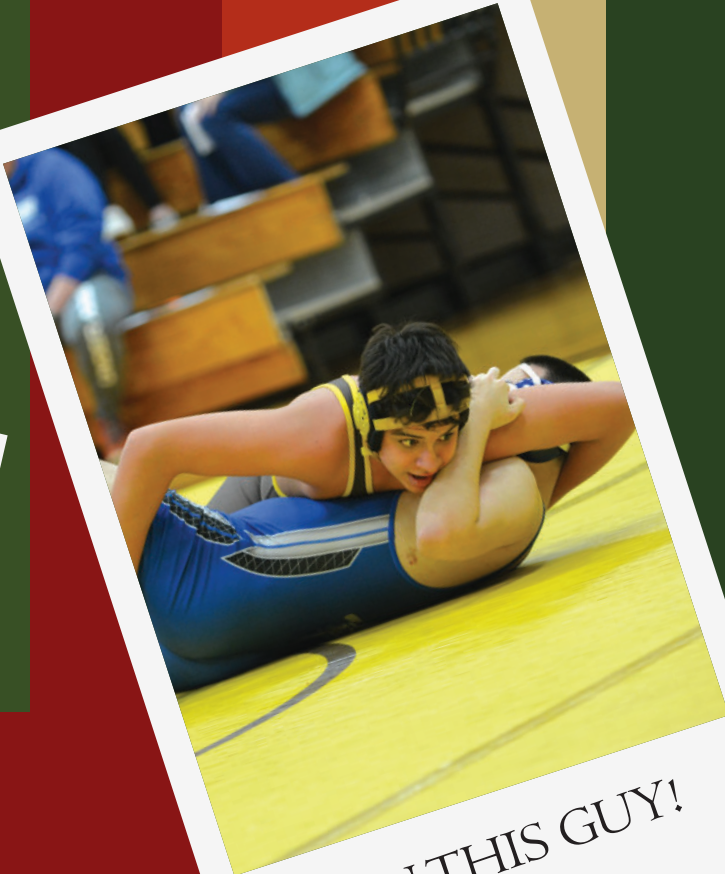




COME AT ME!



PIN THIS GUY!

Hilltopics

Volume LIX

Issue 2

Student Publication Since 1965



GREETINGS!

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Advisor

Mrs. Deann Sippel

Editors-in-Chief

Jonathan Prado and Nile Montes

Writers

Nile Montes
Jonathan Prado
Cristian Cruz
Hung Nguyen
Thien Hanh Mai
Diego Soto
Justin Tran
Max Trinh
Said Villa
Jonah Lim
Alan Mora
Bao Tran
Chris Vu

Photographers

Daniel Cornejo
Tyler Le
Jonathan Prado
Cristian Cruz
Jae-Soung Hong
Thien Hanh Mai
Joaquin Partida
Hernandez
Bao Tran



Letter from the Rector

By the time this issue of Hilltopics is published, the Catholic Church is preparing to celebrate the Third Sunday of Advent. This particular day in the Church's calendar is also known as Gaudete Sunday. Gaudete is Latin for "rejoice." On this day, the rose-colored candle on the Advent Wreath is lit, priests wear a rose-colored vestment at Mass, and the readings proclaimed at the Liturgy of the Word exhort the assembly to rejoice. This is because the Lord's coming is near. All of the customs that we as Christians observe during Advent set a tone of joyful anticipation of the Lord's first coming—his Incarnation—the divine moment in human history in which the Word was made flesh and made his dwelling among us. "Rejoice" then is what we are all called to do as we eagerly await the coming of the Messiah. And there is good reason to rejoice because the Lord comes to bring glad tidings. The Lord comes to break the chains that hold us captive to sin. The Lord comes to forgive us our trespasses. The Lord comes to announce the year of favor from God.

