

Sons of Calvary

St. Lawrence Seminary Alumni Magazine 2024

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BUILDING A NEW
SENIOR DORM

HERO'S ORIGIN STORY

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FRONT COVER: The view of the cupola from the tower at sunset. The Christmas candle lights in the windows can be seen for miles.

BACK COVER: A new day dawns over St. Lawrence, especially with the construction of Father Solanus Hall.



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Editor's Note

I have been blessed to have a very long relationship with St. Lawrence Seminary. From birth I have been attached to this place in some way or another. And my relationship to this place has changed many times. I began as the son of a faculty member. Then the brother of a student. Not long after, I became a student myself. Then an alumnus. Shortly thereafter, a faculty member.

Now, I have a new relationship with the school, and that is as a parent of a student: last year my oldest son became a Son of Calvary! My second son is looking at SLS, too, for next year, and quite possibly even my third son, as well, in a few years.

That's a lot of different relationships. And each one has allowed me to see this place a little differently. As a young boy, when I would visit the Hill with my parents, I saw a regal and enchanting campus. When my older brother was here, I got to witness for the first time the brotherhood that forms among classmates. As a student, I experienced the rich education and formation these dedicated faculty provide. And as a member of the faculty, I see the the slow and careful evolution of a storied program whose goal is the deliberate crafting of young men who make a difference in the Church and world.

As a parent now, I get to watch as this place I love has its deep and profound impact on the people I love.

In this issue, we have stories about each of these aspects of St. Lawrence Seminary. See how our beautiful campus is changing with the construction of Father Solanus Hall, the new senior dorm. Read about the creative ways classes are maintaining their brotherhood and staying connected over the years and miles. Learn about how the fraternity system developed to better form boys into men. Hear stories about alumni who themselves were changed by this place and, in turn, went out to change their worlds.

St. Lawrence is a remarkable place! I'm lucky to be reminded of that every day.

-Anthony Van Asten '01



From the Rector's Desk

Something wonderful is happening on the Hill of Happiness. A new senior dorm is on the rise! For quite some time, the idea of constructing a new senior dorm has been on hold. St. Francis Hall, the residence of our senior students for decades, is over one hundred years old. It is showing signs of aging and becoming more and more outmoded over time. It is neither handicap accessible nor does it fit the kind of dormitory that we envision for our graduating students. The global pandemic of 2020, along with an extensive renovation of St. Francis Monastery in Milwaukee, put a hold on the idea of building a new senior dorm. In 2022, after the pandemic subsided and the monastery renovation complete, and with the seminary back to its normal mode of operations, we revisited the idea and decided that it was time to embark on this building project.

We hired architects to guide us through the processes. The architects conducted meetings with the administrators, maintenance and custodial staff, residential supervisors, and students. The entire process was collaborative. We met with and made a proposal to the Provincial Council, and with their blessing, we began. We are building on the site of the old guest house, and we are naming it Father Solanus Hall in honor of the holy and revered Capuchin friar from Wisconsin. Father Solanus is known for his unassuming simplicity, profound faith, and selfless deeds. He is now in the process of becoming a saint and serves as an excellent role model to our students.

As Rector of St. Lawrence Seminary, I am tremendously grateful to have the opportunity to provide our senior students and all those who will come after them with a better, more suitable, and more conducive residence. By embarking on this project, we communicate to the public our commitment to our mission. By naming the building after Father Solanus, we hope to inspire a new generation of disciples of Jesus and ambassadors for Christ so that one day, like Father Solanus, they, too, will dedicate their lives to God and in service to others.

-Fr. Zoy Garibay, OFM Cap.

Staying Connected

The memories made at SLS bind a class together and give them something to talk about for years afterwards.

BY: DON MUELLER '64

To understand the first “Baby Boomer Class,” it’s helpful to look at the times, in church and society. John Kennedy was elected the first Catholic President. The Cold War with nuclear threats was heating up with the Cuban Missile Crisis. Racial inequalities were challenging our country. On TV, *Leave It to Beaver* and *Andy Griffith* provided humor and solid values of respect (even if not agreeing), forgiveness, gratitude, responsibility, etc. “Soul music” and *American Bandstand* moved hearts.

Elderly Pope John XXIII “rocked” the church-world by gathering over two thousand bishops, for the first time with non-Catholic observers. The Second Vatican Council changed the Catholic identity from a pyramid-based hierarchy (“Perfect Society”) to a circular “People of God” (inclusive of all humans), all “called to holiness.” At SLS we prayed for the Spirit to renew us. Around 30 ordained Capuchin brothers were our faculty, with about a dozen “lay brothers” serving our needs with their talents of nursing, maintenance, music, etc. In

our senior year, physical education teacher John Horn became the first non-Capuchin staff member. Less than two miles away from the “poor boys’ seminary” was the Brothers’ School which prepared teenagers interested in being religious brothers. Occasionally, we got together, primarily for sports. The Capuchins, known as the “Marines of the Church,” served the marginalized and underserved around the world.

Starting with 99 classmates, many from the greater Midwest, we came to explore a call to priesthood. Some were influenced by parents, older brothers, alumni relatives, pastors, and teachers, most often religious women. Others joined in the following years but many more left by their choice or school discipline. Many who left remain our friends and return for alumni reunions or keep in touch. We enjoyed a family spirit with nicknames such as Rockin’ Jerr, Cappy or Sparks. Earl Pulvermacher enjoyed the special distinction of having the most nicknames: Porky, Plungermacker, and Early Bird. From sophomore year, illness began to cripple him.



The hours spent together in prayer and worship form some of the strongest of memories on the Hill.

