors you see when you split the light through a prism or grating. C-N stars show the particular colors that indicate much of the carbon is in the molecule of straight carbon while some of the carbon is in the radical molecule made of carbon and nitrogen — the stuff that goes into cyanide! "A" stars have a more usual chemical composition, richer in oxygen than in carbon, but with a temperature indicating that they are quite large and hot compared to our own Sun.)

When Richard Gray, my colleague at Appalachian State University, was surveying a certain group of carbon stars, the companion star stood out in the spectrum revealing that there was not one star there but two. Gray saw that the longer-wavelength part dominated by the carbon star was normal, but the shorter-wavelength part, from the A-star, had an unusual chemical composition. It had enhanced abundances of nuclear s-process elements, such as strontium and barium. This suggested that the A-star is being contaminated with these elements by mass transfer from the carbon star.

Dr. Gray asked me to get spectra of the combination with VATT – the Vatican Advanced Telescope, consisting of the Alice P. Lennon Telescope and the Thomas J. Bannan Astrophysics Facility. I use a special spectrometer – a device that can split out and record those colors – specially designed for the VATT with the proper resolution to sort out these different chemical compositions. Over several observations, I noted that the enhanced elements had gone, but the spectra indicated the companion was a star surrounded by a thin shell. Further investigation of VATT’s high signal-to-noise spectra showed unequivocal evidence that the A-star companion is accreting carbon star material.

This companion was worth closely monitoring. The Spectroscopy Discussion Group, a group of both professional and advanced amateur astronomers with a geographically distributed set of telescopes, took on the task. Curiously, the A-star companion started flickering in strength, sometimes almost disappearing, until it disappeared completely. A VATT spectrum that I took in October confirmed that it still hadn’t reappeared.

What is happening? Our best guess is illustrated by a Hubble Space Telescope picture of a similar carbon star, CW Leonis. It shows complex shells and arcs of gas around such a star. In our case, the companion has likely disappeared behind the carbon star’s dusty shells.

We think that in a few million years the TU Tau system will be completely different. The carbon star will have thrown off its outer shell, creating a short-lived planetary nebula, transforming the core of the star into a white dwarf; the A-star companion will evolve to become a G or K-type red giant showing unusually high abundances of the s-process elements. In this way, TU Tau will transform itself into what astronomers call a Barium Giant. TU Tau gives a glimpse of a stage of this process that we have never seen before. For the first time, a Barium Giant has been caught in the act of forming!

At the General Assembly of the International Astronomical Union in 2024, I presented a paper on “Weird Binaries” including TU Tau A and B. But another odd star was HD5501, which seemed innocuous until Richard Gray again discovered that this “star” we can see is not only surrounded by a shell of material, but also varies periodically in brightness and in its spectrum. It is an eclipsing binary system, and quite weird at that.

Like TU Tau, what we can see is the brightest member of a binary star system, whose unseen secondary star eclipses it about every 7.5 days. Gray got interested in this system because it has spectral features implying there is a shell of material around it. What is more unusual is that this material changes over time and so does the star’s “light curve,” the record of the brightness of the star, over time, from cycle to cycle, orbit to orbit.

