



HILLTOPICS

New Year, New Us

VOLUME LVIII

ISSUE IV

New Sons of Calvary

ThienHanh Mai ('25)

Rector's Bubble



Angel Guerrero

Grade: Sophomore
City: Chicago, Illinois
How did you hear about SLS? "I learned about SLS from my mom's friend."
Hobbies: Playing games and spending time friends and family

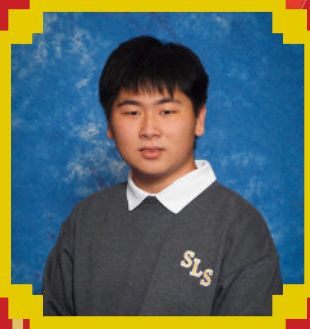
Goals for 2023: Exercise more and Rector's List
Favorite Place to Visit: Cancun, Mexico



Khoa Dang Nguyen

Grade: Sophomore
City: Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam
How did you hear about SLS? "I heard about SLS from Phuoc Hoang ('24)."

Hobbies: Playing basketball and soccer
Goals for 2023: "Improving my English"
Favorite Place to Visit: Sydney, Australia



Khanh Pham

Grade: Junior
City: Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam
How did you hear about SLS? "I heard about SLS from relatives."

Hobbies: Listening to music, playing games
Goals for 2023: "Achieve good grades, improve on self"
Favorite Place to Visit: Ba Na Hills, Vietnam

These days, I see a lot of hearts and the color red just about anywhere I go. In Wal-Mart, for example, there are plenty of heart-shaped balloons, candies, and stuffed toys put on display. In Walgreens, cards decorated with hearts dominate card aisle. I believe all of us know the reason for this: Valentine's Day is coming.

The heart has become the most popular symbol for love. Valentine's Day has become a day most associated with love, and a day in which we express our love to those who are dear to us. This year, Lent comes a week after Valentine's Day. And what a wonderful segue! How appropriate it is that we are surrounded with hearts because Lent is ultimately about love.

Lent is a time of preparation for the celebration of the Lord's passion, death, and resurrection. These are events in the Lord's life in which he expresses to us in a powerful way his great love for us. We normally associate Lent with penance, self-sacrifice, fasting and abstinence. However, if we truly reflect on the essence of the season and think about why we observe these practices, we will realize that we do them because we love the Lord. We show that love by being in solidarity with him, by sharing in his suffering, and by dying to ourselves so that we may share in his redemptive work and in the glory of his resurrection.

As we receive the mark of ashes on our foreheads, we are thus reminded to take the time to examine our hearts, to reorient our hearts, and to refocus our hearts to God. There are many ways in which we can go about doing this. Most often people think of giving something up such as unhealthy food or drinks, unnecessary spending, or excessive use of electronic devices. The Gospel reading for Ash Wednesday, however, focuses on three familiar and time-honored practices: prayer, fasting and abstinence, and alms. These are wonderful ways of preparing our hearts for Lent.

The Prophet Joel speaks of returning to the Lord with our whole heart. Saint Paul urges us to be reconciled to God. And Jesus reminds us of the importance of having humility when observing penitential practices. In Psalm 51, the Psalmist sums these all up when he says, "A clean heart create for me, O God. (Ps. 51:12)" So let us spend these next 40 days in Lent showing our love for the Lord, preparing our hearts for him and making them pleasing before God.

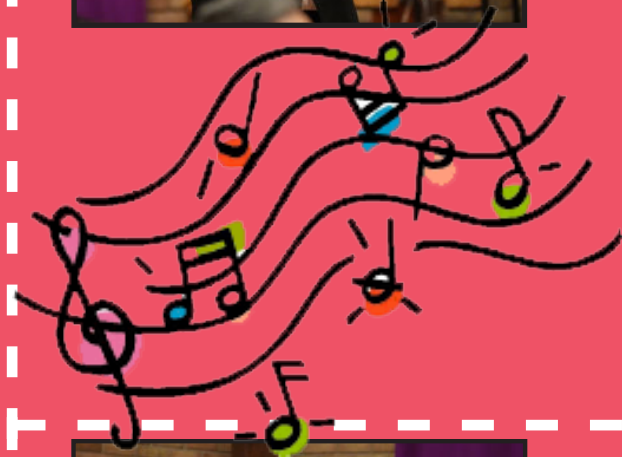
It's the most wonderful CAROL

Said Villa ('25)

