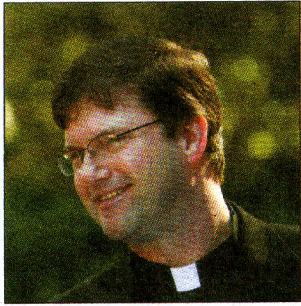


# 'Go Roman' At Georgia Tech Catholic Center

By GRETCHEN KEISER Staff Writer



Father Tim Hepburn  
Chaplain

## Catholic Center Georgia Tech

172 Fourth St., NW  
Atlanta  
(404) 892-6759  
gtcatholic.org

**Daily Mass:** 5:30 p.m. Monday,  
Tuesday, Thursday, Friday  
**Weekends:** 5:30 p.m. Saturday  
10 a.m., 11:30 a.m.  
and 5:30 p.m. Sunday

**A**TLANTA—Between fall rush and football, where does faith fit in? On campuses around Georgia, chaplains have to be creative and undaunted by challenges as they provide a Catholic niche for students and faculty, using whatever resources they have at their disposal.

At Georgia Tech, Father Tim Hepburn estimates there are about 3,800 Catholics in the student body of 19,000. About 500 students come to the four weekend Masses celebrated at the Catholic Center, located on the Midtown campus on Fourth Street.

One challenge right out of the gate is learning who the Catholic students are when they enter Tech, he said.

"Schools that receive state funds are subject to the Family Education Right to Privacy Act, which protects student information, including their religious affiliation," he wrote in response to a series of questions from *The Georgia Bulletin*.

At Georgia Tech, this is interpreted very strictly, he said, and chaplains cannot get information about incoming Catholic freshmen or Catholic students in general, even when the students provide their religious affiliation to the university.

"This has hurt our ability to reach out to incoming students and also fundraising efforts," Father Hepburn said.

He encourages families, parishes and youth ministries to send names and contact information, including e-mails, of Catholic students "coming our way (so) we would be able to reach out to them." Also, he said, Catholic high schools can assist by letting campus ministers know which of their graduates are coming to a particular campus.

One mother went the extra mile to help collegians make a faith connection, the chaplain said.

"A St. Pius High School mom planned a dinner at our Catholic Center for all the Pius students at Georgia Tech, even though her senior went to another university," the priest said.

"Several of those students have remained involved at the Catholic Center," he said.

Those who find their way to the Georgia Tech Catholic Center will

have much to look forward to.

Students there "foster all kinds of things that build community, from Friday night dinners to big parties, intramurals, camping trips, tailgating before football games," the chaplain wrote. "It is amazing how quickly students communicate using the e-list available on the Georgia Tech systems. We have one broad distribution list for an e-newsletter that goes to over a thousand people, a smaller list just for students to keep aware of events."

During Greek Rush, when fraternities vie for new members, some at the Catholic Center noticed the center looked closed and quiet in contrast to the lights and music at frat houses, Father Hepburn said. So they started "Catholic Rush." The flyers they distributed said, "Go Roman—where everyone can get a bid!"

"They planned events for every night of Rush Week and we met some great new freshmen and grad students," according to Father Hepburn.

The welcome mat is out and leads to many opportunities to grow deeper in faith. This is a great time of life and for many young adults college is when they make a permanent faith commitment, the priest said.

"College students bring all their religious experiences from childhood to college, for better or for worse. Some use the separation from family and parish as an invitation to step away from their religious practice, but for many it is a time of strengthening. Some even seal the deal and become true disciples and follow Jesus in the Church for the rest of their lives. That's why there must be multiple entry points in a college ministry: liturgy, prayer groups, social, outreach."

"The consistency of daily Mass and confession is a gathering point for a healthy handful of dedicated students," Father Hepburn wrote. "This is our second year to offer RCIA and this year we have a few preparing for baptism and five for confirmation. We have two periods of Eucharistic adoration each week. One of these happens within the context of a night of worship that the students named D.I.G. (Defined in Grace). It includes a talk given by a student and prayers of praise, healing and intercession. We also have a Bible study, rosary, evening prayer."

The campus ministry at Georgia Tech, which has been self-supporting for many years, relies on the support of alumni and the volunteer help of students. Father Hepburn said he would benefit greatly right now from the aid of a volunteer development director who can strengthen ties with supporters of the Catholic Center and develop new ones.

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This is the first in a series of articles on Catholic campus ministries.