Many classmates like 6’4” Bill Lee had permission to carry Earl to class, prayer or around school. Forty-four graduated, with Earl celebrating his “new life” early on April 8. We remembered him fondly at his funeral.

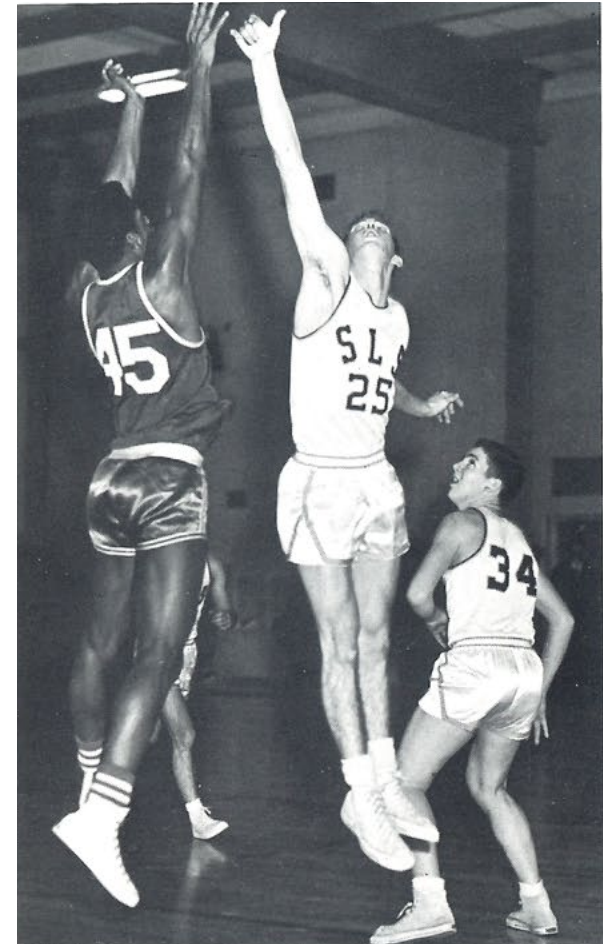
One classmate, Ken Lewis, owned a Harley and loved to ride it. On July 3, 1964, a little over a month after graduation, Ken washed his cycle and planned a nice July 4th weekend. About 9:00 P.M. he rode over to McDonald’s and on the way home, a vehicle without the right-of-way shot across a busy intersection. He had no time to react and hit the vehicle causing him to fly over the handlebars and hit the passenger door and windshield post with his face. The hospital staff and a helmet saved his life. He had numerous broken bones and lost an eye. His folks contacted SLS asking for prayers. During the weeks in the hospital, many classmates contacted him by visits, cards, or phone calls. Besides offering prayers, Capuchins also visited him.

Our bonding grew through extra-curricular activities such as the “L” (alias Morons) Club “stuffing” SLS fundraising mailings printed by students in our print shop. The Catholic Students’ Mission Crusade (CSMC) nurtured interest in worldwide or cross-cultural mission. The Franciscan Third Order, choir, band, plays, canteen, sports, newsletters and the yearbook (started in 1963), dorm prefects, librarians, barbers, Field Day, Sunday night movies, hikes off campus (with permission!), rumbles below the hill and even “kneeling out” when we were late for chapel united us.

We were no saints! Teenagers can be cruel to each other, and our class was not immune. We had some “characters” that we gave a hard time. For example, a mouthy guy in freshman dorm pushed a couple of classmates too far. They welcomed him into the bathroom to wash his face in the toilet. Another guy tried his best to get kicked out because his mother had the vocation. A smart kid, he did his best to flunk out. For three quarters, Fr. Vernon gave him a D in religion. When Fr. Vernon realized what he was trying to do, the guy got his wish by failing out. The Capuchins weren’t afraid to challenge us. A history teacher asked one guy: “Are you going to be an [expletive deleted] all your life?”

Upon graduation, more than a dozen classmates caught the fire of our “Capuchin” brothers and joined. Some entered other seminaries; others felt called to use their gifts other ways as teachers, medical personnel, engineers, police, craftsmen, factory workers, etc. Most carried with them the values of Calvary. For some the reality of the Vietnam War became a real threat to their own peace: How to reconcile giving your life for

Because basketball was the only major sport played against other schools at that time (and even then, only against other seminaries), the games were an opportunity to form intense school pride.



How many memories have been made by Sons of Calvary on and behind stage? Theater has been an integral part of the SLS experience, as evidenced by this 1964 production of *The Bachelor's Club*.

Christ to possibly having to take a life for what you believe in. Those men served in many levels from enlisted to officers, even a two-star Admiral. They served from medics to MPs, from jet pilots to submarine radio men. Most became parents, while some remained single and shared their gifts that way. Many developed lifelong relationships. Alumni reunions always included former profs and lots of laughter and reminiscing, plus sound advice. We respect all our classmates.

I have acted as my class liaison for years. Many classmates approached me to see whether we could get together this year to celebrate our 60th anniversary. We formed a team and got actively involved in researching, contacting classmates by any means possible. With the help of SLS, we were able to form a type of blended reunion consisting of classmates who could make it to the Hill for the annual reunion, and a virtual meeting on that day for the guys who could not.

To help with this article, we asked classmates what their time at SLS meant. At least 30 classmates contributed to this article. The overwhelming response shows the faith, hope and love that the Capuchin community continues to give young men and their families.

Sons of Calvary return or stay in touch because they have internalized the Capuchin Spirit of knowing God's love personally and been able to try to love all, to hope and dream a better world and are learning over the years to embrace daily disappointments and stresses with inner peace and joy. We love to belt out our alma mater ... with tears in our eyes. Success is not our goal, but unselfish service. ■



(Top to bottom) Staying connected over the years and the miles isn't easy, but the class of 1964 has worked hard to organize periodic reunions.