The SLS Christmas concert and banquet were held on Friday, December 16th. The evening started with the banquet to which all SLS faculty, staff, students and friars were invited. There was a German theme, and Fr. Zoy started the banquet with a prayer in German. The guests broke traditional German bread called stolen and then they ate. The meal consisted of dishes like meatballs, steak, asparagus, mashed potatoes and Black Forest cake. Emmanuel Hernandez ('25) said, "This was one of the best Christmas dinners I have ever tried."

After the banquet, the parents started to arrive for the annual Christmas concert conducted by the new music director, Mr. Danny Matthew. The band performed first, playing songs that included; "Nightmare before Christmas," "C'est Noel," "Salvation is Created," and "African Bell Carol." With a new music director comes new experiences. The Music Theory class was given an assignment to compose a piece that would be performed at the Christmas concert. The classes listened to "Auld Lang Syne;" they were then given chords to create an arrangement which each student played on the piano in class for their peers. Each piece was entered into a computer program, played for the band and the band voted. Senior Jimmy O'Neill's piece was chosen for the clarinet section to play. Sophomore Andrew Lee said, "It was fun learning a piece that one of my schoolmates created; even if it was difficult." After the band's performance, there was a brief intermission when Santa arrived with a few elves and passed out candy canes to the audience.

The second half of the concert consisted of the SLS choir. They sang songs like, "It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year," "I'll be Home for Christmas," "Jazz Gloria," and "Carol of the Stars." The concert concluded with the annual tradition of the alumni joining the choir on stage to perform "Sleigh Ride." Freshman Jonah Lim ('26) said, "My first experience was extremely exciting and memorable; I cannot wait for the spring concert." The 2022 Christmas banquet and concert were enormous successes; there will be many more to look forward to.



Samson Mathew ('23)

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IT'S CHRISTMAS BREAK

From mid-December to early January, students enjoy a much-needed Christmas break, over the span of three weeks. The break also marked the end of the first semester and gave students a clean slate. For the break, international students and students from other states got the chance to travel home and spend time with family and friends. SLS arranged buses to accommodate all the students' travel plans.



X-Mas Break



Students used this break as a time to relax and to take a break from their workload. Clive Moras ('23) got the chance to meet an NBA player. He stated, "I spent Christmas with Noel Choi ('23) in Texas. We had the chance to meet Alperen Sengun, a current Houston Rockets player. I even got my jersey signed by him. I also spent some time catching up on college applications. It was a great and relaxing time."

Another student went to his homeland for the first time. Eugenio Tinoco ('23) explained, "I went to Mexico for the first time during the Christmas break. I learned more about where my parents came from and how they were raised. I met many family members that I have not met before. I had the chance to visit The Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe and the Shrine of Jose Sanchez del Rio. I also attended some of the Las Fiestas; I also learned how to dance. I had an amazing experience that really widened my horizons." Fr. Peter Kafuma had the chance to visit Virginia and catch up with family and friends. He said, "I visited my sister and had a wonderful time with my family in Virginia. I also visited a few friends and went to the Basilica of the National Shrine. I also had the chance to visit some friars in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania." The SLS students and staff used the three-week break not only to celebrate Christmas with family and friends, but also to relax and have some fun.

ICE, ICE, BABY

Clive Moras ('23)

The 50th Winter Carnival at Saint Lawrence Seminary High School was a historic event that students and staff will never forget. This year's theme was "Ice, Ice, Baby" and it was held on Wednesday, February 1st, marking the first time the event was held on a weekday instead of the traditional weekend. The student council, as always, did a fantastic job of organizing the event, which featured various indoor and outdoor activities.