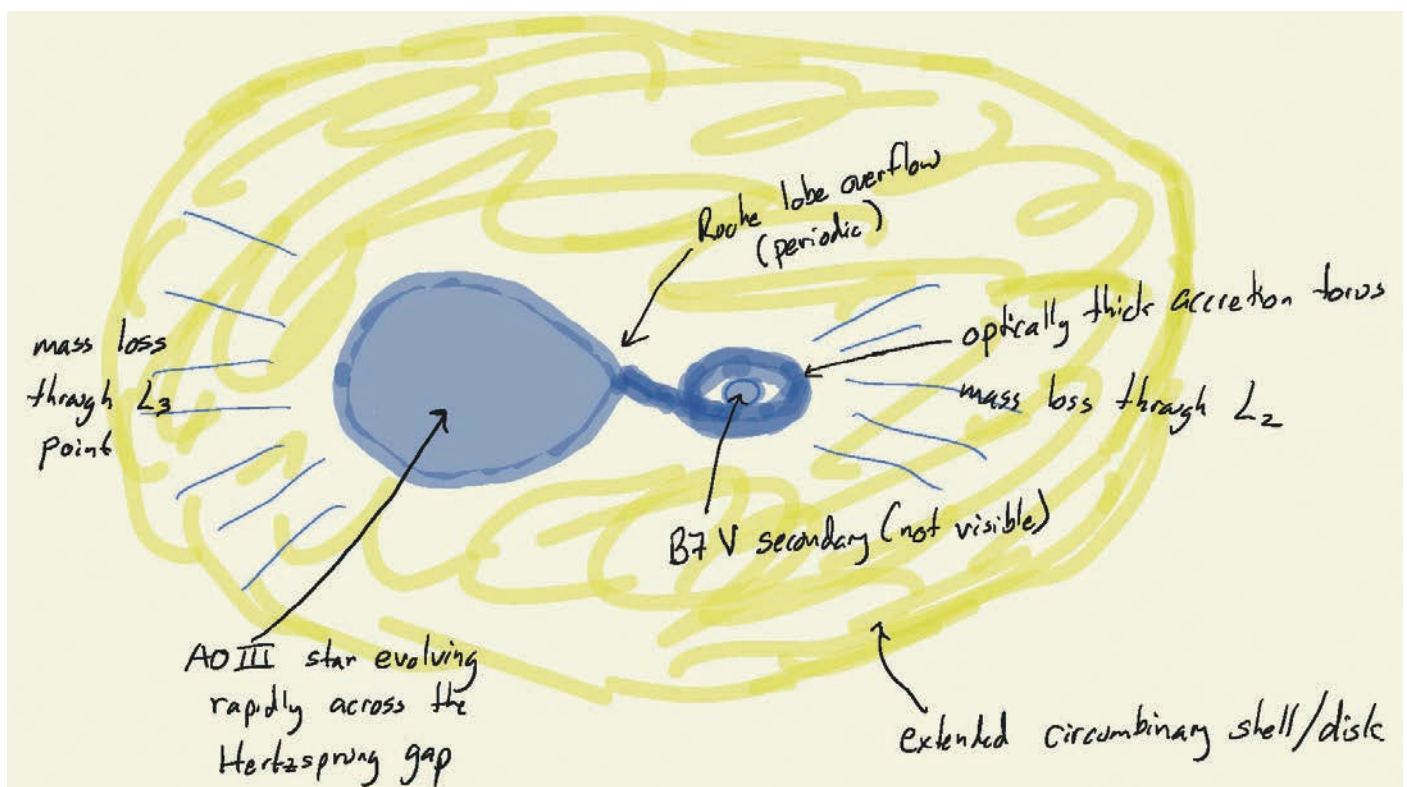
With a lot of observations from the HD 5501 group, including spectra from VATT, and Gray’s courageous ventures into modeling the binary system, eventually we arrived at a satisfactory but surprising scenario. We propose that the primary star that we see, the A component, has been caught in a brief period (lasting around 170,000 years) when the transfer of material from its giant (“bloated”) surface onto the unseen secondary occurs only during the part of their orbit when the two stars are closest together. Eventually a time will come, however, when the transfer from A to B will occur continuously and B will rapidly increase in mass and so begin, prematurely, to turn into a red giant star.

The transfer of material is chaotic, hence the variability of many features, and it produces a torus of material shrouding the secondary. The prime source of the energized hydrogen gas, shown by emission in the red region of its spectrum, is not as first thought a hot spot on B's torus, but it is the gas and material flowing out of the "back" of the primary. There are still puzzles about the system, so observations are ongoing.

Another group of professionals and advanced amateurs to which I belong, the Global Network of Astronomical Telescopes (GNAT), has submitted a paper on yet another odd system, MG1-1995959. This is also an eclipsing binary system whose secondary star we cannot see. We know there is a companion to the primary star by the way the brightness of the primary varies. There is a deep dip in brightness when the secondary moves in front of the primary (the "primary eclipse"), while a shallow dip occurs when the primary moves in front of the secondary (the "secondary eclipse").

