

# H

ST. LAWRENCE SEMINARY



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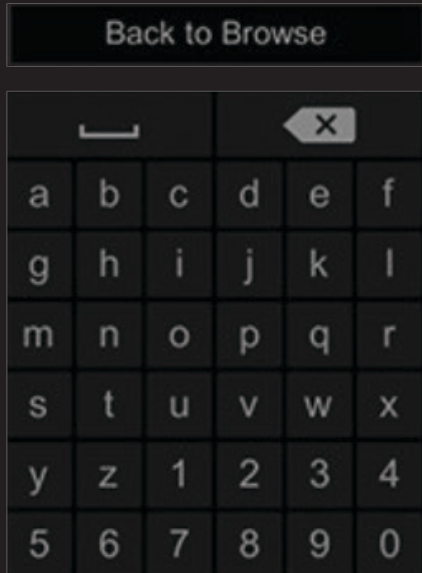
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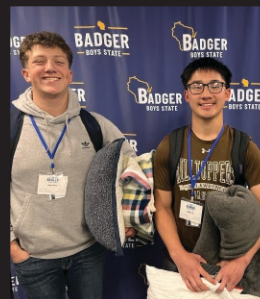
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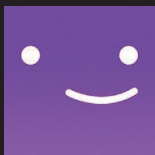
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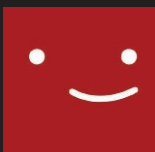


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## "COMING THIS YEAR AT ST. LAWRENCE SEMINARY..."

By: Father Zoy Garibay

Every now and then, I go to the movie theater to watch a motion picture that sparks my interest or to see a live HD transmission from the Met in New York of an opera that I like. Besides the main feature, I also enjoy watching the previews or trailers, i.e., short videos that give theater audiences a glimpse of an upcoming film to generate interest and build anticipation for its release. This year, the editors of *Hilltopics* have quite cleverly chosen the theme "Coming this year . . ." for this first issue of the said publication in this new academic year. In keeping with that theme, here now is what's coming this year at St. Lawrence Seminary:

It begins when our students set foot on the Hill, in the middle of nowhere, in the waning days of summer. Here, in this storied place, they embark on a journey unlike any other. From the moment the bell rings at break of day until the hour when the lights go out at night, our students are tested, challenged, and stretched. The ebb and flow of their life in the next nine months may seem like a routine: studies, prayer, work, and play. But there will also be occasions when it will feel like a roller coaster ride with ascents and deep dives, sudden turns, and unexpected twists along the track. There will be periods of excitement, times of difficulty, and moments of epiphany. But every moment counts, every opportunity is precious, and every occasion is a fertile ground for learning and growth. From above, a Spirit descends, moving around in quiet and often undetected ways, enlightening the mind, stirring the heart, and guiding the feet on The Way. Hours turn into days, days into weeks, and weeks into months. The world turns and seasons change. Before they know it, students will find themselves at a critical juncture of their lives. They will realize that they are no longer the same individuals that they were as when the journey first started. They are changed. They have been transformed. And just when they think their journey is ending, another one is about to begin. Their journey continues. Their story is still being written. And the best chapter is yet to come. ■



# FR. SOLANUS HALL PREMIERS!

## NEW DORM BLOCKBUSTER

By: Christopher Vu ('26)

Throughout the 2024-2025 school year, a new building took shape on the Hill. The St. Clare Guest House had been demolished to make way for a new senior dormitory. Students and staff watched the bare foundation slowly grow into a new chapter of the SLS story. During the last week of summer break, The Fr. Solanus Hall was prepped with a Wall of Gratitude, furniture, statues and decorations, awaiting its premiere for the new senior class.

The Fr. Solanus Hall was designed to model a college dormitory, unlike the other dormitories on campus. The building features multiple floors and shared rooms with doors for added privacy. Students were assigned to a "quad" consisting of two neighboring rooms and two vanity areas, with two students per room. Four students share one restroom and a shower room both with locking doors. The lobby was designed to be a versatile space where students can relax, eat, play ping pong and study. Each floor has a private prayer space.

The seniors quickly formed opinions about the new dormitory. Jason Nguyen commented, "I like having the curtains in my room." Immanuel Xavior said, "I think the layout of the lobby and the rooms are a lot like college campuses, which is good to get used to, but the bedrooms could be a little bigger."

On Sunday, August 24, a dedication ceremony for the Fr. Solanus Hall was held. Benefactors, faculty, staff and students attended Mass, followed by the blessing and tours of the Fr. Solanus Hall. Fr. Zoy recalled, "After mass ended, we proceeded to the front of the building. We started with the introductory rites, then a reading, intercessions, and finally I went to the cornerstone of the building to bless it. After I blessed the cornerstone, Father Baudry, Father Peter, and I sprinkled holy water over the dorm."