WANT TO ORGANIZE A CLASS REUNION ON THE HILL?

FOR INFORMATION ON HOW TO DO SO, CONTACT DIRECTOR OF INSTITUTIONAL ADVANCEMENT KEVIN BUELOW '98 BY EMAIL: KBUELOW@STLAWRENCE.EDU OR CALL: (920)753-7582.



Staying Connected by Zoom

BY: KEN McDONALD '56

Being one of the Sons of Calvary has changed my life forever, and the spirit of St. Lawrence lives in the hearts of all who lived their formative years on the Hill as a Son of Calvary.

In 2005, Peter Billquist and I decided to find our classmates and have a 50th reunion back on the Hill in June 2006. We were successful: out of 52 in our graduation class, thirty-six attended, and it was like we had stayed in touch over the last 50 years. What a great reunion to see classmates sharing memories and where life's journey had taken each of us after St Lawrence. From our class, twelve became Catholic priests and two became Episcopal priests.

This reunion was a real bonding of the friendships we had as younger men in our formative years. As we parted, we vowed to stay in touch and not let more years

slip by. Five of us couples formed a group that met twice a year.

In 2020 Covid-19 isolated everyone with fear, and everyone stayed home. Life took a drastic turn for all of us. The video platform Zoom had become very popular and allowed us to stay connected with family and friends.

One day I wondered: what are my classmates from St Lawrence doing? We still had a list of all the alumni of 1956 reunion buried in the computer. We started calling and found many were interested in getting together on Zoom. So we set up that first Zoom call.

Ever since then, my wife Yolanda has set up and managed our meetings: every Tuesday at 1:00 Arizona time, which is early enough for those on the East coast. We share memories from our years on the Hill as well as news of our families, travels and lives.

We have from 8 to 15 joining the conversation each week. We have three priests, wives and even one widow who joins us weekly. It keeps us connected still.

Zoom meetings are a great way to stay connected. How can you do it? First, gather the e-mails of your classmates, some of which can be obtained from St. Lawrence. Then, create a group e-mail for contact. You can visit for 40 minutes free on Zoom or pay for a membership and chat longer. You will need someone to become your scheduling coordinator. It does take planning at first, but then becomes routine to connect as often as the group likes to meet. We're sharing because we have loved being together with classmates and not losing contact. We continue the fond memories of St Lawrence on the "Hill of Happiness." ■

Learning Brotherhood

The Fraternity Turns 30

BY: FR. GARY WEGNER OFM CAP. '76

The alumni of St. Lawrence Seminary often speak of the brotherhood they shared with their classmates. It is real and it is for life. Once, while sitting at a table at the wedding reception of an alumnus, I had an interesting conversation with the fiancée of another alumnus. She shared with me her observation that there was a bond between her fiancé and his classmates. She thought it was obvious to anyone who shared a life with an SLS alum. That is brotherhood.

Since 1994, the students have been divided into “fraternities.” The fraternity system focuses the brotherhood among the students in a way that is different from what would come naturally, and extends it beyond the individual classes to the larger student body. Each fraternity is arranged into groups of 10 to 12 students with a balance of freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors in each. At the head of each fraternity are the seniors. They have a number of responsibilities and opportunities to develop their

leadership skills. Among these responsibilities is their sponsorship of their respective freshmen: they welcome, engage, and support each of these young men throughout the year.

One of the biggest benefits of the fraternity system is that, from day one, every student is plugged into a support network of peers—a group of brothers looking out for each other.

Within that first year, the student dining room was organized by fraternities. It has been that way ever since.

Initially, fraternities sat together in chapel for Morning and Evening Prayer and weekday Masses. Over time, the fraternity system expanded into other areas of student life. An early addition that was given the members of each fraternity was the responsibility for the liturgical ministries each week—the seniors are lectors, the juniors lead the intercessions, the sophomores serve as acolytes and the freshmen bring up the gifts.

To prepare for their week of liturgical leadership, a fraternity would meet on Sunday evening with the Rector to reflect on the next Sunday’s scripture readings. Additionally, each Saturday, a different fraternity would prepare and lead the student evening prayer. Weekly “fraternity prayer” on Tuesdays was another opportunity for senior leadership. Each fraternity met in a designated location where they would pray, using a script prepared by members of the Student Spiritual Life Committee. These prayer experiences varied in quality, depending on senior leadership.

An age-old challenge in high schools can be managing the fierce competition between the classes—freshmen/sophomores, sophomores/juniors, and juniors/seniors. At SLS, Winter Carnival and Field Day could become hypercompetitive, leading to arguments that sometimes ended in visits to the Dean of Students. All that changed when first Winter Carnival and then Field Day changed from class to fraternity competitions. A sophomore may want to beat the freshmen or juniors and vice versa, but it is more difficult to get emotionally invested in wanting to crush Fraternity 14! The desire to win rather than defeat another class changes the climate.

For most of my years at SLS I was tasked with arranging the fraternities. Sometimes a student would accuse me of having “loaded” a fraternity with athletes. I plead “Not Guilty.” When forming fraternities, I tried to make sure there was an ethnic balance. I also tried to make sure that a fraternity was not filled with extroverts or introverts. I do admit that once I was tempted to create an “all-Jason” fraternity as we had “Jasons” from every ethnic group spread across the classes. I resisted. I confess that I did give in to put together a fraternity with a senior named “Jesus” with the other students bearing the names of the Apostles. I waited to see how long it would take them figure it out...about a month.

