

# VOLUME LVI



# HILLTOPICS

NEWS IN ISOLATION  
ISSUE SIX



# CLASS

# OF

# 2021



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**Kiet Tran**

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**Dave Truong**

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**Aaron Villegas**

*Loyola University Chicago, Chicago, IL*

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**Benedict Wood**

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# Rector's Corner


*“For I am already being poured out like a libation, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have competed well; I have finished the race; I have kept the faith.”*

The above scripture passage is from Saint Paul’s second letter to Timothy. Saint Paul wrote that letter while being imprisoned in Rome for preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Timothy, a disciple of Saint Paul who later became his frequent companion and collaborator on his missionary journeys, was facing trials and difficulties as a leader of the Church in Ephesus. So Saint Paul offered him guidance and encouragement. The letter is both powerful and uplifting. It challenges the reader to trust in God, to persevere in faith, and to live in hope.

I first encountered this passage at a graduation ceremony at the high school seminary I attended in the Philippines back in the early 1990s. I was a freshman then. The graduates that year chose this passage as their motto. These words adorned the background of the chapel, where the ceremony took place. I remember being taken by those words immediately, and since then, they have served as inspiration and guide.

I am reminded of this passage as I reflect on the 2020-2021 school year at SLS. We opened the school for in-person instruction in the fall of last year amidst a pandemic. We faced many trials and difficulties. We had to learn to adapt to the new reality that we were in. For months, we persevered in abiding by established protocols in order to ensure the safety of everyone on campus—students and staff—and in order for our school to remain open. The way we pray, learn, work, and play was not like what it used to be. Yet, we remained patient and we moved forward steadily.

Now that the end of the school year is near, looking back, I can say that all of those efforts were not in vain. The race is almost over. We are close to the finish line. We have kept the community safe and our school open. Thanks be to God! All of this would not have been possible without the cooperation of everyone who are involved in this mission— students, parents, faculty, and staff—and without the generous support from our benefactors. My heart is full of gratitude and joy!

As we end this school year, let us give thanks and celebrate. And as we look ahead to the next school year, let us march forward with firmer trust in God, with more perseverance in faith, and with greater hope in our hearts. With the Lord as our light and our salvation, there is nothing to fear. 

## 2020-2021 Staff

- |                   |                                    |
|-------------------|------------------------------------|
| <b>Writers</b>    | <b>Publications</b>                |
| Benjamin Bartlett | <b>Photographers</b>               |
| Ricky Conlin      | Rem David                          |
| Kiet Do           | Ellison Juern                      |
| Earl D’Souza      | Zach Nolte- <i>Hilltopics</i> Only |
| Nathan Fernandes  | Emiliano Ochoa                     |
| Ellison Juern     | Christian Orozco                   |
| Joseph Hall       | Diego Orozco                       |
| Peter Lim         | Martin Pham                        |
| Harvey Nguyen     | Gael Palacios-Prieto               |
| Thomas Nguyen     | Aaryan Studden                     |
| Andrew Tran       |                                    |

- Miscellaneous**
- Jacob Lim
  - Emiliano Ochoa
  - Diego Orozco
  - Ciproquio Williams

- Editors-in-Chief:**
- Benjamin Bartlett
  - Andrew Tran

- Advisor:**
- Deann Sippel



# STRIKE THEM OUT!

By: Earl D'Souza ('22)

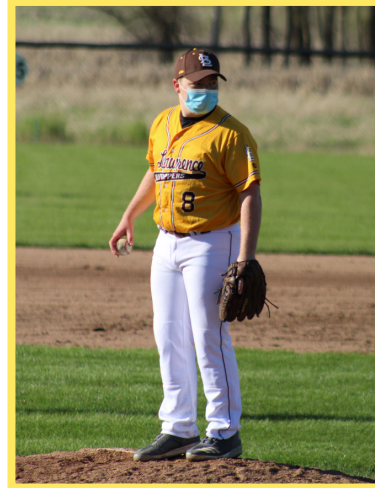
The baseball team at St. Lawrence is ready to take on this year's spring season after having missed last year's season, which was canceled due to the pandemic. In addition, the coaching staff has taken on a new member Mr. Matthew Bahr, who also teaches the Industrial Design courses at SLS.

The Hilltoppers are enthusiastic about being able to play out this season, despite having to take various precautions to contain the spread of the COVID. The pandemic has necessitated taking measures such as social distancing during practices and sanitizing equipment once it has been used. There is also the issue of a shortened season due to the alternative fall sports season held this spring. The team will only play a few games, an issue that led to the Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Association (WIAA) to allow the use of up to fifteen contact days so that students could train before the start of the season.