Following the ceremony, guests were invited to tour the building and enjoy a luncheon. Seniors were seated at each table to thank benefactors for their support and share conversation. Juniors assisted by serving tables coffee and food. During the open house, seniors guided the benefactors and guests around the dormitory, answering questions and offering personal reflections and experiences.

The dedication and blessing ceremony ended quietly, but with much excitement and gratitude. Many seniors left positive feedback about the new dormitory before the festivities had ended. Hopefully, the future cast of seniors will no doubt continue to appreciate the comforts and blessings of their new dormitory: Fr. Solanus Hall. ■



## OVERVIEW





# SENIOR CLASS MAKES A SPLASH

By: Ethan Thomas ('26)

Have you ever wished you were on a vacation, having the time of your life, without a worry in the world? On Saturday, September 6th, the senior class had that opportunity. Accompanied by Mr. Vanissaveth, Fr. Peter Kafumu, and Mr. Ramirez, the seniors embarked on an unforgettable trip to one of Wisconsin's most iconic and loved attractions - Wisconsin Dells! Their journey began bright and early at 8:00 AM. As students boarded the buses, their excitement was already starting to show. Their chatter and laughter filled the air, making the long drive feel like part of the adventure. Once they arrived, it was clear that the wait was worth it. Their destination was the famous Kalahari indoor waterpark- one of the largest in the country. With its massive slides, wave pool, lazy river, and indoor cabana vibe, it offered the perfect escape. From plunging down fast water slides, to competing in intense water sports, to even simply relaxing in the hot tubs, the students eagerly jumped into action - soaking up every moment (literally). One of the most noteworthy attractions was the wave pool. Bik Hmung commented, "The wave pool was insane. I really enjoyed flipping my classmates over on the tubes and then chilling in the lazy river. I could have stayed there all day!"

After a long and memorable day, it was time to head back. After drying off and packing up, the group made one final stop, a Chinese Buffet. Their plates were piled high with noodles, egg rolls, fried rice and more, which made for the perfect ending to the day. Some of the students took advantage of the delicious food and went up for seconds, thirds, and even fourths! Miguel (Miggie) Herrera earned his place in the hall of fame with a total of 8 plates! "Man, I wasn't even that hungry at first," Miggie joked, "but once I saw the buffet it was game over." On the ride back, the seniors were exhausted from a long day of splashing and making memories. This was certainly a trip the class of 2026 will never forget. ■



# INTENSE COMPETITION ON THE HILL

By: Conner Mills ('27)

The celebration of Labor Day is a long-running tradition on campus between all classes. After lunch each class competed against each other vying for an unknown prize. The games included football, volleyball, Mario Party, spike ball, and dodgeball. All sports were a unique experience; however, dodgeball and football proved to be the most competitive. Near the end of a nerve-racking game of dodgeball between the juniors and sophomores only one junior outlasted all the sophomores, Felipe Gonzalez the junior, eliminated every sophomore and was the last man standing. Football also came down to the wire. By the second half of the seniors vs. juniors' game, the juniors lead 2 - 1; however, the tide eventually turned in favor of the seniors, who won by a landslide in the last five minutes. Consider adding the score of the game) Then the seniors proceeded to play the sophomores and won.

When all the games were over there was a special event. Each freshman had the chance to "dunk" their senior in a dunk tank full of water., by hitting the target with a softball throw. It was a sight to be hold. A cookout was served in the courtyard for everyone. Mr. Nguyen announced that the juniors had won -by just one point! The class burst into cheers celebrating the hard-fought victory, while also showing sportsmanship by congratulating their opponents for the fun competitions. Later that evening, after class elections the excited juniors gathered in their dorm to share the grand prize- a giant ice cream cake- still stunned by the fact that they had won the 2025 Labor Day competition. ■





ORIGINAL

## KARIBU TANZANIA!

July 2025 - 10 episodes

▶ PLAY

+ MY LIST

By: Jonah Lim ('26) &amp; Joshua Choi ('26)

In July, eight students along with Father Zoy and Dr. Donahou embarked on an exciting journey. They traveled over 8,000 miles to visit Tanzania and the Maua Seminary, a Franciscan-Capuchin school nestled at the base of Mount Kilimanjaro. This was the first in-person interaction between the two Seminaries, to plant the seed of brotherhood and establish a meaningful connection. Upon arrival at Julius Nyerere International Airport in Dar es Salaam, the group was welcomed by our Father Chrispin. There the SLS group spent their first night at the Capuchin Provincialate with the friars and the Provincial Minister, Father Robert Massawe.