The year of favor (or jubilee) in the Ancient Jewish tradition means remission of debt. There are specific days in the Jewish calendar that mark the Jubilee celebration. In that year, slaves and prisoners are set free, all debts are canceled, and God's mercy is made manifest. What glad tidings they are indeed—not just for God's chosen ones but also for the rest of humanity. The coming of Jesus brings to reality God's promise of release from captivity to sin, the remission of debt owed to God, the restoration of right relationship with God, and God's gifts of peace, hope, and life everlasting. And so, let us rejoice. Let us rejoice not only in this Advent season but throughout the liturgical year and all through our lives because the Lord is coming and shall dwell in our midst. Let us, therefore heed the words of Saint Paul to pray unceasingly, to give thanks at all times, to retain what is good, to refrain from doing evil, and to rejoice always in the Lord. That is how our lamps are perpetually lit. That is how we stay sober and alert. That is how we best prepare ourselves for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

2023 - 2024 Hilltopics Staff



Kiet (Henry) Le ('27)
Nghe An, Vietnam
Favorite Song: Snowfall
by Øneheart and reidenshi
Hobbies: Basketball, Video Games



Dang Nguyen ('27)
Sacramento, California
Favorite Song: Feeling Good
by Michael Bublé
Hobbies: Volleyball, Video Games

Student Spotlight

By: Bao Tran ('26)



Francis Lisboa ('26)
Ras Tanura, Saudi Arabia
Favorite Song: How to Love
by Lil Wayne
Hobbies: Sleeping and Cycling



Giorgio Roxas ('27)
Hartford, Wisconsin
Favorite Book: Fableheaven
by Brandon Mull
Hobbies: Golf, Reading, Football



'MERICA MONDAY!



TIE TUESDAY!

The Spectral Festival

By: Justin Tran ('25)

Every year at St. Lawrence Seminary, near the end of October, Spirit Week is celebrated around the season of Halloween. It is a week for the Hilltoppers to show off their unique fashion styles depending on the day's dress code. However, it does not stop there, the Halloween celebrations go into the weekend.

This year Spirit Week started with America Monday, in which students wore polo shirts that had to be red, white or blue. Tuesday, Spirit Week continued with Tie Tuesday, where everyone dressed in Sunday dress code with ties. Then it was Wacky Wednesday, quite the opposite from Tie Tuesday. Creativity and humor blew up with sounds of students' laughing throughout the campus. "It is weird to not be weird on Wacky Wednesday," stated Alex Biju ('25), who had his shirt backward with mismatched shoes and a tie on his head. Continuing the wackiness, SLS students, somehow, found their long-lost twin brothers on Twin Thursday. It is a day for the Hilltoppers to clothes-match each other from top to bottom as twins, triplets, or quadruplets. Finally yet most importantly, on Friday, students ended Spirit Week with Costume Day in which they dressed up in their favorite Halloween costumes. Khan Nguyen ('27) shared, "Going to school in my taco costumes was so funny, it made a bunch of people laugh when they saw me."



MUMMIFIED!



WACKY
WEDNESDAY!



TWIN THURSDAY!

Moving on from Spirit Week and into the weekend Halloween continued to be celebrated with the incredibly unique and trendy haunted house. This year, the seniors prepared, with passion and creativity, the “Elmo” themed haunted house. As Cesar Gonzalez ('24) said, “Elmo is scary!” The seniors developed this idea while surfing TikTok and together decided to add it in the haunted house. The Grimace Shake was also a part of the theme this year that appeared to be scary but also funny at the same time. “The Class of 2024 brought you a haunted house that you have never seen before,” Cesar Gonzalez ('24) shared. The Elmo Haunted House made a great memory for our Hilltoppers and ended the Halloween season here at SLS.



I'M SUPPOSED TO KNOW?



GET GRIMACED!