Today, the fraternity system continues to evolve to meet the needs of the students. Now faculty members are paired with fraternities and serve as mentors, checking in on all students to make sure classes are going well and homework is getting done. Faculty mentors and seniors also plan fraternity outings and get-togethers.

The fraternity system is ingrained into the SLS experience. Alumni often talk about how they looked up to their seniors. Alumni often return to campus just to watch their freshmen graduate. The system has served SLS well. In all likelihood, fraternities will remain, for years to come, a significant aspect of the St. Lawrence experience. ■

Fraternities gather daily to share meals (top) and to pray (middle). They also engage in special seasonal activities (bottom) that build lifelong bonds.

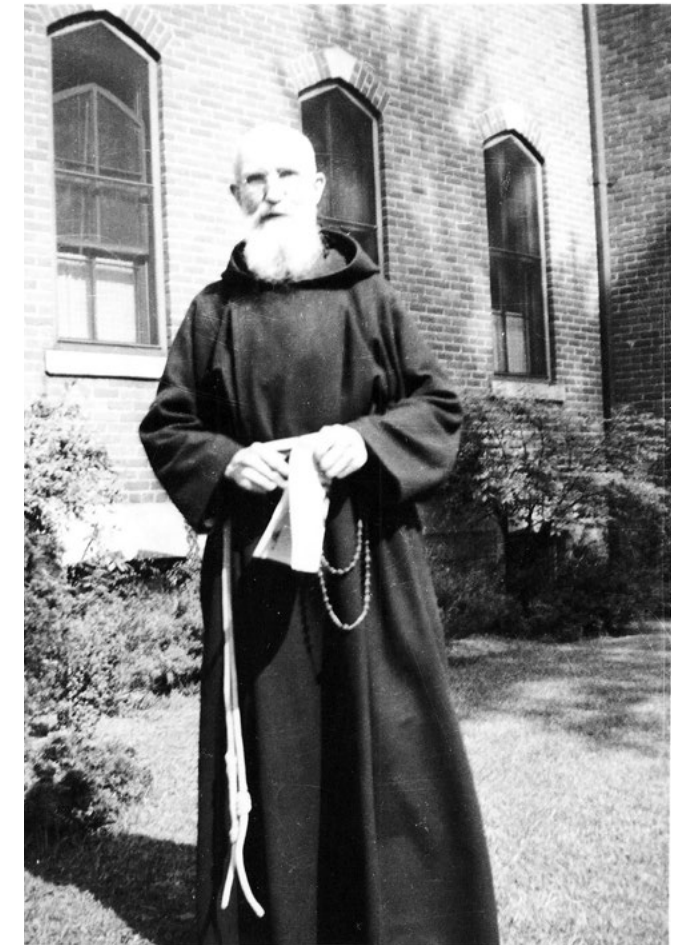


For years, Field Day has been a fraternity competition.





(Left) A rendering of the new senior dorm, which is on track for completion before the 2025-2026 school year.
 (Below) Father Solanus Casey is an exemplary model for SLS students. "Blessed be God in all His designs," is a phrase that he used often.