The group's first day of travel was an early venture on a scenic yet lengthy nine-hour bus ride to Maua Seminary in Moshi. There, they were graciously received by the Capuchin Friars led by Father Amadeus Kauki, the Rector. The next day the SLS students started their day early attending Mass and morning prayer with the Maua students. Afterwards, they participated in classes, engaging with the students and experiencing the academics of Maua. Fr. Zoy highlighted, "Seeing our SLS students interact with their counterparts at Maua Seminary truly touched my heart. They were able to grow in brotherhood through prayer, sports, and academics, and it is my dream for the Maua Seminarians to be able to visit St. Lawrence Seminary as well one day."

Wednesday, the students enjoyed a friendly basketball competition, ending in Maua's close victory. That evening, the group met two amazing tours guides, Gift and Albert, who would lead them on a long and exciting journey the next morning. Their first stop was a Maasai Village, where they explored the lives of the Maasai people. Next, it was off to Arusha for lunch and souvenirs. Friday, the Toyota Land Cruisers zoomed through the safari in the vast Ngorongoro Crater, spotting a variety of wildlife including lions, zebras, gazelles, hippos, and many different birds. Watching wildlife in their natural habitat was an absolute highlight of the trip for everyone in the group. The next day, both SLS and Maua students participated in a schoolwide talent show, where they showcased their talent in music, comedy, and dance. Isaac Ehlenbeck ('27) mentioned, "Being at Maua Seminary was eye-opening because of the differences in culture and environment. All the students, friars, and teachers were all welcoming, and it made the experience even more exciting."

The group visited a convent of the Capuchin sisters, located just down the road from Maua, where they received a tour of their humble abode. After almost a week it was time for the students to say goodbye to the Maua Seminarians. After a farewell party with their sponsors and a gift exchange, the SLS students packed their bags. The final full day, the group explored the city of Dar es Salaam, visiting St. Joseph Cathedral and a local mall. ■



## EPISODE - 1

### 1. Pilot

For the first time, SLS embarks on a journey to Tanzania.



## EPISODE - 2

### 2. Schools United

SLS reaches Maua Seminary and form bonds with the Maua seminarians.



## EPISODE - 3

### 3. Among the Maasai

The Maasai people show SLS their way of life.



## EPISODE - 4

### 4. New Frontier

SLS explores the safari in the Ngorongoro Crater.



This once in a lifetime journey to Tanzania was far more than a simple visit: it was an exchange of faith, culture, and friendship. The SLS and Maua students learned a lot about each other's cultures and strengthen their Catholic faith. Though these two similar high school seminaries are many miles apart, the bonds formed will continue to grow and inspire future encounters. The group returned home with not only many memories, but with a deeper sense of community, gratitude, and hope for the ongoing relationship between the two Seminaries. ■



By: Khan Nguyen ('27)

# BINGE RUNNING

While summer runs away from everyone's mind, the fall sports seasons have begun! Cross-country, one of three fall sports at St. Lawrence Seminary, is one that revolves solely around running long distances. Cross-country, one of the three fall sports at St. Lawrence Seminary, centers on the endurance and discipline of long-distance running. Runners practice after school during the weekdays with alternating distance and speed practice days. During distance days, participants go on runs ranging between two - five miles to build endurance, while speed days involve runners practicing sprints to perform longer strides and to work on faster times. Another practice runners do on distance days are triples, which consist of 9 sets of sit-ups and 3 sets of push-ups. Mr. Kevin Buelow, the head coach, and Mr. Hub Bradley ('15), the new assistant coach, stated that a good runner "will push themselves to not give up and to keep going." Official races are five kilometers long, approximately three miles, on various terrains like asphalt, grass, and gravel. After all that running, ultimate frisbee Fridays are fun practice that every runner looks forward to. Cross-country may sound challenging, but don't be discouraged, it's a fun sport! ■



## A FRESH START

By: Luke Joseph ('27)

As the new school year starts, so does the fall sports season. One fall sport is soccer. Our soccer athletes are very excited for the new season. Soccer is all about working together as a team to win games which requires a lot of skill and athleticism. Felipe Gonzalez ('27) stated, "As a player, you must be able to dribble, pass, and shoot while being able to read the field. You also need endurance because of the constant sprinting and changing directions." Here at SLS, the soccer coaches have specific training drills that help the players form these necessary skills. Mr. Sebastian Vervaeck and Mr. Dave Bartel (the varsity coaches) and Mr. Matthew Mattes (the JV coach) run similar practices. Typically, soccer practice starts with warmups, which helps condition their bodies. The team then focuses on different drills that may involve shooting, dribbling, passing, or general playmaking. A good soccer team has a combination of strong individual skills, exceptional team chemistry, and unwavering desire to win. This year, the varsity team's goal is to make it past regionals and have a winning record. The junior varsity team also wishes to have a winning record and wants to develop their team chemistry to build on for next year. ■





# BUMP, SET, SPIKE! SLS IS TAKING FLIGHT!

By: Tam Tran ('28)



Sports have always played an important role at Saint Lawrence Seminary, and this year, a new sport is making its debut. Volleyball has been added to the fall sports lineup, bringing with it great excitement and anticipation. On August 18th and 19th students from all grades participated in a rigorous two-day tryout led by Coach Sy Vanissaveth. During tryouts, players were evaluated on the fundamentals of volleyball: passing, setting, and spiking. Out of the 25 people who tried out, 15 earned a spot on the first SLS volleyball team.



