

# Waldtopics

*Saint Lawrence Seminary*

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Issue I



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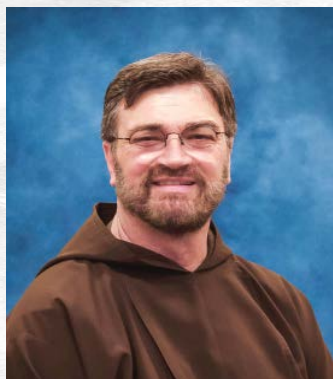
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## A Spiritual Message



"Jesus came to Nazareth, where he had grown up, and went according to his custom into the synagogue on the Sabbath day. He stood up to read and was handed a scroll of the prophet Isaiah. He unrolled the scroll and found the passage where it was written: *'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord.'*"

The above scripture passage is from the Gospel of Luke (4:16-19). This particular scene, which portrays Jesus proclaiming a passage from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah (61: 1-2) to those assembled inside a synagogue, took place at the start of Jesus' public ministry. This proclamation has become Jesus' opening salvo, declaring his purpose—his mission—to all who were present and were listening.

An integral part of Jesus' mission is "to proclaim liberty to captives." Saint Paul spoke about creation being "made subject to futility, not of its own accord but because of the one who subjected it in hope that creation itself would be set free from slavery to corruption and share in the glorious freedom of the children of God" (Romans 8:20-21). Jesus came into the world to free us from the bondage of death, to bring us out of the shadow of sin, and to lead us "into the freedom his marvelous light" (1 Peter 2:9).

"Breaking Limits" becomes for us, Christians, a reminder that is both timely and timeless: to break the limits set on by sin and to live in the freedom of being God's children. As we make our journey into this new school year, I hope that this theme will become a focus of both our spiritual as well as our mundane efforts. "Breaking Limits" is also what our new publications team are trying to achieve in this year's inaugural issue of *Hilltopics*. Our publications team came up with this novel and creative idea of having a theme for each *Hilltopics* issue. I commend them for that, and I very much look forward to behold them "Breaking Limits" in their work this year.

-Fr. Joy Garribay





# SLS GAME ON

By: Alan Mora ('26)

Finally, after a long and relaxing summer, the fall sports season begins. Soccer and cross-country practice starts immediately after school on the first day. All of the students look forward to trying out.

Cross-country practice alternates between distance and speed days, with each day beginning with stretches. Distance training helps the runners build muscle and endurance. Speed training focuses on longer strides and faster times. During distance training, runners' also complete triples, which are three sets of three different strengthen exercises, such as sit-ups and push-ups. Runners practice on various types of terrain and elevations.

Cristian Cruz ('25) comments, "Cross Country is a very mental sport. You really have to break through the pain and keep going. It's worth it at the end once you feel the accomplishment of finishing." After a rigorous week of practice and meets, the team unwinds by playing Ultimate Frisbee for fun.



Soccer has a similar practice schedule and game structure. Practice begins with conditioning warm-ups, followed by specific skills training, to improve a player's shooting, dribbling, or executing plays. Teamwork is essential for every game. When asked about the team's motivation, head coach Vervaeck responded, "For some, competing and winning is what drives them. For others, it's the camaraderie with their classmates." Alan Gonzalez ('26) explains, "The games are intense. You have to think quickly to make the right move. It's fun to play and learn from your mistakes because, there's no limits in improvement."

Both fall sports have a special SLS events tied to them, the annual Hilltopper and Alumni Weekend. The Hilltopper is an invitational cross-country meet hosted by SLS. Many alumni return to campus as spectators and some participate in the events. After the cross-country race is finished, there is the annual alumni vs. SLS student soccer game. These competitions are referred to as "Alumni Weekend". Both are one of the most anticipated occasions of the school year.





# RUN! HILLTOPPERS, RUN!

By: Max Trinh ('25)

Every year, St. Lawrence Seminary hosts the highly anticipated cross-country Hilltopper Invitational. This year, the 46th annual event took place on Saturday, September 21. Early Saturday morning, twelve different schools arrived on campus to participate in our arduous course. The event started with the varsity girls' race, followed by the varsity boys' race. One of our very own Hilltoppers, Justin Wagner ('28), placed 6th overall. Justin, who has been running cross-country since 8th grade stated, "It was a hard race. Training definitely helped by running the hills on campus." Cristian Cruz ('25) added, "The competition was tough; I'm so proud we endured. Nobody knows this course as well as we do; we have home field advantage." The JV races followed and the final race was the "Fun Run," which was open to everyone.