However, there is something weird about the variations. When the two stars are out of eclipse, as occurs twice in the cycle, and one would expect their combined brightness side-by-side to be the same from our line of sight, the maxima are in fact unequal. This is what is called the O'Connell Effect, named after Fr. Daniel O'Connell, S.J., who in 1951 published a paper based on his observations from Australia of the phenomenon. (A year after this paper came out, Father O'Connell became the director of the Vatican Observatory, a position he held until his retirement in 1970.)

Of the three usual explanations for this effect, our observations of MG1-1995959 suggest that in this case there is an asymmetric distribution of star-spots on the primary star. Those star-spots, as with sunspots, are cooler than the other parts of the star's surface and so dimmer. Three spectra that I took with VATT



A sketch proposing how material may be moving from a hot visible star into a star that is obscured by dust

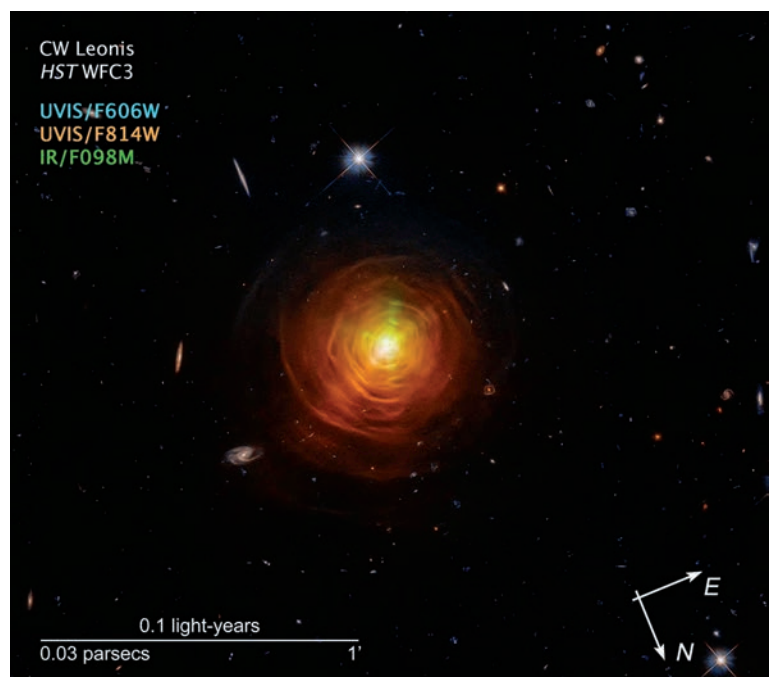
contributed to the confirmation of star-spot activity on the primary, as well as its orbital velocity, and led to a classification of the type of star of the primary with an “educated guess” about the classification of the secondary. These data fit in with measurements of the brightness variations supplied by the other members of the team. The probing of MG1-1995959’s variations continue at the VATT, to look for any change from one season to another.

Our expertise on accreting, varying stars was of surprising use not only to the stars we observe but also in the observations of the star classical nova FQ Cir by our colleagues, including Bradley Schaefer (retired from Louisiana State, now living in Tucson). This object was considered an ordinary fast He/N classical nova, a binary star system that flares up regularly due to nuclear reactions on the surface of one component. What’s interesting is that this nova has the smallest known amplitude for a classical nova, brightening up by 3.1 magnitudes – only a few hundred times brighter than its normal brilliance.

However, further study has shown that FQ Cir represents a new mode of accretion in interacting binaries, with material overflowing from a “decretion” disk (a disk that results in the star getting smaller, not larger) feeding mass into the usual accretion disk around its companion white dwarf: disk-to-disk accretion. The companion must have been spun-up to a very fast rotation to have produced such a decretion disk. This is the discovery of a new class now called ‘High Mass Cataclysmic Variables’.

A key point to recall in all of this work is that no astronomer works alone, and no telescope works alone. The VATT is part of a network of observatories, and astronomers... a fellowship built up over a lifetime of collaborations and international meetings.

A fundamental question remains: what is the utility of the VATT in the age of space telescopes and larger 8 m class telescopes? The VATT scientific niche has always been that of long-term surveying and monitoring of astronomical objects – especially in the northern hemisphere. Given how expensive and limited observing time is, it is very difficult to get more than 3 days of time on larger or space-based telescopes. However, long-term monitoring of peculiar stars or large black holes can be done routinely on the VATT. Combined with a moderate-resolution spectrograph, the VATT excels in getting good spectra of bright stars and quasars.