Blessed be God in All His Designs: Building Father Solanus Hall

BY: KEVIN BUELOW '98

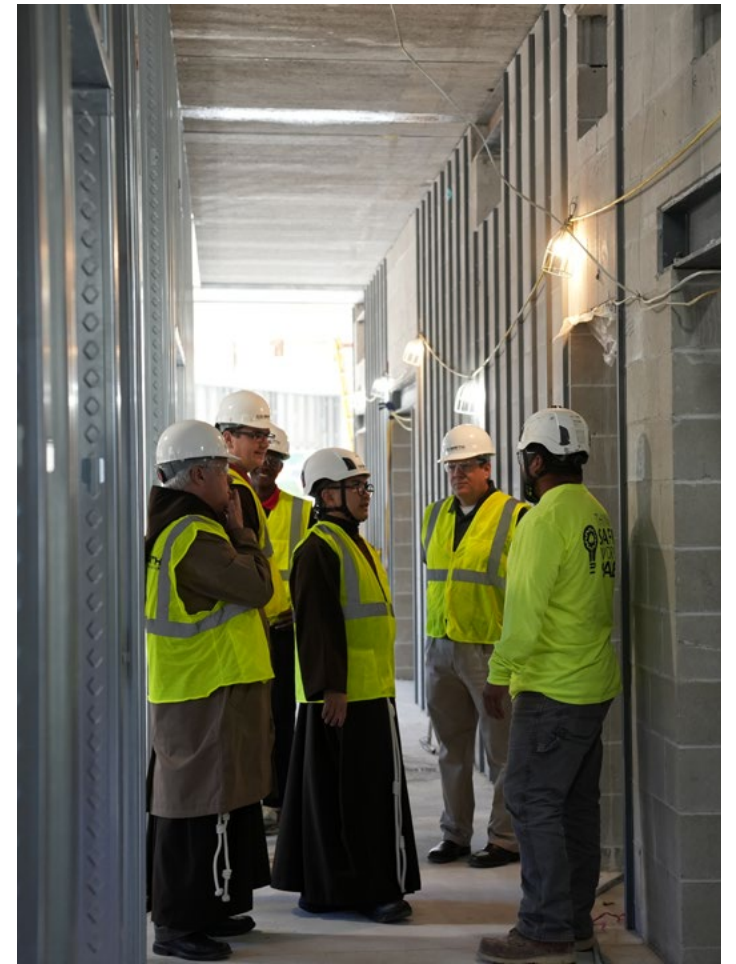
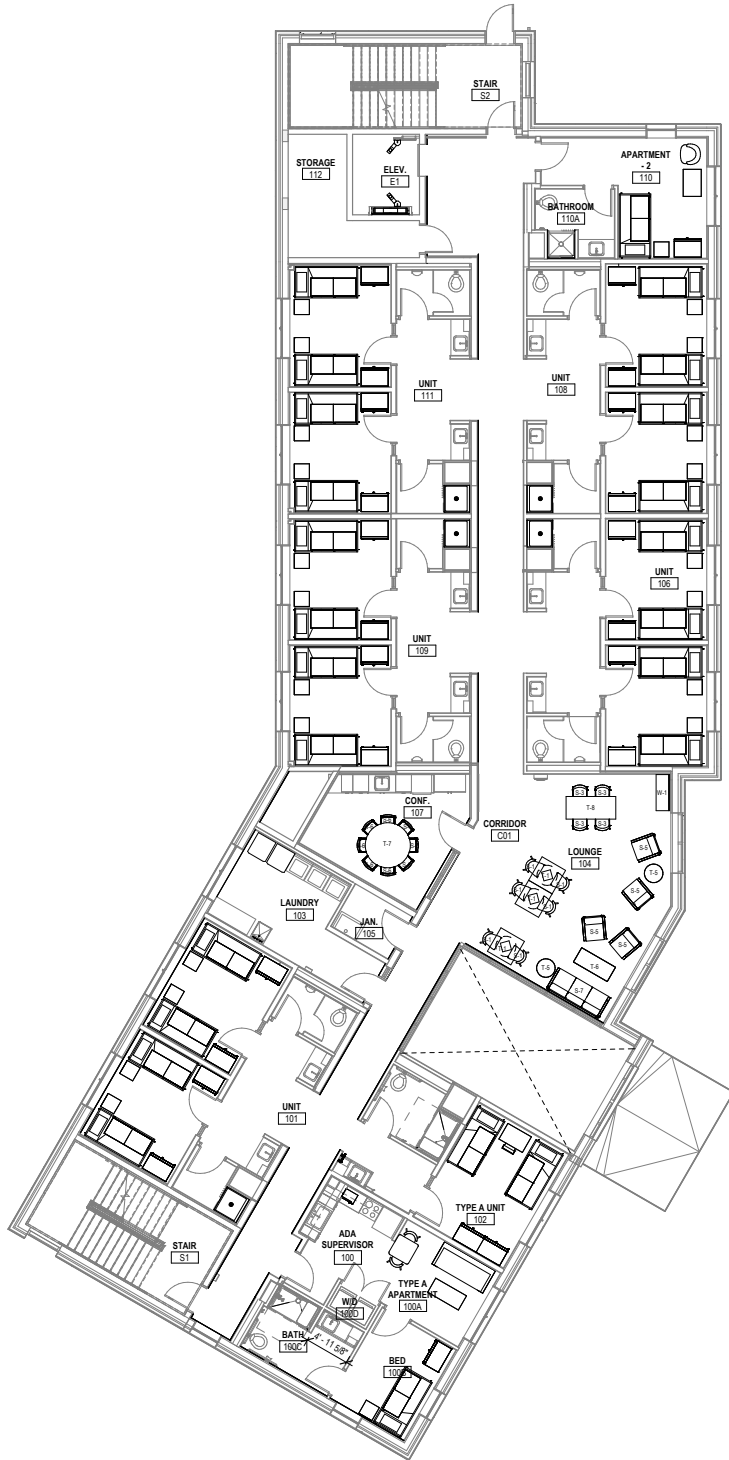
St. Francis Hall was the home away from home for generations of St. Lawrence alumni. For most of its time, it served as part of the college program. Since the 1990s the building has housed the seniors. Whatever your connection to the Hill, the memories from this building are boundless. Standing since 1917, its terrazzo flooring, radiators under the windows, and wooden handrails and doorframes are a throwback into history. However, for all of its charm, the unique characteristics of a century-old building also come with antiquated and missing systems which are necessary for safety and modern life. These necessities point towards the need for an upgrade. The most viable option was the building of Father Solanus Hall.

The new dormitory at St. Lawrence will be dedicated to our own "saint in the making." Many ask, "was Blessed Solanus ever at St. Lawrence?" The answer: he must have been. He was a native of western Wisconsin



Students will be able to relax in a beautiful garden outside the front door.

(Right) Students and staff have been able to monitor building process from the windows of the refectory. (Below) A floorplan gives a general idea of the quad-style room arrangement.



Provincial Minister Fr. Mark Joseph Costello, Fr. Zoy Garibay, Mr. Kevin Buelow and student representatives inspect construction on the new Father Solanus Hall.

who attended a minor seminary in Milwaukee, was ordained in Milwaukee, and celebrated his first Mass in Appleton; his travels would have undoubtedly led him through Mt. Calvary. While he was never assigned to the friary at St. Lawrence, his ministry in both New York and Detroit had a lasting impact on many, including as one of the founders of the Capuchin Soup Kitchen. The prayers for his canonization continue, but he will always be remembered within the Province as “Father Solanus.”

Father Solanus Hall is already taking shape on the east side of campus on the site of the former St. Clare Guest House. As visitors walk past the statue of Blessed Solanus upon entering the building, they will move directly into the recreation space for the dorm. Dorm lobbies continue to be a main hang out on campus, with the seniors enjoying a ping-pong table, T.V. and kitchenette in the lower level of St. Francis Hall. The new dorm will be no different, just upgraded. Additionally, the lower level will contain a conference room for class meetings, studying, or gathering.

The second and third floors of Father Solanus Hall will be the residential areas of the dorm. As seniors enter their final year at SLS, the thought was to create space that would resemble more closely a college experience.