Staff and students worked from behind the scenes, to make this event possible. There were parking crews, guiding cars in and out of various parking areas on campus, concession stand volunteers selling food to visitors and students, water station volunteers, distributing cups of water to hydrate the runners, and race directors, keeping runners on the 5K course throughout the race. This year, the course was altered slightly due to construction surrounding the new senior dorm, making the race director's job especially important. Alex Biju ('25) was part of the parking crew, said, "My job was to make sure no cars parked in front of St. Joseph Hall because it would interfere with the race."

The annual Alumni Weekend also took place on this day. SLS Alumni returned to play the annual soccer game and to reminisce. The class of 1974, especially, showed up in numbers to celebrate their 50th anniversary. This year's alumni attendance exceeded that of previous years with over 150 attending the event. After the Hilltopper races, lunch was served at the concession stand, followed by the alumni vs. student soccer game. The game had two 30-minute halves. The first half was played between the alumni and the varsity team. The alumni managed to score the first goal, but Seungwon "Drew" Lee ('25) dribbled down the field and shot a powerful goal, evening the score. Mr. Anthony Van Asten ('01) played goalkeeper for the alumni, but despite his skills, his efforts were in vain, as the ball slipped from his grasp ended up in the back of the net. The second half featured the alumni vs. JV team. The JV team played valiantly and showed determination, but the alumni proved they still had it in them, prevailing with a score of (4-1).

To conclude the event, a Vigil Mass was held, during which the prestigious Brindisi award was presented. This year, there were two recipients: Fr. John Hascall ('59) and Dr. Robert Weber ('45). Fr. Larry Abler accepted award this posthumous award on behalf of Fr. John, who passed away in 2022. Following mass dinner was served in the refectory. After a long, yet fun day, students were able to go off campus with their family or friends for the night. The 46th annual Hilltopper, along with the annual alumni weekend, was a resounding success. It was a day of light-hearted fun – a day that not only brought back memories but also created new ones.





# Countless Faith

*By: Jonah Lim ('26)*

Every year, SLS takes a delegation of students and staff on a mission trip. The past two summers SLS has "broken limits" by traveling to World Youth Day in Lisbon, Portugal in 2023 and this year to the 10th National Eucharistic Congress in Indianapolis, Indiana.



This year's event began as a pilgrimage from the four corners of America. The four routes traveled over 6,500 miles bringing Jesus through many different cities and towns. Religious and lay people walked with Jesus until they converged in Indianapolis, IN. On July 17th, more than 60,000 Catholics gathered at the Lucas Oil Stadium to witness Jesus in the Eucharist. The SLS delegation was Father Zoy Garibay, Dr. Michael Donahou, and eight SLS students. It has been over 80 years since the last National Congress. The purpose was to restore and revive the Catholic belief that Jesus' Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity are truly present in the Eucharist. Each day, participants celebrated Mass, had Eucharistic Adoration, and enjoyed breakout sessions.



Many of the main sessions features talks on Eucharistic Revival by prominent Catholic speakers, including Bishop Robert Barron, Father Mike Schmitz, Sister Josephine Garrett, and Jonathan Roumie. Live Christian music was performed during adoration by renowned singers like Matt Maher and Andrew Laubacher. Dr. Donahou said, "It was a moving experience; I especially enjoyed the music. I found it inspiring, and I now listen to the same songs as I commute to work."

A memorable event for the group was going to a session by Father Leo Patalinghug, a Filipino priest who spreads the Good News through his passion for cooking. Father Leo spoke of the need for Catholics to serve others first, just like Jesus served us His Body and Blood. He concluded with this question, "Are you hungry for the Lord?" Anthony Le ('26) said, "Father Leo's session was very humorous, and overall, this event was an once-in-a-lifetime experience that I will never forget."

On Saturday, the Congress processed throughout downtown Indianapolis, where people were kneeling in the streets in prayer. Patrick Donohue ('25) said, "Seeing the massive crowd of Catholics, who all believe in the same thing, was a very humbling experience. At the same time, it felt great knowing that I am part of something much greater than myself." On Sunday, the Congress celebrated their final mass, with a procession of seminarians, priests, and bishops was continuous, because there were over 1,500 religious men and women present. This National Eucharistic Congress surpassed other Catholic conferences, and it will help people spread the message of Jesus Christ.





# TEACHER TAKEOVER

By: Diego Soto ('25)

The school year has kicked off with many new and returning faces from all classes. For many students, this is their first class at SLS, and they are busy making new memories. Each year brings the opportunity to create new experiences while reminiscing about past ones. Often many of these memories are made in the classroom where students and teachers build relationships and foster a better learning environment.

