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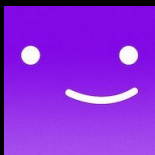
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Advisor



Mrs. Deann Sippel

Editors-in-Chief



Christian Casilla



Alan Mora

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Joshua Choi

Christian Casilla

Jonah Lim

Joshua Choi

Ethan Thomas

Joaquín Partida Hernandez

Christopher Vu

Conner Mills

Luke Joseph

Khan Nguyen

Conner Mills

Nathan Nguyen

Khan Nguyen

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Tam Tran

Omar Valenzuela

Yubal Vazquez Cenil

“BEHIND THE SCREAMS...”

By: Father Zoy Garibay

“De profundis clamo ad te Dómine, Domine, audi vocem meam! Fiant aures tuæ inténtæ ad vocem obsecratiónis meæ!” (Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord, Lord, hear my voice! Let yours be attentive to the voice of my pleading!) These are the first two verses of Psalm 130. In the revised version of the New American Bible, Psalm 130 is given the title, “A Song of Ascents.” But the psalm is more commonly called, “De Profundis” (Out of the Depths) from the first two words that commence the psalm. This phrase becomes a metaphor for the state of deep despair that the soul experiences as it cries out to the Lord for mercy and for help. For this reason, Psalm 130 is strongly associated with the Office for the Dead. To me, these verses conjure the climactic aria, *Libera Me*, that concludes Verdi’s epic opus, *Requiem*, in which the soprano, against the backdrop of an emotionally charged chorus and an earth-shattering orchestra, cries out desperately to God to be “freed from eternal death and that terrible day of wrath.”

On November 2, the Catholic Church will commemorate All the Faithful Departed. Here at St. Lawrence Seminary, we mark this event with a special liturgy, in which the deceased family members, relatives, and friends of students, staff, and friars are remembered, prayed for, and commended to the Lord. This liturgical celebration is the highlight of “Spirit Week” at SLS. This year’s Spirit Week begins with Haunted House on October 25, Pumpkin Carving on October 30, and Trick or Treating on October 31. Behind the scenes, our senior students will plan and prepare to present a unique and unforgettable haunted house. Fraternities will design and carve their pumpkins, put them on display in the refectory, and compete for the prize. Students and staff will inscribe the names of their deceased family members, loved ones, and friends in the Book of the Dead in the days leading up to November 2. Students and staff will wear costumes and participate in the Trick or Treat after school on October 31.

Behind the screams—whether it is while traversing the dark route of a haunted house or while praying fervently or singing ardently to the Lord, interceding to the Just Judge on behalf of our beloved deceased and all the souls in purgatory—is a lot of work and planning. You can find them in this issue of the *Hilltopics*. ■



INSIDE THE INFINITY CASTLE!

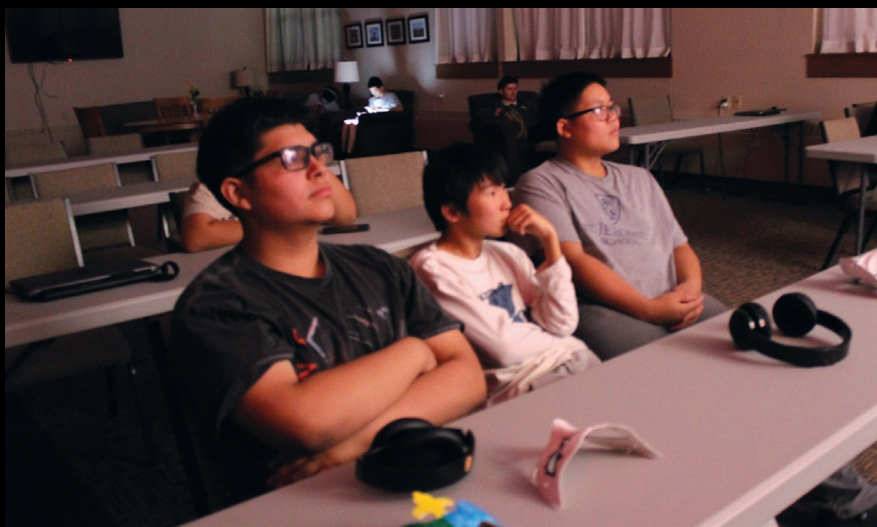
By: Christopher Vu ('26)



