

HILLTOPICS

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HILLTOPICS

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Editor Introduction

It's crazy to think that we arrived here as a freshman and a sophomore, and now we're beginning our final year at St. Lawrence Seminary. It doesn't seem too long ago that we first stepped onto the Hill, unsure of what lies ahead. Now, looking around, it's hard to believe we're almost at the end of this journey.

As new co-editors, we are blessed to be able to create this school year's *Hilltopics*. But what might this year's theme be? By now, it may be obvious we have chosen Legos. After spending time considering all the different possibilities, we felt this theme truly correlates with the students here.

SLS focuses on discerning God's call while building a foundation of faith, service, and leadership. We thought using Legos as our theme would be a great way to illustrate that concept. Constructing a masterpiece using Legos takes time, just as building your faith does. It can't be done instantaneously; rather, it's a journey that happens overtime. Building your Legos can be challenging, and you will face many challenges, but if you keep building, you will eventually reach your goals. This is just the beginning of something great, and we are excited to share it with all of you this school year.

Carl Tango-an



Luke Joseph





The Base of Faith, Fr. Bill Hugo Takes His Place

By: Tam Tran ('28)

There is a saying in engineering that “a building is only as strong as its foundation,” meaning that if the base of a structure is weak, the rest cannot stand. Fortunately for SLS, the foundation could not be any stronger; especially with the addition of the new President/Rector Fr. Bill Hugo.

Although he may be new to his position, Fr. Bill is very familiar with Saint Lawrence. Not only is Fr. Bill a Son of Calvary having graduated in 1971, but he is also a former member of the teaching staff. After his time at Calvary, Fr. Bill pursued higher levels of education and was ordained a priest in 1980 as a member of the Order of Friars Minor. In addition, Fr. Bill has held the title of Vicar Provincial, Director of Capuchin Formation, Director of Post-Novitiate and Ministry Formation, and currently serves as a member of the Provincial Council for the Province of Saint Joseph. Fr. Bill is also the author of several books on Franciscan life, including two study guides on the lives of Saint Francis and Saint Clare of Assisi.

Early this summer, Fr. Bill assumed his role as the Rector/President of Saint Lawrence Seminary with one goal in mind – emphasize the Catholic and Franciscan education that Saint Lawrence provides. Since arriving on the Hill of Happiness, Fr. Bill has updated Saint Lawrence’s mission statement to better reflect the school’s purpose: “Providing Catholic Franciscan Education for Life”.

To further support the mission, Fr. Bill took the initiative to bring back daily Mass to provide Hilltoppers a chance to truly grow in their Catholic identity. When interviewed about his new experience as Rector/President, Fr. Bill replied, “I am truly grateful for all the wonderful staff at Saint Lawrence. It is so inspiring to see them give so much to the school and provide students from all over the world a chance to receive a strong Catholic, Franciscan education. Without them, I can confidently say that Saint Lawrence Seminary would not be where it is today.” Being the Rector/President of Saint Lawrence is no easy task; however, Fr. Bill is more than qualified to lead our school to follow the values of Franciscan spirituality and form strong Catholic men able to make a positive change in the world.

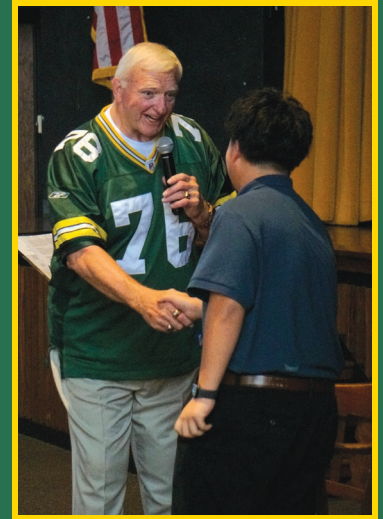
Faith On and Off the Field

By: Luke Joseph ('27)

On Monday, September 7th, former NFL player, Mike McCoy, gave a special Labor Day presentation to the students and faculty. This presentation provided valuable insight into staying strong in your faith and relying on God during times of hardship. It also highlighted several important lessons for young people, including the impact that the people you surround yourself with can have on your character and decisions. Additionally, it emphasized the importance of avoiding drugs, alcohol and making choices that lead to a positive and fulfilling life.

Mr. McCoy was an NFL defensive tackle for the Green Bay Packers, Oakland Raiders, New York Giants, and Detroit Lions. He was drafted second overall in the first round of the 1970 NFL Draft and his NFL career lasted 11 years. His talk on the Hill included his journey as a Catholic and how he founded Mike McCoy Ministries. Jeremy Galan ('27) stated, "Mr. McCoy's talk helped give me a reality check on how I should be living my life in this day and age."

Mr. McCoy emphasized that, with the influence of social media and ongoing cultural changes, it can be challenging to follow God and keep Him at the center of our lives. Amid the confusion, pressure, and challenges that many adolescents face today, it is important to continue walking with Christ, regardless of the difficulty. His message served as a reminder that staying grounded in faith provides strength, guidance, and purpose, helping all of us face life's obstacles and remain true to ourselves.