The traditional torch-lighting ceremony took place Wednesday morning, and the student body headed to the snowy upper ball diamond to participate in outdoor activities, such as soccer, broomball, football, and ultimate Frisbee. The recent snowfall added a special touch to the day, and students bonded with their frats, experiencing the warmth of joy and spirit despite the cold weather.

At lunch, the students indulged in a delicious meal before moving on to the much-anticipated staff vs. student volleyball game. The game was held immediately after lunch, giving students a break from the cold and a chance to connect with their classmates and staff members. The fraternities then competed indoors, bouncing between the gym and lower St. Anthony's Hall, playing games such as ping-pong and *Super Smash Bros*. The day ended with a scavenger hunt that took students all around campus to search for answers. The spirit of competition was still present through that event towards the end of the day as students raced to finish the hunt first.

The spirit of Saint Lawrence was on full display during this year's Winter Carnival. It was a fun-filled day of competition and camaraderie. The competitiveness and energy were palpable, and the cheers and cries of victory echoed through the halls. The 50th Winter Carnival will go down in history as a special and memorable event, and everyone who participated in it left feeling proud to be part of such a wonderful community.



WINTER
50th
CARNIVAL





GET YOUR GAME ON

Max Trinh ('25)

With a new season comes a new opportunity for SLS gamers to shine. Following the successful season of *Super Smash Bros.*, an entirely new game is being offered. It is one never played in SLS electronic sporting before: *Rocket League*. *Rocket League* is a creative game where players play virtual soccer but with vehicles. Players perform in either single or multiplayer modes. Recently, the school purchased new laptops for the team. When asked about the goals of the season, Coach Logan Burge replied, "Since this is a new sport for us, most of the team has never played or has barely played the game before."

My goal is to familiarize the team with the concept of the game and just to overall have a good season." Angel Guerrero ('25), one of six members on the team, describes e-sports as fun and a great experience. "Growing up, I loved playing *Rocket League*. It's one of my favorite games and seeing how I can play it at a competitive level made it a lot more fun." So far, the team had their first match and despite a grieving loss, the team fought with great valor and showed promise for future matches. It is only the start of the season and the team has plenty of room for improvement. Rocketing into this season, the effort will be out of this world. It will be interesting to see what the team has in store for the season.



Making a Difference

Diego Soto ('25)



Alumnus John O'Neill ('15), the Diocesan and Church Outreach Coordinator for Students for Life of America, extended an invitation to the SLS administrators to send a group of students to attend the March for Life/Rally on Friday, January 20th in Washington D.C. The Sons of Calvary have never attended an activity like this but decided to represent SLS in support of pro-life. Members of the Spiritual Life committee and a couple students from Virginia were chosen to attend. Seniors Christopher Lor and Washington Thor, juniors Matthew Nguyen and Alan Pham, sophomores ThienHanh Mai, and Diego Soto, along with Mr. Bartel, Dr. Donahou and Fr. Peter departed on January 19th, around 6:00 A.M., for a 16-hour journey, to attend the march.

After the long drive, the group finally made it to Virginia where ThienHanh Mai and Matthew Nguyen's families hosted the group from Thursday night through Saturday night. Friday started with a visit to the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum. Alan Pham ('24) stated, "It was a valuable experience to visit the museum. Although I have been to the museum in Illinois, I still enjoyed it." After the eventful visit to the Holocaust Museum, the group made their way to the rally point to attend the march. At around 2 P.M. the SLS group finally started the march. The march took the participants through the National Mall, past the Congressional Offices, by the U.S. Capitol and ended at the Supreme Court and Senate Offices. After the long day in D.C., the Mai family was kind enough to prepare a delicious traditional Vietnamese meal known as pho.

On Saturday the group attended the Students for Life sessions, once again in D.C. The group met up with John O'Neill there and learned more about abortion. Diego Soto said, "I have never heard of this organization, but, to say the least, my mind has been opened to problems that I never knew existed. I only hope that my peers have gained as much knowledge as I have on this trip."

