

PRESS RELEASE

June 04, 2025

The Summer School for Astronomers has begun at the Vatican Observatory

The 2025 Vatican Observatory Summer School (VOSS) has officially commenced for twenty-four bright young astronomers from around the world. The students, representing twenty-two different countries, were welcomed with a dinner gathering on the evening of June 1. They began classes the next morning at the Observatory's headquarters in Castel Gandolfo.

Over the course of June, students will attend lectures by some of the world's leading astronomy experts, work on projects related to their own research, explore the local area through various field trips (Subiaco, Florence, Orvieto, Ostia Antica).

The theme of this year's VOSS – the 19th since its first iteration in 1986 – is: *Exploring the Universe with the James Webb Space Telescope: the First Three Years*.

The James Webb Space Telescope (JWST) was launched on Christmas Day in 2021. Since it began releasing data the following July, it has revolutionized our understanding of the cosmos. This year's VOSS will present a comprehensive overview of the major JWST results in its first three years (2022-2025), and cover its discoveries in four major fields: 1) First Light and Reionization; 2) Assembly and Evolution of Galaxies; 3) Birth of Stars and Protoplanetary Systems; and 4) Planetary Systems and the Origin of Life.

Since those themes are directly related to much of the research the students are currently working on, the summer school will also provide a series of hands-on tutorials for JWST data processing and analysis.

The 2025 VOSS is chaired by Dr. Eiichi Egami (University of Arizona), a distinguished member of JWST NIRCам team. Other faculty members include the Vatican Observatory's own Br. Guy Consolmagno, S.J. (Director) and David Brown, S.J. who serves as this year's dean; Dr. Almudena Alonso-Herrero (Centro de Astrobiología in Madrid, JWST/MIRI team); Dr. Tom Greene (IPAC/Caltech, US, JWST/NIRCам and MIRI teams); Dr. Roberto Maiolino (University of Cambridge, JWST/NIRSpec team); and Dr. Maria Drozdovskaya (Physikalisch-Meteorologisches Observatorium Davos und Weltstrahlungszentrum - PMOD/WRC, CH). In addition to the instructors, the VOSS will also include guest speakers and data processing instructors.

In his opening presentation, Dr. Egami (himself a graduate of the 1990 VOSS) stressed that a project as revolutionary as the JWST only comes around a few times per century. "We're living in a very special time for astronomy," he noted. He also emphasized that the goal of the VOSS is not only to bring students up to speed on the latest astronomical research, but to build community and foster collaboration among the next generation of astronomers.

The Summer School 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, over 400 students have graduated from the program and have gone on to contribute richly to their fields of research. Tuition is free, as financial support for the VOSS is provided by generous donors through the Vatican Observatory Foundation.

2025 VOSS students come from the following countries:

Argentina – Austria – Brazil – Canada – Chile – China – Colombia – Egypt – India – Italy – Germany – Greece – Lithuania – Morocco – Poland – Peru – New Zealand – Slovenia – South Africa – Spain – United States – Uruguay.

More information can be found at:

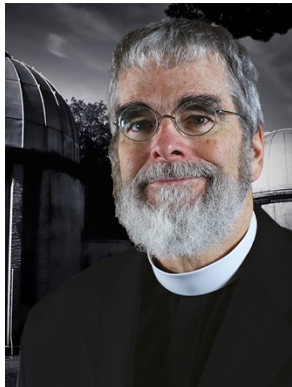
<https://www.vaticanobservatory.va/en/component/content/article/voss-2025?catid=23&Itemid=171>

Contact: Br. Guy Consolmagno, SJ - Director. E.mail: director@specola.va - staff@specola.va
Specola Vaticana - Castel Gandolfo, Stato Città del Vaticano

Images:



Image 1: VOSS 2025's Poster



Br. Guy Consolmagno, SJ



Fr. David Brown, SJ



Dr. Eiichi Egami