Junior Emiliano Ochoa, who plays shortstop, said, "The changes have taken a little while to get adjusted to. It's kind of difficult to play with a mask on, but baseball isn't really a contact sport, so it isn't that bad." Matthew Donohue, another junior on the team, added, "I feel like the pandemic has limited the one-on-one coaching we get because we experience that as more of a group now. I also feel like it's limiting the full experience of playing baseball."

Head Coach Noel Sippel said, "Despite the issues caused by the pandemic, I feel like the changes have been equally as good as they have been bad. The contact days really gave us a chance to get to know the players and work with them, which I think helped us make the decisions about who to put on the team. There has also been a greater turnout this year than before, and although many of the students who tried out hadn't played baseball before, it was refreshing to see them willing to participate because, after all, baseball is America's favorite pastime."

And if the pandemic isn't bad enough to deal with during the short spring sports season, the weather also plays a huge part in getting games in. Due to the weather conditions on Monday, May 3rd, the first scheduled game of the season canceled. But, the Hilltoppers continued with practice and were ready for the rest of the season's scheduled games. ♦







# The First Spring



By: Thomas Nguyen ('21)

With the spring season in full momentum and the end of the school year in sight, the Saint Lawrence Seminary tennis team is on track for a short, yet intense, season. This year the tennis season's schedule will be a little different. There will only be four tennis meets with Saint Lawrence competing against conference schools.

Like many of the other sports, the tennis team has also been working diligently to follow the COVID guidelines. Players are required to wear masks and keep social distance. This year prior to the season, contact days were held for those interested in the tennis to learn the essentials of the game and to get a feel for what practice would be like. To ensure social distancing, groups were split up by experience. Because there is not much physical contact in tennis, there was not much that changed. Coach Dennis Holm stated, "Other than the contact days and creating different groups, I haven't noticed much of a difference when it comes to getting out there and playing." There has also been a change with a new coach; Mr. Tre Waldren has joined the team as an assistant coach. "It was a very exciting and humbling opportunity. Unlike most of the teachers here, I didn't many opportunities to interact with the students. Now that I'm a coach, I get to work with more of the students and learn about the community here at Saint Lawrence Seminary."



Both the players and the coaches have been working hard to prepare for the short season. At the initial practices, Coach Holm and Coach Waldren reviewed the basics of tennis, such as, hitting and footwork. Once the groups were split by experience, the coaches and the players did different drills based on their skill level. The group of beginners worked on returning the ball and learning the rules of the game. For many of the players, this was their first time holding a racket. Many balls flew over the fence, but as the days went by, the players quickly improved. The more experienced players worked on more advanced skills like when to lob and how to poach.

Although the group missed out on the last season, the players came back excited to work and to get back in rhythm. Senior player, Andrew Tran, stated, "Working with the team and Coach Holm again has been exciting. The team challenges each other to get better every day. And I know that we will do whatever it takes to compete." The last time the Saint Lawrence tennis team competed, they won the conference championship. This year's team looks to repeat that success. Although there is no conference championship this year, the team has set goals for success. Coach Holm stated, "My goal for the season is to be competitive. I want to see each of the players improve along the way." Whatever challenges are thrown at the Hilltoppers, they will work to score that winning shot. 🏆





This year's musical is *Newsies*, which is based on the real-life story of the Newsboy Strike of 1899 starring Jack Kelly, a rebel newsboy. When Joseph Pulitzer raises newspaper prices at the newsies' expense, they, in turn, go on a strike with the help of the female reporter Katherine Plumber.

This Broadway original play was selected for the 2019-2020 performance prior to COVID and when that performance couldn't happen, it was pushed to 2020-2021. It was planned for performances in front of classmates, teachers, and the school community, and live streamed through video to attract parents at a distance. This year's performances of *Newsies* were April 30th through May 2nd. Tickets had to be reserved as seating was limited due to COVID. The production was also recorded and offered for viewing online through an outside source, MTI, via Showtix4U.com.