One teacher who has been with SLS for twenty years is Mrs. Daane. Over the years, she has held many different roles. Currently, Mrs. Daane is the sophomore English teacher, the supervisor of the student publication *Inklings*, and has recently taken on the role of Dean of Studies. With her extensive experience, it is not surprising that she sometimes breaks limits and varies her teaching style. Mrs. Daane explained, "I try to use pictures and signs related to the unit we're studying so that students can visualize the material. I like to arrange my desks in pods to encourage collective learning and to engage students' minds in critical thinking. For my yearly poetry unit, I take my students outside to write poems on the pavement. I also have a small library in my classroom to help students improve their reading skills."

Mrs. Daane goes out of her way to enhance the learning environment for her students. She also fosters personal relationships within her classes. While students understand that learning is the primary focus, it is also valuable to break away from traditional teaching methods and create a fun and engaging classroom atmosphere.

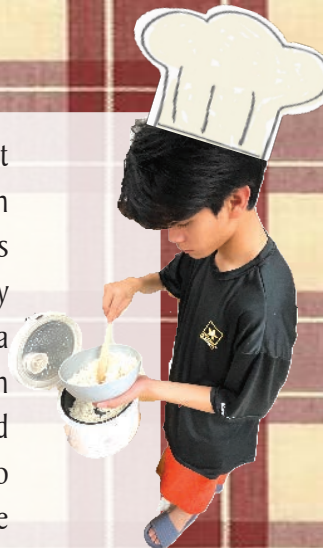


## STUDENT COOKBOOK

By: Christopher Vu ('26)

You can always smell something cooking at Saint Lawrence Seminary: whether it's instant noodles in the canteen, warming up home cooked food, or meals prepared by the FLIK chefs. Students always find a way to eat at any time. Jonah Lim ('26) and Christian Casilla ('26), have teamed up to make instant rice with SPAM in an attempt to prepare their own fried rice. When asked about it, Jonah said, "I brought my own electric pan to cook with and asked Christian to buy SPAM during the mall trip. Sometimes we have our own little potluck in the canteen."

Seniors have extra privileges, including the use of rice cookers and air fryers. Will Nguyen ('25) shared, "I use the rice cooker sometimes to heat up a variety of meats like chicken or fish when I am hungry to eat with my rice. As for the air fryer, I have seen people frying frozen French fries and taquitos for a snack." SLS students frequently make and eat food in their dorm, whether it's during snack time or later at night - it's something most students do.



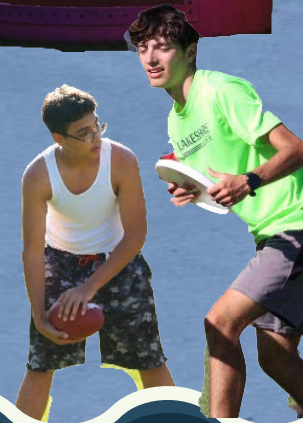


# LABOR DAY

By: Joshua Choi ('26)



A half day of school and a short sports practice gone by, the Labor Day activities began. The activities included football, volleyball, ultimate Frisbee and even a Mario party. With a competitive spirit, the students devised strategies to beat the other team. The callouts to their teams and celebrations of victory or groans of loss echoed on campus. Whether winners or losers, everyone was exhausted in the end. Daniel Nhan stated, "The activities were very competitive and high spirited." The dunk tank, however, seemed to rejuvenate the tired students and get them excited again. The freshmen threw the balls in an effort to dunk their senior or staff members while other students cheered on their classmates. Meanwhile the Flick chefs grilled burgers and prepared the food for the cookout. Br. Baudry remarked on the day, "It was the most fun event, and I liked how it showed the staff as more approachable. I also liked the show of camaraderie between the students." When the burgers were ready, the students rushed to get in line for the dinner, causing a giant scramble to be first. After the satisfying meal, classes gathered separately to elect their leaders for the 2024-2025 school year. After some tough decisions, the class officers were chosen and announced to everyone. Labor Day concluded as everyone retired to their dorms.



## 51ST STATE By: Said Villa ('25)


Every spring SLS juniors can submit an essay to earn a chance to attend Badger Boys State. The staff of the Social Studies Department, the Dean of Studies and Fr. Zoy review submitted essays to choose which students will attend and represent SLS. Badger Boys is a week-long summer program where incoming seniors, from all over the state of Wisconsin, travel to UW-Eau Claire to learn how to govern. During the event, those in attendance are tasked with creating the 51st state. They do this by electing public officials at the city, county, and state

levels of government. After carefully reviewing the essays, Patrick Donohue, Daniel Pizana, and Thomas Kim were chosen.