No Tricks, Just Treats

By: Alan Mora ('26)

Each year at the end of Spirit Week, students are allowed to dress up in various costumes and treat or treat on campus. This year, there were inflatable dinosaurs at every corner and even a huge bag of popcorn seen walking through the halls, all collecting candy. Many students participated. Even some of the staff in St. Joseph Hall got into the festivities. On each floor of the main building, teachers and staff were handing out candy. One of the best places to stop was the Business Office hallway. The staff decorated the hall/offices as a haunted food court. At the end of it all, Mr. Schroeder, SLS Director of Operations, stated, "The entire staff and students thought enjoyed the haunted food court and thought it was a blast."

Once the trick-or-treating ended, the students returned to their dormitories and stashed away their newly gotten rewards. However, the fun was not over yet, in the evening, there was the community invited Halloween Drive-Thru. This event began during COVID. Every fraternity did their own special skit based on a bible-passage. The scenes were performed for each car that participated. Each child in the car received a smile and a bag of candy for his or her treat. Joaquin Partida ('26) said, "We all had the chance to be creative. I enjoyed it." It was a win-win, the students receive a pizza party and ministry hours for their hard work, while the families that drove through left with candy.



LET'S GO TEAM!



PARTY TIME.



GOING TO DORM

Order on the Court and Mat

By: Diego Soto ('25)

The Hilltoppers winter sports season has begun; the basketball and wrestling rosters have been posted; and the students are ready to watch some hoops and see some pins. To start the season the coaches are frequently asked the same questions: What are the team goals, what are some of the strengths and weaknesses in the participants, and what excites you most about the team?

The wrestling team led by head coach, Mr. Phil McCabe and assistant coach, Mr. Dan Stephany started the season in the mat room. When interviewed, Coach McCabe replied, "One goal I always have for each new season is for all the new wrestlers to gain as much experience as they can. This includes all the learning that happens during practice and the matches." When asked about the strengths and weaknesses he replied, "A strength we have is the excitement that all the guys bring to the team. A weakness is the fact that there are so many new guys and few have any wrestling experience before coming to SLS.

The varsity basketball team led by head coach, Mr. Quan Nguyen and assistant coach, Mr. Grant Bargender started the season running drills in the gym. When interviewed, Coach Nguyen stated, "Our goal is to build upon the culture that was established last season and hopefully instill a winning mentality and attitude."

The winter sports season seems to have started well. The teams have been practicing hard and Coach McCabe expressed, "I am excited for this time of year. The start of the season when the new guys are excited to learn a new sport and the returning guys are ready to build on what they accomplished last season." One cannot predict the future but, we can hope for an overall successful season for the Sons of Calvary.



CAN'T GUARD ME.



SMILE!

What is Happening over Thanksgiving?

By: Christopher Vu ('26)

Thanksgiving break is a time where students and staff have an extended weekend away from school, before the end of the 1st semester. It allows everyone time to reflect and be thankful for the many things we have. The break varies from thrill-seeking adventures, to sleeping-in all week. Francis Lisboa ('26) and Christian Casilla ('26) took a trip to Disneyland in California. Christian said, "Disneyland was really exciting, and helped me bond with my friends and family." Sophomore dorm supervisor, Mr. Grant Bargender, went to his grandparents' house, where he relaxed and met up with friends. Mr. Bargender said, "My break was busy, and I got to spend a lot of time with my friends and family." Thanksgiving break cannot last forever, and it allowed most to relax, regroup, and to get through three more weeks of school until Christmas break.

Friends from Peru, Part 2

By: Max Trinh ('25)

Saint Lawrence Seminary has a long-running history of exchange programs with Peru and Germany. On the night of November 14th, four Peruvians arrived at SLS, three students and one chaperone. During their time here, the students experienced a day in the life of an SLS student. They attended classes, Mass, and after school/late-night activities. While here, they also enjoyed a number of field trips. They toured Ledge View Nature Center in Chilton, Central Park Campus at Epic Systems in Verona. They also went to the Milwaukee Public Museum and the Milwaukee Art Museum.