The cast members were re-selected from the current freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors, which attributed to some major role changes. The theatre director Mrs. Margie Buelow and the assistant director and choreographer, Mr. Martin Vu, led the play's preparations while following the required COVID restrictions of masking, social distancing and even the quarantine of cast members. When asked how practices went and how the show was progressing, Mr. Vu stated, "We work with who/what we have here, especially after all the fun that was had while practicing the choreography, impactful dialogue, and other parts of each scene." Benedict Wood, who played Jack Kelly, said, "This play was a bit of a struggle, especially as I invested through the rigorous process of balancing my school life, diet, musical ability, play practices, and other segments of my senior career."

The play did pose an obvious problem in who would play the girl role, Katherine, at an all-boys' boarding school, but Mrs. Buelow came to the rescue. She asked her granddaughter, Alyssa Buelow, who came from North Carolina to play the role.

In spite of the many obstacles posed to the directors and cast of the annual school play, *Newsies the Musical* displayed the cast's dedication through numerous long practices. The show must go on and that it did to the final curtain call. 🎓

By: Peter Lim('21)

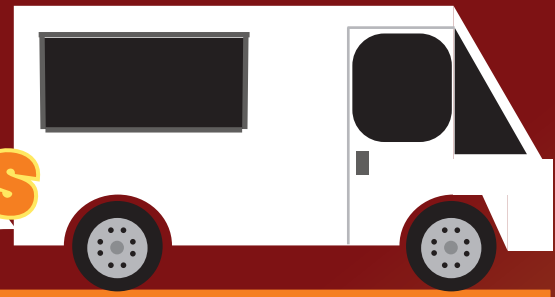
# SEIZING THE STAGE





# CELEBRATING CULINARY DIFFERENCES

By: Joseph Hall ('22)



During these times of race riots and unrest, it is more important than ever to celebrate, and not condemn, those who are different. One of the most obvious ways in which SLS accomplishes this is through the Cultural Heritage Festival. Each year, students form groups to cook authentic food from different ethnic groups. This provides students with the unique opportunity to experience the cultures of their friends through the food they created. This year's festival took place on April 24th, and many students seized the opportunity to take some time to prepare delicious cultural dishes for their classmates. A few weeks before the festival, students formed groups and decided what food they would make. They then submitted their ideas and waited for the festival to arrive.

A few days before the festival, the groups gathered after school to prepare their ingredients and begin cooking their dishes. Students were seen peeling vegetables, cutting meat, washing produce, and doing a wide variety of other tasks. Then the ingredients were once again stored until it was time to continue with the dishes.

In the following days, right up until a few hours before the festival, groups gathered together to prepare their dishes. They grilled meat, rolled egg rolls, fried food, and prepared each dish in ways that are unique to each culture. "Cooking was fun because I got to experience a new culture in a unique way," said Chimnedum Osuala, a member of the Japanese group. Though the groups cooked food from certain cultures, membership was open to anyone. This allowed students to join any group and learn about a culture and ethnic group they had never experienced before.

When the day of the festival arrived, the groups busied themselves putting the finishing touches on their dishes and setting up their stations for the event. That night, the entire student body gathered in the chapel for a special evening prayer dedicated to nurturing unity and celebrating differences. Then, students swept into the chapel courtyard to sample the dishes their classmates had prepared.

Twelve groups from around the world were represented at this year's festival. Some of the more popular stations were the Korean group with their tteokbokki (stir-fried rice cakes), the Chicago group with a chocolate cake shake, and Singapore with strawberry banding soda. These were just a few of the many delicious dishes this year. "It was a great experience to try so many new foods and see people having fun and talking about food," said freshman Kiet Pham. Everyone left the festival full of both food and new knowledge of their classmates' cultures. It goes without saying that this year's festival was an enormous success and left everyone hungry for next year's. 🎓





# MANY Are Called, & FEW Are Chosen

By: Nathan Fernandes ('22)

On April 25th, St. Lawrence Seminary celebrated the sacrament of Confirmation amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. Special safety precautions were set to ensure the smooth sailing of this milestone event. The use of masks, hand sanitizer, and social distancing was all done to protect everyone involved. Due to these circumstances, only the junior class, family members, sponsors, and musicians were allowed to attend the Confirmation Mass. However, that did not stop families from coming from all across the country, from Minnesota to New Hampshire.

At 10:15 A.M., the congregation gathered and began singing the opening song as Archbishop Jerome E. ListECKi, Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee, headed the Mass. Joined by Fr. Zoy Garibay and Fr. Biju Varghese, the nine Confirmation candidates included Ricky Conlin, Nathaniel Jude, Alex Krause, Ian Le, Jacob Lim, Chueyee Lor, Steven Nguyen, Richard Perez, and Yair Rivera. Once the service began, the nine confirmands were called to stand and affirm their faith. Following the Gospel, Archbishop ListECKi anointed the confirmands with the Chrism oil and shared a few words of advice. After all confirmands were consecrated, the faithful offered in prayer bilingual intercessions followed by the liturgy of the Eucharist and a special blessing for the newly confirmed.