Daniel Pizana said, "I really liked the classes and working with the students within my city. It was an interesting experience going about the business, in an orderly manner, to address and push our agendas onto the city and county level. Both the classes and meetings helped clarify how things get done in a democracy, as well as the thought needed to really add or change laws and policy." Patrick, Thomas and Daniel, enjoyed spending time with city groups and described it as a unique and fun experience. Some of the highlights enjoyed was the free time getting to know the other students, participating in extra activities and exploring the vast campus of the college.

By sending students to Badger Boys State SLS continues to break limits, helping to create and empower students to be tomorrow's leaders. With the financial support and generosity of the Mt. Calvary American Legion, the Knights of Columbus of Fond du Lac, and the East Shore Lions Club, SLS continues to break limits to make this possible.



  
**BADGER**  
— BOYS STATE —



# SENIOR TRIP

*By: Cristian Cruz ('25)*

In the senior's final year, and the first full weekend on campus, they took a class trip to Noah's Ark, a water park in the Wisconsin Dells. Upon arrival at the park, the seniors gathered into groups to discuss their strategies for the day and decided on what attractions they would go to first. The groups took off to explore and enjoy the attractions like Kahuna Wave Pool. It is a large wave pool with varying depths of water. While in the pool, the seniors were inspired to have a few races for fun. Patrick Donahue ('25) said, "Noah's Ark, was a really fun experience. We had a lot of bonding time

as a class. There were so many fun and enjoyable rides. I really enjoyed the Black Anaconda, a roller coaster with water. I went on that with Khoa Nguyen ('25) and Hoa Doung ('25), TWICE, because it was so good." Another student favorite was a ride named Point of No Return, which features a nearly vertical plunge. The seniors had a blast bonding, eating funnel cake, going down water slides, and also saving Daniel Pizana ('25) from almost drowning in the wave pool. The seniors had a great day "breaking limits" before jumping head first into the strenuous year ahead.





One of the best ways to unite people from all corners of the world is in a friendly competition: the Olympics. Recently, France hosted the 2024 Olympics in Paris. Athletes from around the world competed in many different sports with hope of a shiny gold, silver or bronze medal. These sports included archery, badminton, basketball, track, volleyball and many others, including breakdancing! The Olympics ended on August 11th, with USA taking first place with 126 medals, China in second with 91 medals, and Japan in third with 45 medals.

# Rising to Glory

By: ThienHanh Mai ('25)

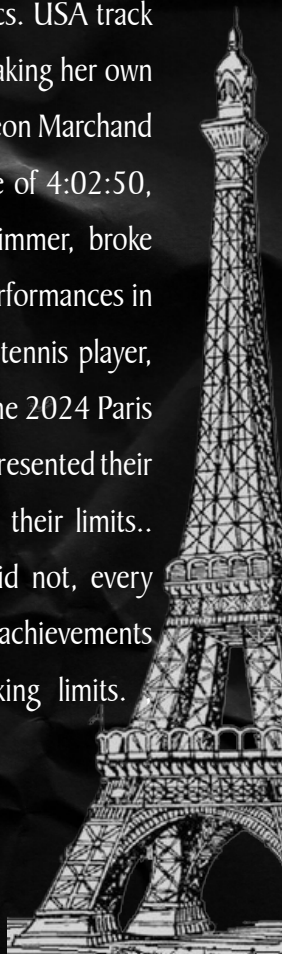


Even though the best athletes finished their events with a gold medal, it seems the athletes who placed second or lower may have had more memorable performances. Many teens are now buzzing about the silver medalist in shooting. Unlike many others, the Turkish sharpshooter Yusuf Dikec did not use any special gear, used one hand, and put the other hand in his pocket. His nonchalant, near-perfect shooting immediately caught the attention of many.

Another interesting event at the Olympics was breakdancing. This year, "Breaking" was introduced as a professional Olympic sport. Australian breaker Rachel "Raygun" Gunn put on an interesting show for the Olympic judges. Her routine was called unorthodox, and some of the moves were very strange. Many spectators and judges questioned some of her moves, so she received zero points and was disqualified. Olympic spectators mocked her online, posting videos of themselves doing ridiculous dance moves, saying that they should be in the Olympics. Nevertheless, Raygun did her best by breaking limits in Olympic breakdancing.