Rather than opting for the cubes like all other dorms, the seniors will have a “quad” of students, where they will share rooms, but for every two rooms there will be a shared bathroom and shower. Like all other dorms, a main supervisory apartment for a friar or lay supervisor will be on the 2nd and 3rd floors. Each floor will also have an additional supervisor room. And, of course, there will be laundry facilities.

Father Solanus Hall will have a few unique features. A prayer space on both residential levels will create a quiet space for the students to take a break from their busy schedules for reflection. Additionally, an enclosed skywalk will connect the dorm to St. Mary Hall, just next to the refectory and meeting rooms. As with all recent construction, the new dorm will have the many behind-the-scenes items for the operation of the building, including adequate fire protection, HVAC, and ADA accessibility.

The excitement on campus continues as the students watch the construction from the refectory windows. The project remains on schedule for the Class of 2026 to move in this August.

Using the profound words of Blessed Solanus Casey, we would like to... “Thank God ahead of time.” ■

THERE IS STILL GREAT NEED FOR FINANCIAL SUPPORT OF THIS ENDEAVOR. FOR THOSE ABLE TO SUPPORT THIS PROJECT, PLEASE VISIT [HTTPS://WWW.STLAWRENCESEMINARY.ORG/FATHER-SOLANUS-HALL](https://www.stlawrenceseminary.org/father-solanus-hall) OR USE THE QR CODE TO ACCESS RENDERINGS AND A WAY TO DONATE.



IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT DONATIONS, PLEASE EMAIL: KBUELOW@STLAWRENCE.EDU OR CALL (920)753-7582.

Brindisi Award Recipients

Every year the Alumni Association recognizes alumni who live lives of outstanding service, transformational ministry and faith-filled leadership with the Brindisi Award.

Dr. Robert Weber '45

After graduating from St. Lawrence, military service and dental school, Robert Weber opened a dental practice in Sheboygan Falls, Wisconsin. Shortly after, his life of ministry to the Church began.

In 1956, Bob joined the St. Vincent de Paul Society conference at his parish. He is still an active member today. For 68 years, Bob has been working to help meet the temporal needs of the people of his community. He has worked hard to keep his district active and involved. Today, his conference still has 20 active members.

Bob and his wife Tess first got involved in their parish's faith formation program in the 1960s. Though at the busiest time of their lives, raising a family and beginning their careers, they faithfully took active roles in the education of their parish youth. Their classes were always full.

After six decades in the classroom, Bob finally retired from teaching faith formation last year, watching 36 young people of his parish get confirmed. Over his many years in his parish faith formation program, Bob guided thousands of young people to closer relationships with God.

Bob's wife Tess had three brothers who graduated from St. Lawrence Seminary: Francis Schlaefter '43, Anthony Schlaefter '41, and Salvador Schlaefter '38. Salvador became ordained and eventually became bishop of Nicaragua. Anthony, an optometrist, began traveling to Nicaragua annually to run vision clinics for those in need. Anthony's daughter, also an optometrist, continued this tradition after her father retired.

In 2005, she asked her uncle Bob to come down and help her with these vision checks. He did. When some Nicaraguans discovered that Bob was a dentist, they

Dr. Robert Weber '45 received the Brindisi Award at the Alumni Reunion in September.



asked him to give them checkups. So he did.

Recognizing a profound need for better dental education, he established a program to do so. In a subsequent trip, he taught four local women how to teach dental hygiene. He supplied them with literature and toothbrushes and paid them a stipend to teach school-children and locals how to maintain proper dental hygiene. He personally made nine trips to Nicaragua and funded the program for many years.

Bob's lifelong dedication to the Catholic faith, his care of God's people and his desire to educate future generations make him an exemplary Son of Calvary! ■

Fr. John Hascall, OFM Cap. '59

Fr. John was perpetually professed as a Capuchin on September 1, 1963, and was ordained on October 19, 1967. He passed away in 2022.

He was an early member of the American Indian Movement and his ministry was deeply united with his membership in and role of medicine man of the Ojibwa nation. Most of his ministry was spent in his hometown of Sault Ste. Marie, Assinins, and Baraga, Michigan, but he also ministered to the Crow Nation in Montana.

From 1986 to 1989 he served as president of the Tekakwitha Conference in Great Falls then served as pastor of St. Charles Parish in Pryor. Afterwards he returned to his Ojibwa Nation in the Upper Peninsula.

From 1983 to 1992, the Conference responded by providing native-centered Catholic leadership training on enculturating native traditions within a Catholic context. These were one- and two-week summer training institutes led by Father John Hascall, Sister Jose Hobday, and others.

Hascall said it has only been in recent years that the Catholic Church has come to accept the compatibility of Native American ways and Christian faith. "The church is growing up. It is understanding what the reforms of Vatican II are all about," Hascall said. "We Indian people have the responsibility to understand the ceremonies of our culture, love ourselves for who we are-and so pass on the tradition. We are Native American people living the Catholic Christian life in our Native American way."

The President of the Tekakwitha Conference, Fr. John Hascall, priest, Capuchin and Medicine Man for his Ojibwa people lead the traditional ceremony of the Sweat Lodge, supervised people in the fasting and prayer of Vision Quests, and conducted healing ministry. John Hascall offered a significant model of an in-

Fr. Larry Ablor '56 accepted the Brindisi Award on behalf of Fr. John Hascall '59 at the Alumni Reunion. Fr. John died in 2022.



tegrated Native peoples and Catholic Christian life. Fr. John summed this up in the opening talk of the 1986 Tekakwitha Conference held in Bozeman, Montana: "Before we used to wonder if we could be Indian and Christian. Now we know that we can only be Christian if we are Indian."