Volleyball is a sport that requires control, patience, and most importantly, teamwork. When practicing, players are not only strengthening their skills but also learning how to share the court and communicate effectively with their teammates. Volleyball is just as much a mental game as it is a physical one, which is why learning how to support one another is so important. With enthusiasm, Coach Vanissaveth stated, "I'm super excited about this season and hope our SLS community is, too. I don't know what the other teams' level of play is like compared to ours; therefore, win or lose, I hope we remain humble and joyful, and motivated to be even better. May God bless us this season!" As the season unfolds, the SLS volleyball team will be presented with challenges. Yet, they will be prepared to deal with them together, as brothers. ■



# A WEEK TO CHANGE A LIFETIME

By: Jonah Lim ('26)

At the beginning of June, three SLS students - Joshua Choi, Jonah Lim, and Alan Mora - who were selected by the SLS Social Studies Department to attend Badger Boys State, a week-long leadership program for high school juniors, held at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire. This program immerses and educates young leaders on how to make a positive impact in their communities.

With over 800 students from across Wisconsin in attendance, participants were tasked with creating the 51st state. Upon arrival, everyone was grouped into individual cities and counties, where they learned how government functions by forming their own city, county, and state-level governments. Through meetings, caucuses, and conventions, students were able to vote on laws they supported and elect candidates to represent them in the state elections. Joshua Choi ('26) reflected on the event and shared "It was an interesting experience, especially since I was county treasurer. I learned how to listen to everyone's ideas and opinions to ensure our county budget was fair."



Eau Claire, WI

In addition to their civic responsibilities, students took part in Badger Boys University, where they attended college-level classes taught by experienced alumni and professors. They also had the opportunity to participate in a variety of extracurricular activities, including band, choir, Press Corps, and Color Guard. Each day included recreational time and sports competitions, fostering teamwork, camaraderie, and friendly competition within their counties. Alan Mora ('26) said, "At Badger Boys, I found more than just leadership lessons - I found a brotherhood built on shared goals, mutual respect, and the kind of friendship that lasts far beyond one week."

This week-long program expanded students' horizons and was engaging. This life-changing opportunity would not have been possible without the generous support of the Mt. Calvary American Legion, the Knights of Columbus Council 664, and the East Shore Lions Club. Their sponsorship made it possible for SLS students to take part in this unforgettable experience. For the SLS Badger Boys, it truly was a week to change a lifetime. ■





# BACK IN THEATERS...

By: Donovan Blattner ('28)

A star returns to join the show. Mr. Oliver Hix takes on the role as a new freshmen dorm supervisor. After fifteen years, Mr. Hix returned to his alma mater with added experience and high hopes. During his time away from the Hill, Mr. Hix attended the College of Charleston in South Carolina, where he had the opportunity to travel overseas to Vietnam and teach English. For nine years, he taught students of all ages, ranging from elementary children to senior citizens. Upon his return to the US, he began to pursue his master's degree in psychology, using his education to find a university to transfer to. He has long been interested in men's psychological health and sees SLS as an opportunity to further that passion, stating, "I want to apply the skills I'm learning to help the young men at St. Lawrence reach their full potential." With determination and optimism, it seems this new season in Mr. Hix's life has a promising outlook for both him and everyone at the Hill of Happiness. Guided by determination and optimism, Mr. Hix enters a new season that promises blessings for both him and the students of Hill of Happiness. ■



## MR. OLIVER HIX

By: Yubal Vazquez Cenil ('28)

Life at Saint Lawrence Seminary can be like a movie, exciting and occasionally chaotic. Luckily for the sophomore class, Mr. Hubert Bradley ('15), has "played in these roles before." Not only was he a student at SLS, but also the sophomore supervisor in 2017 and 2018!

Mr. Bradley is from South Bend, Indiana. He came to SLS in his junior year and commented, "I was received very well from my peers." He graduated in 2015 and worked a few jobs, including landscaping and at a rehabilitation center for mental health. Mr. Bradley's trait of valuing people's wellbeing influences his plans after SLS. He hopes to either join the police force, be a fire fighter, or possibly stay at SLS longer. Mr. Bradley is thrilled to be back, for the third time, and is determined to be a good role model for the Hilltoppers and to find fulfillment in life. ■



## MR. HUBERT BRADLEY



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