On the topic of breaking limits, many outstanding accomplishments were achieved at the 2024 Olympics. USA track athlete Sydney McLaughlin set a new world record in the 400m hurdles, breaking her own in the record, finishing with a time of 50:37. In swimming, French swimmer Leon Marchand broke the world record in the 400m individual medley, finishing with a time of 4:02:50, breaking Michael Phelps's record of 4:03:84. Katie Ledecky, a USA swimmer, broke several more records, all of which were her own, and now has the top 10 performances in the 1500m event! Novak Djokovic, a Serbian tennis player, won his first-ever gold medal in men's tennis. The 2024 Paris Olympics were truly remarkable with athletes represented their countries by performing valiantly and pushing their limits.. While some took home medals and others did not, every athlete performed with dedication. Many great achievements were part of this year's Olympics by breaking limits.





# Back in My Day...

By: Christian Casilla ('26)

As residents of the Hill of Happiness, you will learn valuable lessons as you spend more time on the Hill. Looking back, a few seniors have reflected on what they have learned over the years, especially as freshmen. A common lesson that many seniors shared is that they have learned that the faculty and staff are here to support you. Jae-Seoung Hong ('25) and Cristian Cruz ('25) both agreed, that there are numerous people here to help you and there is no shame in asking for help; you are not alone on the SLS journey. Diego Soto adds, "I wish I realized sooner how close you get with classmates. Everyone says the brotherhood is great, and that is a true statement. However, the feelings of brotherhood forms through involvement, like Mr. Bartel's card games and stressing together over Mr. Krieg's tests. That is the beauty of SLS. You have a family away from your family." While some learn lessons about brotherhood on the Hill, others discover the importance of being a part of the community. Alexander Biju ('25) shared, "Doing extracurricular activities, like sports, clubs and ministries, will enhance your experience at SLS. Being involved might help you discover things about yourself and new activities you might enjoy."

On the other hand, some seniors regret not appreciating the time they have had here. Daniel Pizana ('25) said, "I wish I realized how much free time I had, and how I could've been involved in more things." So take advice from the seniors, who have experienced life on the Hill first-hand. Whether you learn from these lessons or not, it is important to keep your mind open, break limits and make the most of your time on the Hill.

## SENIOR SPILL

## COUNSELOR'S ADVICE

By: Mr. Sy Vanissaveth



We either confront challenges with a fixed or growth mindset as coined by psychologist, Carol Dweck. A fixed mindset believes talent, intelligence, and ability are set and unchangeable. You tend to give up easily and may develop negative thoughts about yourself and feel intimidated, threatened, or even jealous of others' success because you believe you're not smart nor gifted like them. Feedback may feel like a personal attack while trying to avoid any type of criticism to hide flaws.

A growth mindset views challenges, mistakes, and failures as learning opportunities because of the belief that talent, intelligence, and ability can be developed and fine-tuned over time. Failure is a temporary setback and resiliency is strengthened. As stated by Russ to Charlie in *Mighty Ducks 2*, "...And then you take a few breaths, slug some water, and get out there and do it again!" Growth mindset leads to PRACTICE and continuous practice can often lead to mastery.

Breaking limits is a growth mindset. You are not limited, but humbled, by your failures and then inspired to become a better you. When you start to do this not for yourself, but in glory to God, then you'll see how strong you truly are through Christ. The Apostle Paul beautifully wrote in his letter to the Romans: "...we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit..." Therefore, remember your Almighty God—not bound by limits—who created you, saved you, and loves you despite your failures. Look forward to discovering and growing the talent, intelligence, and abilities instilled in you and start breaking those limits in glory, honor, and thanks to God.





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The Slatop

INDEPENDENT IN  
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THE DEATH RECORD.  
The following record  
was taken from the  
death record of the  
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published for the  
information of the  
public.

**Breaking Limits**

THE DEATH RECORD.  
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*In many ways, regret is worse than death. It clings on to a person, endlessly haunting their minds with whispers of missed opportunities and mistakes. The sheer thought of regret can trap a person in a cycle of self-doubt and despair. Intending to learn from this valuable lesson, we, as Hilltopics editors this year, came up with the theme "Breaking Limits" for issue one.*

*"Breaking Limits" is when a person has the guts, boldness, and courage to step beyond their comfort zone and discover something new, such as choosing to come to SLS. Our mission is to ignite this spirit of curiosity in every Hilltopper so that, every Hilltopper is reminded to think outside the box, instead of playing it safe, and exploring what you are capable of. At the end of the day, ask yourself this question: "What hurts more, the thought of being challenged or the thought of regret?"*

*- from Justin & Thomas*

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This issue's postcard artwork is  
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