Hubble imaged a carbon star with a similar configuration of gas and dust as Corbally and collaborators have proposed for TU Tau, before the A-star disappeared behind the carbon star.  
Photo Credit: NASA for HST picture of CW Leonis

A significant part of its future contribution lies in the follow-up needed for the interesting objects that all-sky surveys with large telescopes will supply. VATT, with its excellent location (far from large population centers and their light pollution), its curiously stubby telescope mount and adjoining carefully crafted astrophysics facility, has a unique place in the history of telescope construction, a productive scientific record, and a bright future in joining the squads of robotic telescopes dedicated to future science.

Collaborations with numerous astronomical institutions also demonstrated that often telescopes like the VATT are ideal for testing new ideas and new instrumentation, before transferring them to larger telescopes. This suggests two things: (a) that the utility of the VATT is increased greatly if it is opened to the wider astronomical community, and (b) the VATT becomes much more productive with newer and a broader set of instruments.

As the only working research telescope of the Vatican, the VATT has served and continues to serve as a powerful symbol of the Church's engagement with astronomy and the sciences. The knowledge that the Church operates its own telescope among the biggest telescopes of the world contributes much more to the science-religion dialogues than dozens of philosophical and academic articles on the topic. Along with the many scientific results that it has produced, the VATT serves as a symbolic lighthouse on a mountain top – promoting the Observatory's mission to “demonstrate to the world that faith and science can go together”.



Chris Corbally with Eiichi Egami in 1990 (top) and 2025 (bottom), who was at VOSS 1990 and chaired VOSS 2025



Chris Corbally with the 2025 VOSS



# 2025 FOUNDATION FINANCIAL REPORT

**WE ARE GRATEFUL TO BE STEWARDS OF YOUR GENEROSITY, A RESPONSIBILITY WE TAKE WITH THE UTMOST CARE.**

The Vatican Observatory Foundation finished their financial year ending June 30, 2025 with a surplus of \$795,918, or \$301,466 higher than the fiscal year ended June 30, 2024. Gross income grew by \$395,940 or 24.4%, including a restricted gift of \$500,000 into our endowment. Expenses grew by \$94,474, or 7.4%, primarily due to disbursements associated with funding the Vatican Observatory Summer School (VOSS) and Vatican Observatory’s Fellowship program.

*A copy of our fully audited financial report is available upon request.*

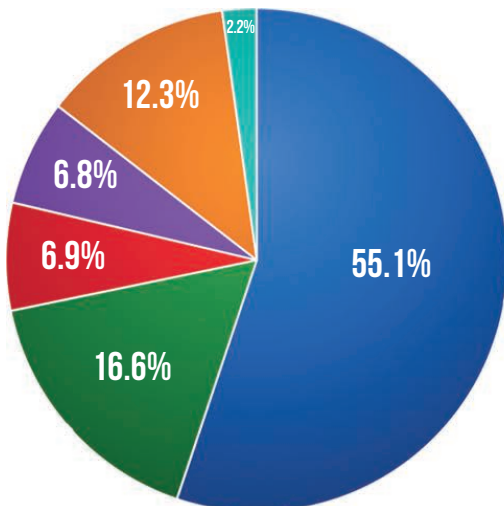
## FISCAL YEAR RESULTS

### INCOME

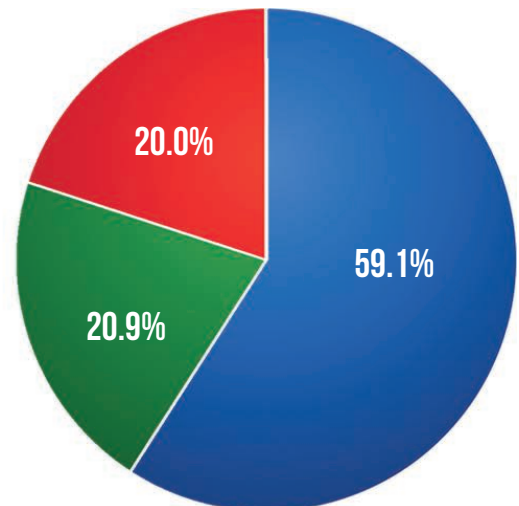
	2025	2024
Contributions & Pledges	\$ 1,191,374	\$ 779,286
Vatican Block Grant	\$ 360,000	\$ 360,000
Jesuit Salaries (in-kind)	\$ 150,000	\$ 250,000
Program & Contractual	\$ 147,910	\$ 59,234
Net Investment Return	\$ 266,511	\$ 214,806
Other	\$ 47,026	\$ 103,555
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 2,162,821</b>	<b>\$ 1,766,881</b>