Following the Confirmation Mass, families gathered together to congratulate their sons. Many others also opted to take pictures with the Archbishop. The rest left campus to enjoy their status as confirmed members of the Church. Confirmand Richard Perez said, "It was pretty nerve-racking at first, but having my godfather next to me made it easy. Also today, with the help of my patron saint, Saint Anthony of Padua, I found a key and a book I was missing." Despite COVID, it was a day that went off without a hitch and will be remembered by the participants for a very long time. 🎓







# UNDERGROUND HEROES

By: Kiet Do ('22)

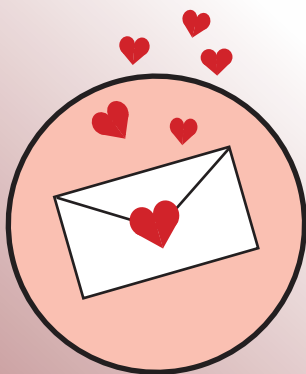


Located in the basement of St. Mary Hall, many people may not know about the development office, but their contribution to the school is immeasurable. In order for St. Lawrence Seminary to continue long into the future and offer a place for young men to discern and answer the call to serve our faith-filled church, the development office has been working tirelessly.

As a bridge between the school and its donors, the development office is responsible for the success of all fundraising efforts for Saint Lawrence Seminary. They ensure these efforts are donor-focused and internally integrated. The development office also coordinates, via a research process, the identification of which individuals, foundations and corporations should be donor prospects for which programs and activities. The office exercises this responsibility for fundraising by offering prayers for the donors and sending out greeting cards to them. The development office consists of more than 10 people; each person is responsible for a different stage in the process: receiving letters in the mail, clerking them, and replying with a campaign letter.

Mrs. Denise Birschbach, the office manager, said, "It's my pleasure to work in the development office, where I can talk to donors and tell them how much students at SLS appreciate their financial support." When asked how COVID affected the office, Mrs. Birschbach stated, "When comparing working from home versus being in the office, working in-person is much easier." At school, I have all the facilities needed. It's also much easier to communicate with my co-workers." When being asked how her normal day is, Mrs. Birschbach shared, "We receive about five thousand letters weekly. We make sure to carefully read every letter, sort them into different categories, and reply with a campaign letter written by Mr. John Riss and a greeting card."

Drawing their strength from the Eucharist, the development office provides philanthropic opportunities to build financial resources inspiring donors to share abundantly and joyfully so that students at Saint Lawrence Seminary may have a chance to get a great education. Thanks to the development office, SLS students have the means to not only improve their academic skills, but also develop their relationships with God. 🎓





Public speaking is one of the most admirable traits a person can have. Forensics is all about becoming a better speaker in front of crowds, but the competition aspect keeps students coming back year after year. St. Lawrence is no exception to this, even in a year of changed practices and tournaments.

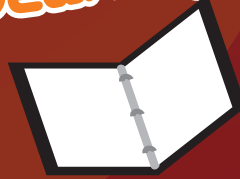
This year due to COVID, forensics practices and meets drastically changed from previous years. Due to social distancing and other precautions, practices were done in a one-on-one style with coach Mr. Martin Vu. The biggest change in practices was that no Friday night group practices took place this year. In past years, the night before a tournament, the students would separate into groups and have group practices with the coach. The tournaments were not held in person, so by Thursday night those who entered the meet had to submit a video of their piece.

Although forensics was different this year, the students persevered, worked hard and found success. The group interpretation of Andrew Tran, Joseph Nguyen, Ellison Juern, Thomas Nguyen and Dan Tran were semifinalists at state. However, Benedict Wood was the 2021 forensics poetry state champion. While talking about the season, he said, "Participating virtually brought about new challenges and changed the way I participated. Even though I love forensics, it was a lot harder to be invested in a season where I wasn't going out and performing in front of a live audience. Still, I persevered and the work I put into my piece paid off."