The SLS Anime Club, led by seniors, Peter Nguyen, Daniel Nhan, and Christopher Vu, with approval from Mr. Quan Nguyen, decided to take a group of 14 students to see Demon Slayer: Kimetsu No Yaiba Infinity Castle on the movie's premier day. The students who regularly attend Anime Club meetings were personally selected by the three student leaders to participate.

On Friday evening, September 12, Mr. Nguyen drove the students to Oshkosh Marcus Cinema to view the 7:15 PM showing of Demon Slayer. The movie is about a fight between the Hashiras, different masters of sword fighting style, against the 12 Kizukis, who are the 12 strongest demons. Many of the students had positive reviews after seeing the movie. Jason Nguyen said, "I liked the intense fighting, and I got to see my favorite character Mitsuri in action." Daniel Nhan shared similar thoughts, saying, "I liked seeing Mitsuri, and the movie snacks made the movie even better."

The Anime Club's first outing of the year was a big hit for anime fans at SLS. As the year progresses, the Anime Club's leaders will continue to work behind the scenes and come up with more experiences for the club members to experience. ■



LINKING UP WITH HILLTOPPER CONNECT

By: Ethan Thomas ('26)



A new club has made its debut! The Recruitment Club, also known as Hilltopper Connect, was launched this year by Mr. Bryant Romero, SLS Enrollment Manager, with others from the admissions team and Mr. Bartel. It was created to offer prospective students a more personal, student-led experience when visiting St. Lawrence Seminary.

Hilltopper Connect helps current students connect with visiting families by sharing personal experiences, answering questions, and guiding tours. As Mr. Romero shared, "We recognized that prospective students often feel most comfortable hearing and interacting directly from current students." That peer-to-peer connection creates a more relatable and welcoming environment.

The club also upholds one of SLS's strongest traditions - hospitality. Members train fellow students to assist with the Weekend Visits and help prospective students feel at home on the Hill. Though the club is still in its early stages, the hope is to make it a lasting part of the SLS experience. "Ultimately, Hilltopper Connect reflects our ongoing mission: to form young men of faith and leadership who not only represent SLS with pride but, to also help others feel at home on the Hill. ■

FAMILY IN FRATERNITY

By: Tam Tran ('28)



As teenagers attending an all-boys boarding school, it can easily be overwhelming. Fortunately, SLS has a fraternity system in place to ensure that new and returning students are provided with guidance and support. Each year, students are placed into fraternities, groups of 10 – 12 students from all four classes. Each is led by one or two staff members, known as mentors. The mentors lead and support their frats throughout the school year, making them a vital part of the program. During the school year, fraternities meet to discuss academics, they sit together for meals, they have friendly competitions with other frats, and they even plan "frat outings" to go off campus for bonding experiences. Freshman, Andrew Nguyen stated, "The frat system is very helpful. My senior sponsor showed me around campus which helped my comfort level on day one. The mentors are also very supportive."

Two major events that fraternities take part in on campus are Winter Carnival and Field Day - days filled with fun activities and friendly competition between frats. Something new this year is "Frat Lunches", each frat chooses an on-campus location, to enjoy lunch together and bond as a group, mentors are there to supervise. Mrs. Katie Daane, who has been a fraternity mentor for more than 10 years, explains, "The fraternity system in my mind is meant to help our students feel connected, whether it is to one another or to the adults on campus. It is a great way for students to get to know and bond with guys from other grades." Fraternities allow students to experience a brotherhood at SLS, whether it is by going on exciting frat outings or just eating lunch together, it creates a supportive environment on campus. ■