Fr. John's life and ministry serve as a testament to his faith and make him a model for all students and alumni of St. Lawrence. For this, he was honored posthumously with the Brindisi Award. ■

The Alumni Association Board welcomes nominations for the Brindisi Award to outstanding alumni of St. Lawrence Seminary. The candidate must be actively engaged in a Christian faith community and demonstrate excellence in service, ministry or leadership. To obtain a current nomination form or inquire about the nomination process, please contact Alumni Board Brindisi Award Coordinator Michael Pickart at pickartm@icloud.com (715-338-8947).

We shall never 'ere be parted...

Alumni News:

3-on-3 Tournament

On Saturday, February 10th the Alumni Association held its annual 3-on-3 basketball tournament. Over 50 alumni joined in the fun, with 12 teams competing, representing classes from 1976 to 2023. Congratulations to the Class of 2017 on their second tournament victory!



Spring Play: *Something Rotten*

On May 3rd, 4th and 5th, St. Lawrence Seminary students performed *Something Rotten*, a spoof of Shakespearean-era theater. The Alumni Association hosted its annual gathering before the Saturday show. Approximately two dozen alumni met and shared stories of their time on the Hill.



Sons of Calvary Ride

The third annual Sons of Calvary motorcycle ride took place on Saturday, June 8th. Participants met on the Hill for a cookout, followed by Mass and a blessing of the bikes by Rector Fr. Zoy Garibay. This year, the event was open to all, not just those with motorcycles.



Alumni Reunion

The annual all-class Alumni Reunion was held on September 21st in conjunction with the Hilltopper Cross Country Invitational. Hundreds of alumni and their families were on hand for the event, including several classes celebrating major anniversaries.



Brindisi Award Recipients

At the Alumni Reunion on September 21st, the Alumni Association awarded Bob Weber '45 and Fr. John Hascall, OFM Cap. '59 with the Brindisi Award. Fr. John received the award posthumously, as he died in 2022. The award was accepted on his behalf by Fr. Larry Abler, OFM Cap. '56.



Christmas Concert

The annual St. Lawrence Seminary Christmas Concert was held on December 20th in the chapel. Many alumni were on hand to join the choir in the sanctuary for the traditional concert closer "Sleigh Ride."



Upcoming Events:

FEBRUARY 1

3-on-3 Tournament

Get your classmates ready to take the court for the annual basketball tournament. It's a good time even if you don't play. **Band alums—play with the pep band for the varsity game!** For more information, email Danny Matthew: dmatthew@stlawrence.edu.

APRIL 26

Alumni Service Project

Join fellow alumni with a service project at St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Milwaukee. Watch for announcements.

MAY 2, 3, 4

Bringing Down the House!

Come for this year's play: *Bringing Down the House!* Billed as a "musical without words," it is sure to be a great show! Come see it on **Alumni Night, May 3.**

MAY 9

Questor's Club

The Questor's Club is a Capuchin fundraising dinner held at St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Milwaukee. To attend at the St. Lawrence tables, contact Kevin Buelow at kbuelow@stlawrence.edu.

JUNE 8

Sons of Calvary Ride

Ride your motorcycle, drive your classic car or bring your...whatever...to the Hill for an afternoon of food, fellowship and fun. This event is a great time to meet alums from across the years.

Stay informed!

To make sure that you have all the information on upcoming alumni events, including dates and instructions on how to register, update your contact information with the Alumni Association at our website: www.stlawrence.edu.



A Hero's Origin Story

BY: ANTHONY VAN ASTEN '01

In the “Hero’s Heroes” portion of the alumni magazine, we typically celebrate current students doing amazing things. This time, however, we’d like to celebrate the eponymous Hero.

Hero the Hilltopper has been a part of St. Lawrence Seminary culture and iconography for decades. Just recently, the school instituted a new rite of passage named the “Rite of Hero the Hilltopper” for freshmen at the end of their freshman year to celebrate their progress on their “climb” towards graduation.

Despite the reliance on this imagery, not much had been known about the origin of Hero, the iconic mountain climber. A *Sons of Calvary* article from 2015 traced the origin to the mid-1960s, finding an image of the Hilltopper in the 1967 yearbook. A photo from the 1968 yearbook included evidence of his name as “Hero.” Beyond that, however, nothing more was known about his origin.

Recently, however, the school received a letter from Rev. Robert Kosarek '66 and '68 in which he takes credit for the creation of Hero. He writes:

“As I recall, we were just launching the student newspaper and I joined the original *Hilltopics* staff, mostly as a reporter for the sports scene. Being someone who liked cartooning, I wanted to add a few cartoons to my articles now and again. But we had no mascot, just the name ‘Hilltoppers.’ I was challenged to create something, probably by my classmate and good friend Jerry Kliejunas, also on the paper’s staff. My mind envisioned the Hilltopper as a mountain climber, likely because running up the Hill from the playing fields at the bottom always seemed like a hard climb to me. Another influence might have been the arrival of the musical *The Sound of Music* in theaters that year, and the song ‘Climb Every Mountain’ became part of every graduation for the next two decades. Also, since anyone who can make it to the top of a high mountain has done something heroic, I put a ‘Hero’ button on the Hilltoppers chest. Thus, ‘Hero Hilltopper’ was born.”

Along with his letter, Bob included some of his original cartoon images.

Rev. Robert J Koszarek celebrated 50 years of priesthood this year. ■



What began as some simple sketches in Robert’s notebook became an iconic figure that can be found all over campus.

Public Speaking: From Calvary to College to Career

BY: ANDREW WELHOUSE '00

There's an old Seinfeld joke about a lot of people's number-one fear: public speaking. Number two, Seinfeld says, is death. More people are afraid of public speaking than they are of death, meaning that if you have to go to a funeral, you'd rather be in the casket than the one doing the eulogy.