The 2021 forensics season was like no other. The students had to break their usual practice routines and no longer had to wake up early for Saturday tournaments. Although the season had its share of challenges, the students enjoyed the season and the competition, even if it was just on a screen. 🎓

# The Art of [VIRTUAL] Public Speaking

By: Ellison Juern ('21)



# DO, RE, MI

By: Harvey Nguyen ('22)



“Magnificent” is perhaps the right word to describe St. Lawrence Seminary music students’ participation in this year’s Solo/Ensemble competition. Solo/Ensemble is an opportunity for small groups and or individuals to be evaluated on their skills at singing and or at playing an instrument and gain recognition. This year there were 24 students who participated, which included 4 groups and 13 individual competitors.

Due to COVID, this year the competition did not take place in-person. Instead, participants had to record videos of their performances and upload them online so the judges could evaluate each selected piece. Despite all of the changes, our school still achieved great results. The SLS music director, Mr. John Ahlstrom, was pleased with the result of this year’s Solo/Ensemble. He stated, “We have some really good instrumentals and singers in our school. The people who I expected to perform well did in fact do well!”

All of the participants did achieve great results. Most recognized were four seniors, Benedict Wood, Russel Kilian, Benjamin Bartlett, and Andrew Le, who did well at the state level. Benedict Wood received two firsts for tenor solo and music theater. Russel Kilian received two firsts for baritone solo and music theater. Benjamin Bartlett received a first for tenor solo. And Andrew Le received a second for baritone solo. Even though the format of the Solo/Ensemble competition was different this year, the students continued to pour their heart and soul into their performances. 🎓



# The Next Dynamic Duo



Hello, everyone! My name is Kiet Do, and I am so honored and excited to be the next co-editor-in-chief of the Hilltopics. During the upcoming year, I hope to further Hilltopics' traditions, while also spearheading more change within the content. My partner, Ricky Conlin, and I will bring readers the best of information, including more interactive articles about a variety of news, spiritual, sports, and entertainment topics. I also hope to foster diversity in our content and staffing. First and foremost, Hilltopics functions as a hub for topics to get updated, and we cannot accurately fulfill that purpose without ensuring all ideas are heard. So, if you have any recommendations for Hilltopics next year, please tell us! I am looking forward to this opportunity and have no doubt that Ricky and I will persevere. 🎓

When I was first offered to be an editor for next year's publication of Hilltopics, I wasn't sure if I would accept or not. I had already talked with Ben Bartlett, one of the co-editors of this current issue, about how much work being editor was. I didn't want to take the role of co-editor, get bogged down with how much work it would be, and end up throwing together a mediocre year of publications. What made me decide to take the role of co-editor was seeing Kiet's excitement as he approached me in dorm about the position; his excitement was contagious. In that excitement, I realized that I was thinking of being co-editor as a task, but I now see it as an opportunity. I want to make publications that stand out, publications that are interesting and showcase artistic skill. I think Kiet was a fantastic choice for co-editor; I have no doubt he and I can work together to make something special.

My name is Ricky Conlin. I grew up in West Bend, a small city northwest of Milwaukee. I am a Cross Country and Track and Field runner. I have been drawing for as long as I can remember, and I have picked up painting not too long ago. I have dedicated probably a bit too much of my wallet to the trading card game Magic, and my favorite food is spaghetti with Italian sausage. I'm excited for next year, when I get to carve my own little design into the deep history of Hilltopics along with Kiet. I'll see you next year; have an incredible summer! 🎓





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## Editors' Quotidian Remarks

### ANDREW

Since I was running around as a freshman time has passed by super fast. It's crazy to think that I will be graduating soon. Next year, I'll be going to DePaul University in



Chicago. It is a big step in my life and I feel that St. Lawrence has prepared me well. I think often about how some of the things I'm doing are going to be the last but, all good things must come to an end. I'd like to thank Benjamin and Mrs. Sippel for working with me on Hilltopics. Hilltopics has been awesome and it would not have been possible without their input. And lastly, I'd like to wish the new editors, Kiet and Ricky, good luck next year. Thank you for reading Hilltopics!

In my SLS career, this year was the shortest. It feels odd to say that I'm leaving for another school; that this is my alma mater, not simply my "high school." I hope Ricky and Kiet are ready for hard work next year, and I thank them for being our replacements. I thank Andrew for being a great

co-editor and writer; I couldn't have survived without him. I thank Mrs. Sippel for being a fantastically patient supervisor, assisting with deadlines and edits. Next year, I will be attending St. John's College in Santa Fe, NM. I hope to maintain the brotherly spirit from afar and share it with my peers in the Southwest. Thank you all for reading, and I wish the best to the Class of 2021!



### BENJAMIN