Mr. Bartel stated, "I enjoyed the experience and have never been on this type of March. The students were surprised, and a bit overwhelmed, by the size of the crowds. I hope the SLS students do something to share their thoughts and experiences with their peers."

Although the experience was a bit overwhelming, the participants learned a lot. The group all agreed they want to do something to share the D.C. experience with their classmates.

God Bless, & More Money to **FLEX**

Hung Dao ('23)

At the beginning of every year, Asians around the world celebrate the Lunar New Year. This festival of events is called Seollal by the Koreans and Tet by the Vietnamese. Following a twelve-year zodiac, this year is either the year of the rabbit or the year of the cat, depending on the culture. Having a large number of Asian students, SLS held a grand feast to celebrate.

On January 22, the Vietnamese and Korean students, along with Hunter Van's ('24) parents, helped prepared a meal to welcome in the New Year. Students were treated to a meal with staples of Vietnamese food and Korean pancakes. Towards the end of the meal, students lined up before Fr. Zoy Garibay to receive the red envelope of lucky money, a tradition wherein elders give money to younger people for good luck while the youth give well wishes to the elders for the new year. After the meal, students gathered in the chapel for prayer. When prayer ended, a group of Vietnamese students performed the traditional dragon dance for the entire student body. To cap off the night, fireworks were lit, closing a one-of-a-kind celebration at SLS.

In describing his first time experiencing Tet, freshman Alexander Regalado said, "The food was amazing, and the fact that students and parents prepared it made me appreciate it more. Also, the dragon dance was fun and interesting as it was my first time witnessing such a thing." SLS takes pride in honoring cultural heritage and diversity. With a large student population of Asians on the Hill, it is very important to honor the Lunar New Year holiday.



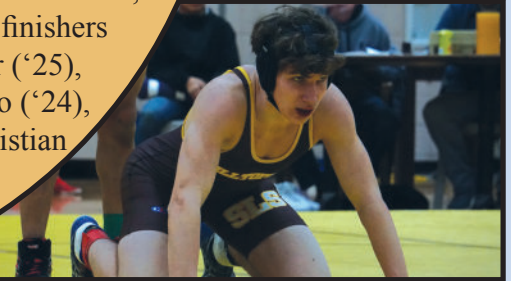
The Return

Of The Mats

Towards the end of the wrestling season, SLS typically hosts a JV wrestling tournament. The Hilltopper JV Wrestling Invitational returned on Friday, January 27th, after a two-year hiatus due to COVID. Preparation for the meet started earlier in the week with wrestlers staying around after practice to help roll out mats. The day of the invitational, the wrestling team taped the mats and set the scoring tables prior to the meet.

Three teams showed up to participate in the Hilltopper Invitational. With this tournament came an opportunity for the JV wrestlers to show off their skills. Sophomore wrestler Daniel Pizaña commented, "I thought it was incredibly fun! Very exciting, the fans got to see many new wrestlers for the first time." Sophomore Diego Soto stated, "I enjoyed it, definitely a good experience, hope we do it again next year. I hope we get more teams and players to come out to participate next year."

There was a lot of fan support by the SLS students who came to the gym to support the team and to show their school spirit. In the end, wrestlers had a fun experience, with many first-place finishers including Diego Soto ('25), Sebastian Montemayor ('25), Andrew Saw ('24), Will Hying ('25), Daniel Cornejo ('24), Immanuel Xaviour ('26), Max Trinh ('25), and Cristian Cruz ('25). The outcome of the tournament was very positive and the support was appreciated.



Cristian Cruz ('25)

What's cookin!