SPIRITS, SCREAMS, SEASON

OCTOBER 2025 - 6 Ep

By: Jonah Lim ('26)

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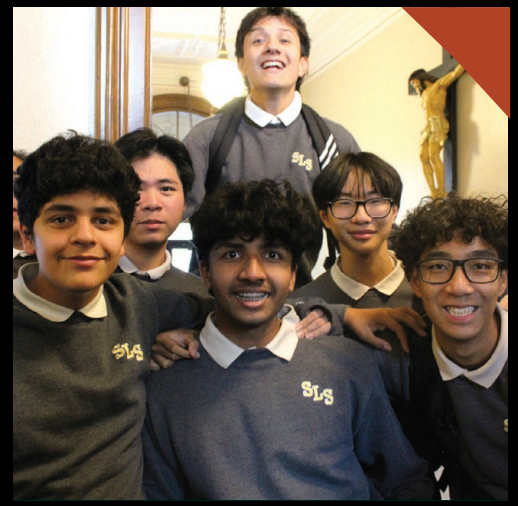
+ MY LIST

The last week of October was packed with school spirit and screams as students participated in various spirited activities. The Student Council organized Spirit Week, a week of fun and friendly competitions among the fraternities that brought the entire campus together. Before the week officially began, the Senior Class of 2026 set the agenda by preparing a thrilling Haunted House inspired by *The Purge* films. James Avolos ('26) remarked, "*The Purge* theme was super fun and exciting, especially the setup, which involved transforming all of lower Saint Anthony and the gym into something really eerie." Students who dared to enter the abandoned "Purge House" experienced heart pumping scares.

Each day of Spirit Week featured a unique dress-up theme in which students can earn points for their fraternity by participating. It started with Monochrome Monday, all students dressed in a single color; Twin Tuesday, pairs of classmates coordinated matching outfits; Wacky Wednesday, which encouraged bold, bizarre, and strange clothing combinations; Throwback Thursday, the students wore styles from past decades; and finally, Costume Friday, where everyone dressed up in their best Halloween costumes. Noah Nguyen ('28) stated, "What I enjoyed most about Spirit Week was trying to find outfits in my wardrobe that matched each day's themes, and it made dressing up a fun challenge." The energy stayed high with sports competitions to close out each afternoon, keeping the friendly competition alive until the very end of the week.

The Halloween spirit continued outside of the classrooms with after-school activities. Students gathered in the refectory for a pumpkin carving contest by fraternities, displaying their carving abilities from intricately carved designs to truly frightful faces. Later in the week, students roamed campus for a trick-or-treat event, eagerly visiting various locations to collect candy from teachers and staff.

These elements of Spirit Week made for an enjoyable and memorable time on campus. Points were awarded to fraternities not only for their dress-up participation but also for their pumpkin carving skills. After the carving, Seamus McCarthy ('26) said, "Carving the pumpkin with my fraternity was tough at first, but in the end, it all came together and we made a really great pumpkin carving." Beyond the competition and screams, Spirit Week served as a significant opportunity for fraternity bonding and school-wide connection. It allowed students to enjoy the autumn season, celebrate the end of fall sports, and create shared memories filled with laughter, creativity, and a few well-timed scares. ■



H THOSE WHO GIVE SHALL ALWAYS RECEIVE

By: Luke Joseph ('27)

The students here at St Lawrence Seminary are shaped into men of integrity and devout faith thanks to the generosity of our benefactors. Each year, our benefactors contribute to our school because they believe in our mission to form well-rounded, virtuous followers of Christ. Without their support, SLS would not be where it is today. It is only through their kindness that we can build new buildings and assist with student tuition. One way we show our appreciation is through the annual Benefactor's Open House.