Laying the Cornerstone of Our Foundation

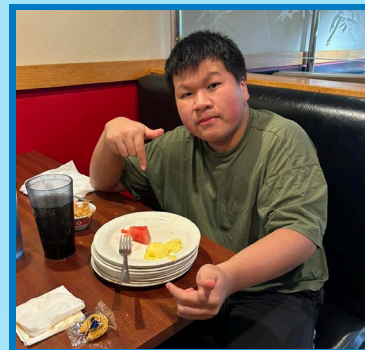
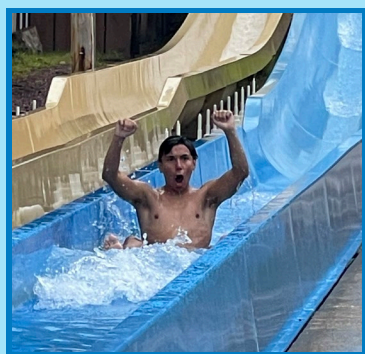
By: Jayden Ahorukomeye ('29)

Changes have taken place over the summer, including the addition of new staff and new responsibilities for familiar faces on campus. New to the SLS staff is Mr. Peter Lim ('21). After graduating from SLS, Mr. Lim received his bachelor's degree at the Franciscan University of Steubenville. While there, he studied abroad and visited many places throughout Europe including Austria, Poland, Vatican City, and the Shrine of Our Lady of Lourdes in France. But after five years, Mr. Lim missed the place that he once called home and decided to return to SLS. Mr. Lim stated, "Nostalgia and my love for the virtue of service brought me back to the Hill of Happiness." He now serves as a freshmen dorm supervisor, helping new students feel welcomed in an unfamiliar environment.

On the other hand, we have two recognizable faces on campus taking on new roles. First, Campus Minister, Fr. Baudry Metangmo, has taken on the additional role of junior and senior Religion teacher. He will teach a variety of subjects, including Morality: which focuses on living in Christ; Apologetics, which teaches students how to defend their faith; and Catholic Social Teaching. Fr. Baudry is excited to "share knowledge with the students and get them excited about the intellectual nature of our faith" but he anticipates challenges in "explaining clearly hard concepts of theology and keeping paperwork in check." A fun fact is that this is his first time teaching, and he hopes it will be a great experience!

Finally, Mr. Francisco Saucedo ('02) transitioned into the role of Dean of Students. He feels teaching Guidance may present some challenges, but he is excited to be working with students daily again. He stated, "I want to understand how things previously worked in the Dean's office and determine the best ways to teach right from wrong." A fun fact about Mr. Saucedo, as a student here, he participated in Solo and Ensemble playing the marimba and went to the state wrestling competition as a student and later as a coach. As the school year continues, we pray that Mr. Saucedo, Fr. Baudry and Mr. Lim settle into their new roles, feel supported by the SLS community, and find purpose and success in their work.





Laying Our Foundation One “Brick” at a Time

By: Khan Nguyen ('27)

As one class begins placing the final bricks of their foundation, another is just beginning to lay a new one. On Saturday, August 28, both the senior and freshman classes departed from campus for their respective class trips. While the seniors celebrated the strength of their foundation built over the years, the freshmen embarked on a journey designed to begin building theirs.

The senior class, along with their supervisors, Mr. Sy Vanissaveth and Fr. Peter Kafumu, loaded the bus at 8:00 a.m. and headed for Noah's Ark in the Wisconsin Dells. Upon arriving at the water park, the seniors showed much excitement, despite the chilly weather. The cold did not dampen anyone's mood, as there were no waiting lines for any of the rides! However, Alex Dominguez ('27) mentioned, "I hated that there was no line for Scorpion's Tail, because I was scared of going on a ride where the floor just disappears." Eventually the weather did deteriorate, with a downpour of rain, but once again no moods were dampened. Jeremy Galan ('27) summed up everyone's attitude, saying, "We're already wet anyways." Leaving the water park around 4:30 p.m., the senior class made a quick stop at a Chinese buffet before heading back to the Hill.

Meanwhile, as the seniors reached Noah's Ark, the Freshmen arrived at Tom & Jerry's Mini Golf in Plymouth, WI. Filled with excitement, Antonio Perez ('30) declared, "I can't wait to spend time with my classmates, because I know that time will fly by like it did for my senior." Following mini golf, Mr. Peter Lim, Fr. Crispin Shirima, Fr. Baudry Metangmo, and Mr. Dave Bartel took the freshmen to a nearby park. There, they enjoyed pepperoni pizza and sodas. As the class bonded over sand volleyball, soccer, basketball, and other activities, the weather did not cooperate and it began to rain. Though this ended the Freshmen's outing abruptly at 2 p.m., Lesidi Osei-Tutu ('30) pointed out, "The rain may have cut our outing short, but at least we had fun together." Despite the rain and early morning departure, both classes experienced a day creating memories that will continue to build their foundation and become cherished pieces of future nostalgia.