Regarding her time at SLS, one of the Peruvians, Macarena, commented, "In the beginning, it was hard to keep up with the schedule, especially waking up and being on time for meals, prayer, and classes." She also stated that something she found very enjoyable during her visit was the presentation she and her fellow travelers gave to the SLS students and getting everyone in attendance to dance. Mr. and Mrs. Liborio, along with many Spanish students, took care of the visitors and enjoyed being hosts. According to Mrs. Liborio, the visit was very positive and creative. "The girls and the SLS students were able to create bonds and become new friends. A cultural exchange opportunity like this promotes cultural open-mindedness to all students" Without a doubt, the exchange was successful. Not only did it help the Peruvians to hone their English-speaking skills, but also helps the students of SLS to be more culturally diverse.



The Celebration of Tepeyac

By: Said Villa ('25)

The Our Lady of Guadalupe celebration is an annual event at Saint Lawrence Seminary, organized by Mr. Francisco Saucedo. This year SLS celebrated it on December 2nd. The celebration is to commemorate the day the Virgin Mary appeared to a Mexican peasant, Juan Diego. On the Hill, we celebrate the historical event with some of the Hispanic students' parents coming to the Hill to prepare a wonderful feast to celebrate. The event started with the Rosary said in both Spanish and English and then we sang traditional Spanish songs such as, La Guadalupana in the chapel. After prayers and song, the staff, students and parents made their way to the refectory for the Mexican feast prepared by the parents. This year the feast was a Mexican soup called Pozole, a brothy chili spiced soup, tacos dorados, which are fried tacos, Conchas or Mexican sweet bread, and for desert, Arroz con Leche or cinnamon rice pudding and Fresas con Crema or strawberries and cream. They also made a Mexican hot chocolate. Michael Velazquez ('24) said, "It was a really fun experience to both eat Mexican food and be able to cook with my family." A highlight of the evening was watching Frankie Velazquez's sisters do a traditional hat Mexican dance called Jarabe Tapatio.

The Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe is an incredibly special event for many students of Mexican decent. To these students it is not just a time to eat tasty food, but a time to remember the miracle of Our Virgin of Guadalupe. With the help of Mr. Saucedo, the celebration was a great success. He stated, "This is a great event; I enjoy working with both the students and the parents and to see them bonding with each other. It is also a good opportunity to show diversity and culture to all students of SLS." The is a very authentic celebration and would not be the same without the participation of the parents, who so kindly take time away from home to cook and celebrate the Feast Day with everyone on the Hill.



HAIL MARY...



THIS FOOD IS
IMMACULATE!



WE ARE GATHERED
HERE.



Money Talks

By: Cristian Cruz ('25)

Mr. McCabe's Personal Finance Class went on a shopping trip to find out how expensive groceries really are. Before the trip, each student created a budget and a shopping list of groceries needed for a week of meals. Mr. McCabe explained, "It is important, for students to gain real life experiences and get a reality check on how expensive food really is, and...to understand the difference between salted and unsalted butter. It is about living life, to get the food you need, and to stay within the budget or you will go overboard." Jae-Seoung Hong ('25) said, "It was very interesting; other classes don't give this opportunity, but personal finance gives students a chance to learn how the real world works. I realized quickly, that food is expensive and the importance of budgeting. And finally, I learned the difference between salted and unsalted butter, is sodium."



Chill and Thrill

By: Hung Nguyen ('25)

Ice hockey continues to grow in popularity. Many people watch hockey games and cheer for their team, just like soccer, football, basketball and baseball. Ice hockey is a fast pace sport with many highlights during the games. On Nov. 18th, Mr. Quan Nguyen, the SLS activities director, took ten students off-campus to attend the Chicago Wolves versus the Milwaukee Admirals. Mr. Nguyen stated, "I want to provide the students with opportunities to go off-campus and try new fun things." A highlight of the game involved the Admirals goalie, Devin Cooley, who struggled to clear the puck, resulting in a 5-2 Wolves win. The students cheered for their teams and Said Villa ('25) said, "It was fun, and I will definitely go again." The hockey game was a new experience for some who attended and most said they would go again, if the opportunity arises.