St. Lawrence, of course, is at the other end of most of our lifetimes — it's a time to experience new things, new emotions, and sometimes, new fears we didn't know we had.

For me, that was St. Lawrence's competitive public speaking program: forensics.

For those of you who weren't in forensics, it works like this: Each student selects a category for competition, ranging from the performance of an existing piece (e.g., prose or poetry) to the writing and presentation of an original work, either as an individual or a team, and either with extensive preparation or made up on the spot. Then, the competitors pick, rehearse, and present their work at competitions against other students around the state.

Like any other competition, there are highs and lows, successes and failures, and plenty of lessons to be learned. If athletic competition teaches you about teamwork, practice, and sportsmanship, forensics teaches confidence, persuasion, and emotion.

I didn't know until years later how far those lessons would take me.

As a freshman, I was a shy kid who didn't want the spotlight. I was skinny, awkward, and I certainly wasn't a gifted public speaker. But, like so many other students at SLS, I was challenged to get outside my comfort zone.

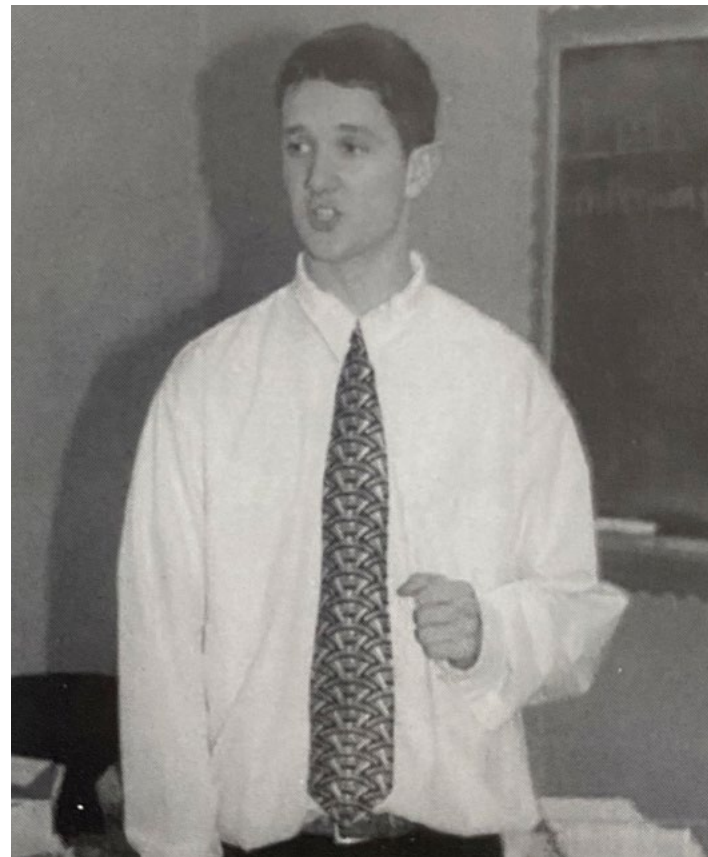
I'll never forget our forensics coach, Fr. Gary Wegner, pushing me to work harder, refusing to give up when I wanted to quit, and throwing me into the deep end of competition. In my second year, Fr. Gary challenged me again by assigning the category of Original Oratory, a

10-minute original persuasive speech, written and presented without notes.

And a funny thing happened — I loved it.

I started working harder on my speech and my preparation, and by the time I was an upperclassman, I was competing at the state finals and was asked to be a co-captain of our team.

Those lessons didn't stop at graduation. For 15 years afterward, I continued to serve as a judge and occasional coach for SLS. In my professional career in politics, I have written speeches, talking points, and helped political candidates and elected officials with their public speaking and debate at two state capitols and on the campaign trail.



Like many Sons of Calvary, Andrew got his first taste of public speaking on the forensics team.



I know those lessons have helped plenty of my teammates as well: speaking in public is an underrated superpower in life (and in plenty of careers). For many of us, our first experience with it was in forensics.

Today, I am proud to pass those lessons on to the next generation as an assistant coach with the University of Utah's John R. Park Debate Society, a highly competitive collegiate program for debate and individual speeches. I work with some really amazing students on their speechwriting, their stage presence, their organization, and forcing them to get outside their own comfort zone.

This brings me to my most important point. (If this were a speech, I would advise getting to this point faster...) Forensics is about a lot more than the competition itself.

For me, it was about the friendships with my teammates — something I see in my own students and their teammates today. It was about the challenge of trying something hard and accomplishing something I didn't know was possible. It was about giving a voice to something important and learning the skills to share it confidently with others.

Look...were there students who only joined forensics because there were girls at the competitions and a

McDonald's stop on the way back? Yes.

Was I one of them at first? Also, yes.

But I found out that St. Lawrence also gave you a front-row seat to great public speaking every Wednesday, Friday, and Sunday with the homilies at Mass: confident speakers using their voices to talk from the heart about something important.

And we learned poetry and prose, writing and speaking in our English classes — like the ones taught at St. Lawrence today by Mr. Van Asten — someone with whom I shared those long Saturday bus rides to forensics meets nearly 30 years ago, and someone who is a lifelong friend today.

And Fr. Gary Wegner, the coach who challenged me all those years ago, was the officiant at my wedding. He even gave a great speech at the reception. ■

HAVE A STORY TO TELL OR A MEMORY YOU WOULD LIKE TO SHARE? WRITE TO US OR SEND AN EMAIL AT: sonsofcalvary@stlawrence.edu



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