### EXPENSES

	2025	2024
Program	\$ 808,498	\$ 721,962
Fundraising	\$ 285,257	\$ 285,385
Mgt. & General	\$ 273,148	\$ 265,082
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 1,366,903</b>	<b>\$ 1,272,429</b>



FY 2025 INCOME



FY 2025 EXPENSES

# 2025 CIRCLES OF GIVING AWARDS



## LEO XIII CIRCLE - \$500,000

Pope Leo XIII established the Vatican Observatory in 1891 “so that everyone might see clearly that the Church and her Pastors are not opposed to true and solid science, whether human or divine, but that they embrace it, encourage it, and promote it with the fullest possible devotion.” He established telescopes on the Vatican walls and oversaw the Observatory’s participation in the Carre du Ciel project creating a photographic map of the stars.

Arline and Thomas J. Bannan Foundation  
 Jesuit Community of the Vatican Observatory  
 The Kresge Foundation  
 The Fred A. Lennon Charitable Trust  
 Thomas Lord Charitable Trust  
 Mr. William Payden †  
 Mr. & Mrs. Paul M. Pohl  
 Dr. Linda Lapos and Mr. Paul Wirth \*



## GREGORY XIII CIRCLE - \$250,000

Pope Gregory XIII was shown a beautiful meridian in the Tower of the Winds that demonstrated the need to reform the Julian calendar. Jesuit astronomers at the Roman College were active in the commission to create the new Gregorian calendar, which was promulgated in 1582. Thus began a tradition of Papal interest in astronomy, which would mature into the modern day Vatican Observatory over the next few centuries.

Jesuit Conference of Canada and the U.S.  
 Vatican Observatory Research Group (VORG)  
 Mrs. Billie Mullen †  
 Ms. Barbara Henkels †  
 John Templeton Foundation  
 The Stephen & Mary Birch Foundation, Inc.  
 The Dan Murphy Foundation



The Vatican Observatory Foundation honors individuals and organizations whose generosity over time has been vital to our mission. Each Circle of Giving is named for an individual notable either in the history of Astronomy, the Society of Jesus, or the Vatican Observatory.

*\* We are especially grateful to our new inductees in Fiscal Year 2025*

### PIUS XI CIRCLE - \$100,000

Pope Pius XI foresaw the risks to the Vatican Observatory from obsolescence and the encroachment of city lights. He moved the Specola to the hills south of Rome at the Papal summer residence at Castel Gandolfo and provided it with modern instruments. He is truly the patron saint of the Vatican Observatory.



- Mr. Bill Ahmanson †
- Judith C. Alstadt Charitable Fund
- Mrs. Judy Alstadt
- Mr. Bernard J. Bannan †
- Mrs. Anne S. Benninghoff †
- Mr. (†) and Mrs. Hubert Brenninkmeijer
- Ms. Susan M. Cianflone
- Ms. Rose C. Collins
- Ms. Andrea M. Dudek \*
- Mr. and Mrs. Richard Friedrich
- Mr. Justin Joseph Golden

- Homeland Foundation
- The John B. & Nelly Llanos Kilroy Foundation
- Mr. Henry J. Knott †
- Mr. and Mrs. James McGee
- John McShain Foundation
- Mr. (†) and Mrs. George Muccianti
- Ms. Barbara Murphy
- F. J. O'Neill †
- Mr. Edward J. Piszek †
- Prior Family Foundation
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### ANGELO SECCHI CIRCLE - \$50,000

Known as the Father of Modern Astrophysics, Fr. Angelo Secchi S.J. was the first to classify stars according to their spectra. His scientific and engineering contributions ranged from the study of sunspots to doublestars to irrigation systems while creating an astronomical laboratory on the roof of Sant' Ignazio Church in central Rome. He contributed in an exceptional way to the tradition of high quality research at the Vatican Observatory.