Many students and staff members are involved not only in the day's events, but also in the behind-the-scenes preparations for the Open House. Mr. Kevin Buelow, Director of Institutional Advancement, stated, "The outreach to the benefactors begins months before with invitations sent by the Development Office. The students are actively involved throughout the day, those in the choir and band, those helping to park vehicles and drive the golf carts, and the seniors as they take on a key role of hosting lunch and giving tours of the campus. The kitchen, custodial, and maintenance staff also dedicate hours in preparation for this very special occasion." On the day of the Benefactors' Open House, benefactors join us for Mass, enjoy a luncheon, and are given tours around campus. This year's open house is particularly special because the benefactors were given the opportunity to see the new Fr. Solanus Hall, our senior dorm that they helped fund. The event took place on Sunday, October 26th, a beautiful fall day and was well attended. ■



REMEMBERING THE SAINT

By: Donovan Blattner ('28)



For eight centuries since the death of Saint Francis of Assisi, Franciscans around the world have honored their beloved founder by remembering him on Transitus and his feast day. Transitus is derived from the Latin, meaning “passage” —a fitting reflection of the day’s significance, commemorating the passing of St. Francis from his earthly life to his heavenly one. At Saint Lawrence Seminary, the two-day celebration which began on the evening of Friday, October 3rd, with a special prayer, centered on the teachings of St. Francis. Accompanying the prayer were nine student-made artworks inspired by the Canticum of the Creatures, including Sister Water, Brother Fire, Brother Wind, Sister Mother Earth, Sister Bodily Death, Sister Moon and Stars, Brother Sun, a depiction of those who pardon, and God.

Saturday, October 4th, SLS celebrated with a St. Francis Festival, it brought an array of outdoor activities including volleyball, soccer darts, a slip-n-slide, and even a dunk tank! The event brought joy and entertainment to many of the students. One student, Paul Nguyen said, “Seeing students and guests bonding alike was really fun.” The evening concluded with a Mass honoring St. Francis’s legacy. Two new guest stars came onto the scene: Bishop Paul Schmidt and Father Joseph Tuscan. The latter traveled all the way from the Saint Augustine Province in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, and provided an insightful homily on the humility of St. Francis and how his message can be incorporated into all ways of life.

The eventful day ended with a tasty cookout offered to guests, students, and faculty alike. Drawing back the curtains now, this weekend of commemoration supplied both enjoyment and inspiration for all atop the Hill of Happiness. ■



HILLTOPPER - BEHIND THE SCENES

By: Joshua Choi ('26)

The 47th Annual Hilltopper cross-country meet was held on Saturday, September 20th. Cloudy skies and a sprinkle of rain threatened the day but were pushed away by sunny skies that brought cheerful energy to the day. Our team of volunteer staff and students jumped into action as they directed cars to parking lots; managed concession stands and guided both runners and visitors to where on campus they needed to go.

The real behind-the-scenes work starts a year in advance. Mr. Chad Dowland, the SLS Athletic Director, works closely with the other schools' athletic directors to encourage their teams to participate in the annual event. A week prior to the show, the serious prep starts, the maintenance and custodial staff set up flags, tents, tables, cut branches, and cleared fallen debris on the path that is used by the runners. The kitchen staff organizes concession, and Mr. Dowland assigns the volunteers to man specific areas. Christopher Vu ('26) managed the water station and stated, "It was easy, and I felt like I was helping the runners by making sure they had enough water to stay hydrated." Mr. Kevin Buelow, the head cross country coach stated, "Without the staff and students who give their time that day, the Hilltopper would not be able to continue."