Gunnar Stier ('23)

ALUMNIS of the ISSUE



Connor McCabe

Saint Lawrence Seminary is well known for its rigorous schedule, advanced academics, spiritual life programs, but most of all, for the people who attended it. Mr. Connor McCabe, a graduate of the Class of 2015, is one of those graduates who experienced the challenges and rewards that is SLS. Connor graduated from SLS with a love of mathematics. He wanted to go into a field where he could demonstrate his knowledge, but still receive new and engaging challenges every day. He decided to attend college at South Dakota State University to get a degree in Metallurgical Engineering. He later decided to switch his major to Applied Mathematics. He always felt passionate about math and wanted to see where this route would take him.

Connor worked very hard trying not only to fulfill the class requirements but also to be involved in the community life. One of the ways he did this was by working in the school cafeteria. "Cooking for people was fun, and it felt pretty wholesome," Connor commented. His love of mathematics could not tame his free spirit. He could not stand the idea of being trapped behind a desk, even if he was doing mathematical work. He wanted to move around, to talk to people, and to do something that was engaging. He decided it was time that he figured out what he really wanted to do in life. Therefore, he left the school, and transferred to Henry Ford University in Michigan. He knew that he loved three things: cooking, people, and math. He combined the best of the three worlds and got his associates degree in Culinary Arts.

He began working at the Grey Ghost restaurant in Detroit, MI, as a line cook and after three years became the sous-chef. He did such great work that when the owners of the restaurant he worked at opened a second restaurant, they asked him to be the sous-chef there as well. Connor now works at Basan, where he serves a variety of Japanese cuisine to people from all over Michigan, and best of all, he satisfies his three loves.

Holy Orders

ON

the Hill

Nicholas Dean ('23)

This past December, two of SLS's Capuchin brothers, Br. Truong Dinh and Br. Nathan Linton, took the next step in their vocational journey being received into the Order of the Diaconate. Becoming a deacon brought both Br. Truong and Br. Nathan one step closer to entering the priesthood. Friends, family, and the entire SLS student body accompanied the Brothers at their special diaconate ordination Mass.

This special ordination Mass was presided over by Bishop Haines of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee. After the Liturgy of the Word, the rites of ordination began. Br. Truong and Br. Nathan came forward to be ordained, and Bishop Haines laid his hands upon their heads as a sign of ordination. After the rite of ordination, the Mass continued its usual fashion. The SLS choir, as well as a couple of other Capuchin brothers, had the privilege to sing during the ordination service. The choir, along with the joyous voices of the congregation, brought the Mass to life with their beautiful hymns of praise. Everyone was cheerful and proud of Br. Truong and Br. Nathan for their great achievement.

Br. Truong commented on his vocation and ordination by saying, "I decided to become a deacon because of the simple fact that it is the next stepping stone for me to become a priest. Becoming a transitional deacon has been a unique and blessed experience for me to learn to become a priest." Br. Truong's goal for the future is "to be the best brother I can be even though I will have a different title, being called 'Father.'" Br. Nathan commented on the same topics by saying, "My vocational development was prompted by my father, who answered his call to become a deacon." Br. Nathan expressed his thoughts on the ordination service by saying, "It was a very joyful event. I was happy to have my father be there and see the whole student body singing and participating." Br. Nathan relayed his thoughts on his future goals by saying, "It's simple: my goal is to be a good servant of God and his people."

The ordination Mass was then followed by a banquet open to all students and guests of the newly ordained Br. Truong and Br. Nathan. The banquet featured a special dinner and lively conversation between the two newly ordained deacons, their families, and other priests and religious present. The day was an opportunity for everyone to celebrate SLS's two new deacons and the gift of the sacrament of holy orders that they received. It was truly a blessed day at SLS and a blessed day for the families of the ordained deacons. Congratulations Br. Truong and Br. Nathan!



Br. Nathan Linton



Br. Truong Dinh



Hilltopics
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Answer:

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1	8	5	7	6	3	4	9	2
9	6	2	4	1	5	3	8	7

JOURNEY TO PORTUGAL

Day 5&6

On day 5, we will celebrate World Youth Day events!



There are many cafes to look at in the city of Sintra.



We can also take a look at castles located in Sintra!



Finally, we will be stopping by Church of Ingreja de Santa Maria.



To Be Continued...