Beyond King Tut

By: Jonah Lim ('26)

Each year, Mr. Jeff Krieg, our beloved history teacher, takes a group of students on a field trip to learn about ancient history. Last year, it was to the Sistine Chapel created by Michelangelo. This year, it was an exhibition about the life of King Tut. Participating students travelled to Milwaukee, to an exhibition called Beyond King Tut. It was an immersive video experience and it featured many mesmerizing displays. These displays included mummification, King Tut's tomb layout, and beliefs of the Ancient Egyptians throughout. Mr. Krieg said, "The immersive projection experience part was mind-blowing, and it really brought to life what the Egyptians thought of the afterlife." Ethan Thomas ('26) said, "It was an amazing and interesting experience. I was able to learn a lot about King Tut's life." These trips are fun and interesting because they allow the students to experience the world's history outside of the classroom.



Vacation for My Soul

By: Thien Hanh Mai ('25)

As schoolwork piles up, an enormous burden is put on the students' academic lives. Retreats are the perfect solution to this problem because they can help the students recharge and forget about school for a little while. However, that is not the main purpose of the retreats. The goal of the retreats is to build a greater bond, not only with classmates, but also with God.

The freshman and sophomore classes stayed on campus for their retreats. SPIRITUS Ministries' staff led both retreats; a great and enthusiastic group of young staff presented many talks and provided many games to help the students better understand their own spiritual life.

Freshman highlight: David Stewart – Small Group Discussions; “I got to share my personal experiences and listen to other people's stories. I got to know my classmates, as well as, the SPIRITUS Ministry members.”

Sophomore highlight: Chris Vu – Game Time; “I loved interacting with my class through the Spiritus-led activities.”

The junior class returned to Mt. Morris in Wautoma, WI for their retreat. Their focus was to help with their discernment and making their first step to discovering their own vocation. The juniors listened to lectures in which they heard about the lives of Peter Pan, St. Francis of Assisi, St. Martin of Tours, and George Formby. The junior retreat content was more serious than the underclassmen retreats. They had fewer games and more talks and reflection time.

Junior highlight: Daniel Pizana – Taking walks in the woods; “I got time to be away from the world and just focus on the beauty of God's creations.”

The senior class went to the Capuchin Retreat Center in Detroit, MI, from Tuesday through Friday. This was a first time experience for any SLS senior class. They experienced the Capuchin Soup Kitchen, the Capuchin Service Center, and the Blessed Solanus Casey Center. Fr. Nathan Linton, a senior class advisor and campus minister, said, “The senior class's first retreat in Detroit was very successful. I could really tell that the boys were bonding with each other, and they really appreciated their time at the retreat. They greatly enjoyed the places that we went to.”

Senior highlight: Inaki Falcon – Works of ministry; “Being able to work at the soup kitchen made me more aware of all the ministries that the Capuchins provide. Just seeing all the works or ministry made me have a sense of hope and happiness.”



SENIORS



SOPHOMORES

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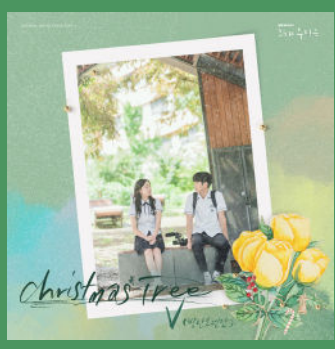


From the Editors

Like that one Mariah Carey video, “It’s TIIIIIIIIIIIIIMEEEEEEEEEEE!!!” It’s finally Christmas time! We hope that you have a safe trip back home and have a restful and relaxing break with your friends and family. This Christmas break marks the halfway point of the year, and that means, for us seniors, that our time here on the Hill is halfway done. Time flies by, but we’re grateful for the time we have spent thus far with each other. Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to you all!

-Nile and Jonathan

What we’re listening to:



Christmas Tree by V



Mistletoe by Justin Bieber



Without You Without Them by Boygenius