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## EUSEBIO KINO CIRCLE - \$25,000

Fr. Eusebio Kino S.J., a missionary in northern Mexico and Arizona, founded the famous San Xavier del Bac mission near Tucson. An expert in astronomy, cartography, and mathematics, he drew the first accurate maps of the region and demonstrated that Baja California was a peninsula, not an island. A defender of indigenous peoples, in 2020 Pope Francis named him a Venerable, an important step towards canonization.

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## CHRISTOPH CLAVIUS CIRCLE - \$10,000

Mathematician, confidant of Galileo and major figure in the reform of the calendar, Fr. Christoph Clavius, S.J. was a key player in the transition of his times between old worldviews and the challenges of new discoveries. Facing them as a scientist, he confirmed Galileo's observations and established a tradition of true scholarship which contributed to the spirit embodied in the founding of the Vatican Observatory. religious creeds.

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Belgian priest Fr. Georges Lemaître was a principal protagonist in the birth of modern cosmology and one of the first to propose the Big Bang. As president of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, he had the difficult task of trying to convince Pope Pius XII of the difference between scientific theories and religious creeds.



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**Br. Guy's October Rotary Club talk interrupted by the University of California Berkeley Marching Band**



**Sr. Raffaella Petrini, FSE with a guest at the Apostolic Nunciature, Washington, DC**

- Mr. Kévin Vercin
- Mr. Neal Verzywvelt
- Ms. Miia Vesikukka
- Mr. Rick Vieira
- Mr. Theodore A. Vierra, CSP
- Mr. Richard Vigh
- Ms. Iaudia Vilega Rodrigues
- Dr. Christopher Viney
- Ms. Crystal Vitagliano
- Mr. John Vitagliano
- Mr. and Mrs. Dennis Vollink
- Ms. Virginia Ann Vollmer
- Mr. Donald J. Voorhies
- Mr. William Wadsworth
- Mrs. Marletta L. Wagner
- Mr. Bernie Walp
- Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Walton
- Mr. and Mrs. John Walton
- Ms. Penelope Ward
- Mr. Jeffrey Warwick
- Ms. Patti Wasserman
- Mr. James Waters
- Mr. Rupert Watson
- Mr. Thomas Wearsch
- Ms. Randa Weeks
- Dr. Deana Weibel-Swanson
- Mr. Arndt Weidemann
- Rev. Thomas Welbers
- Mr. David Darin Wells
- Dr. Carl Joseph Wenning
- Ms. Dara D. West
- Mr. Peter Westre
- Mr. Marc Wheat
- Mr. and Mrs. Blaine Wieland
- Fr. Bruce Wilkinson
- Mr. Francis X. Williams
- Mr. Victor Williams
- Ms. Janet Willson
- Mr. Ralph A. Winrich
- Mr. Richard L. Wiringa
- Ms. Elizabeth Wirth
- Dr. Linda Lapos and Mr. Paul Wirth
- Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth M. Wohead
- Ms. Chere Woodey
- Mr. Mark Wuketich
- Mrs. Mária Wuketichová
- Mr. Peter Wyeth
- Ms. Margaret Wyllie
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- Dr. Edmund Loddeke Yopez
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- Mr. Gordon Zaft
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- Rev. Christopher Joseph Zerucha
- Mr. Germans Zibarevs
- Ms. Graziella Zinn
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- Mr. Peter Shaw
- Mr. John Shay
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- Mr. Wil van Breugel
- Mr. Leonardo Vanzi
- Mr. William F. Vartorella
- Vatican Observatory Jesuit Community
- Ms. Jennifer L. Verbeck

**THANK YOU, YOUR SUPPORT MEANS THE UNIVERSE TO US!**



Monument entitled "Our Lady Queen of the Universe" by Timothy Schmalz, installed in October at our Visitor Center in Castel Gandolfo



[vaticanobservatory.org](http://vaticanobservatory.org)  
520.474.0661  
[info@vaticanobservatory.org](mailto:info@vaticanobservatory.org)