The Hilltoppers trained for weeks for the race as they tackle the obstacles of the Hilltopper daily at practice. Big Bertha, as always, was a big obstacle for many runners, as well as the potato patch this year, with a little mud trap at the end of it that sent runners slipping into a nice welcoming mud bath. The SLS runners crushed even their own expectations, many achieving personal records, with some even beating their overall seasonal record. The Fun Run welcomed all runners of different ages with some of our own alumni joining in. The Hilltopper is one of SLS's biggest events, and it truly would not be what it is today if not for the tireless efforts of the entire campus. ■



RETURNING ACTORS

By: Khan Nguyen ('27)

Every year, St. Lawrence Seminary reserves a special day for alumni to return and reconnect with their alma mater. The annual Alumni Reunion offers a chance for alumni to reunite with old classmates and to honor exemplary alumni. The day began with the annual Hilltopper cross-country meet in the morning; in the afternoon the event was followed by an alumnus versus students' soccer game. The 2025 alumni match was a close one, ending in a victory for the alumni with a score of 6-5. The first half of the game was played against the varsity soccer team, which ended with a score of 5-3. The second half was played against the JV team ending with a score of 6-5 in favor of the alumni. During the game, Nathan Reyes ('27) and his family prepared tacos for all in attendance.

A late afternoon Mass was held for everyone in attendance. Each year the Mass is offered for intentions of our school's Alumnus. After the Mass concluded this year's Brindisi awards were presented. The Brindisi award is given to alumni who best reflect the SLS missions and values in their lives after high school. This year's Brindisi award recipients were Fr. Paul Koenig ('82) and SLS's current history teacher, Mr. Jeff Krieg ('81). After earning this achievement, Mr. Krieg stated, "I am extremely humbled receiving the Brindisi award, as I work at St. Lawrence Seminary because I believe in SLS. Nevertheless, I am grateful."

Following the Mass, there was a cookout in the courtyard for both students and alumni. This year's Alumni Reunion was well attended, with approximately 150 alumni in attendance. Much work goes on, behind the scenes, to make this annual event possible. It is this writer's hope that the event will continue for years to come. ■

SPANISH SUPERHERO SAVES THE DAY

By: Yubal Vazquez Cenil ('28)

Last school year, the Hilltoppers witnessed a star, Mrs. Miriam Liborio, leave the stage. Mrs. Liborio had dedicated many years of her teaching career to Saint Lawrence Seminary, causing her retirement to be a sad but satisfying one. Luckily, Mrs. Esther Morriberon bravely rose up and took on the role of Spanish teacher at SLS. Mrs. Morriberon was born and raised in Lima, Perú. She spent 19 years studying in Lima. Before becoming a teacher, she worked as an industrial engineer. She officially began teaching in 2002.

Prior to coming to SLS, she taught in many different states, including Kansas, New York, Illinois, and most recently, Florida. Mrs. Morriberon came to SLS because she found the Hill to be a wonderful place to help young men become better versions of themselves. She also added, "At Saint Lawrence, I am able to learn about new cultures." She plans to stay on the Hill and is determined to help the Hilltoppers for years to come. ■



A RECOGNITION OF SACRAFICE

By: Conner Mills ('27)

St. Lawrence Seminary celebrates the toil and labor of parents with the annual Parent Weekend, a time to recognize the major sacrifices parents make to send their sons to SLS with activities and gratitude. The day officially began with a home soccer game against Plymouth at the Alumni field, followed by lunch in the refectory.

After lunch parents were invited to a presentation in the auditorium, given by Fr. Baudry, Dr. Donahou and Mr. Romero, who explained discernment, the SLS Ministry Program and the Parent Ambassador Program. When the presentations were over the activities began. The mother-son volleyball game was played on the upper ball diamond where the score was initially in favor of the students until they were nerfed, requiring at least 3 passes on their side which helped even the odds. In the end, however, the students were victorious. Next up was the most anticipated event of the day, the father-son softball game. With the massive turnout of fathers, it was an intense game. Initially, it was relatively even between offense and defense, until the dad's had loaded the bases, and achieved another hit to score, resulting in a five-run lead. The sons could not recover and lost. Despite the game being a landslide Thomas Ruiz ('27) said, "It was incredibly fun to play against the dads."

Finally, after the fun and games, a special Mass was held for the parents, featuring the school choir and chapel musicians. The experience was both meaningful and a heartfelt reminder of our parents' self-sacrifice for their sons. ■



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