The Dream Team

By: Alan Grajales ('28)



As we all know, summer is a time to sit back, relax, and enjoy some time off after a long academic school year. Most of our Hilltoppers took the opportunity to rest, but some, on the other hand, had a different idea. On Saturday, June 20th, most of the SLS varsity soccer team took part in the 43rd Annual Spring Soccer Tournament in New Holstein, WI, where the players stayed with Isaac Ehlenbeck ('27) and his family. In fact, it was Isaac's idea to participate in the tournament. Isaac ('27) admitted, "At first, the whole idea of the tournament was a joke being mentioned at the lunch table, but it slowly came to reality." Moreover, the team was coached by none other than Mr. Anthony Van Asten.

SLS competed in a total of two games at the tournament. In the first game, SLS took on the host of the tournament, New Holstein. At halftime, SLS was down 0-1 but they came back by putting all the missing pieces together and won with a score of 3-1. Later, SLS faced an unfamiliar team, Horicon. Sadly, SLS lost with a score of 1-6 but took second overall in the tournament. Ultimately, participating in the tournament helped the team build a stronger bond. The players added more pieces to their puzzle, strengthening the team and preparing them for the season ahead.

Soccer, the St. Lawrence Way

By: Isaac Navarro ('27)

As the fall sports season gets underway, soccer is already making a statement, with teams coming out strong and delivering impressive performances in the opening games of the season. At SLS, soccer is represented by both a JV and varsity team, giving students the opportunity to develop their skills and compete at a high level.

The varsity team is coached by Mr. Sebastian Vervaeck and Mr. Micah Wood, while the JV team is coached by Mr. Matthew Mattes. Both teams are looking forward to a successful season but with different goals in mind. JV is focused on developing its players, by working on the technical and physical skills needed to succeed at this level. Players focus on building team chemistry, creating a strong foundation for future seasons. Their practices involve a variety of drills to improve passing and shooting.

Varsity, however, is already at a higher level according to Coach Vervaeck. He stated, "There's carryover, and you can see that with this group." Since varsity already has more experience with the technical aspects of the sport, practices include running drills to keep players sharp on certain techniques and to correct minor flaws. The varsity team also focuses on building endurance and stamina to maintain their best performance throughout a game.

With a strong start to the season, both teams are setting a positive tone and building momentum for what promises to be an exciting and successful year on the field. Most importantly, the Hilltoppers look forward to a season of growth, teamwork, and fun.



Running for the PR

By: Conner Mills ('27)

As the fall sports season continues, the cross-country team hits the trails to compete. The determined runners have already competed in a few meets and continue to train hard. Unfortunately, due to weather on September 19th, the 48th annual Hilltopper cross country meet was canceled. Normally, SLS hosts the meet which brings numerous JV and varsity teams on the Hill to compete.

Training for this season is led by Mr. Kevin Buelow and Mr. Hub Bradley. When asked how he was planning to prepare the runners and what his goals were, Coach Bradley stated, "Running a minimum of two miles every practice and to build the team back up." As for the runners' goals Jonathan Lancour ('30) said, "A PR (Personal Record), close to 20 minutes and to stay on varsity." Manuel Lazaro ('29) stated, "Increase stamina and lose weight." With these goals in mind, the cross-country team continues to run the daunting meets with the hope to succeed.

But wait, there's more... it has been a tradition for decades that the Hilltopper draws many alumni back to the Hill for an Alumni Event. Fortunately, SLS was still able to host the event, but it looked a little different this year with all outdoor events canceled. The event included a student vs. alumni volleyball game in the gym, Mass and the announcement of the alumni awards and dinner. This year there were three recipients of the Brindisi Award: Mike Faber ('76), Jerald Brisson ('83), and Father Bob Malloy ('62), who all displayed extreme devotion to carrying out God's will through service to the church and to the poor. In addition, the Class of ('76) filled the chapel wearing yellow polos to celebrate their 50th reunion.

As the cross-country season continues, the Hilltoppers accepts the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. Whether setting personal records or competing against top competition, the team's hard work and determination will make this a season to remember.



Set, Serve, Receive, Believe!

By: Yubal Vazquez Cenil ('28)

Various steps are required to establish a strong foundation, whether for a new senior dorm, a child's LEGO creation, or a newly formed team. This fall, the Hilltoppers were called upon to establish a Junior Varsity volleyball team, a new addition to the program. After last year's vibrant season, many students are eager to watch these athletes compete once again. Returning varsity player, Tam Tran ('28), commented, "Coming back from summer break and hearing the crowd cheer you on is something an athlete truly looks forward to." What many don't see is what goes on behind the scenes when building a successful team. After a full day of school, these athletes head over to the gym, where they practice their volleyball skills.

The varsity team led by Mr. Sy Vanissaveth stated, "I'm really excited about the veterans being back. A focus this year would be to really polish up the team's skills." Mr. Chad Dowland stepped up to coach the new JV team. Mr. Dowland was thrilled as well, noting, "I am truly excited to see how this season plays out. I want to work with the team to better their competitiveness and their communication." With consistent practice and coaching, these athletes are building a solid foundation to be better leaders both on and off the court.





Building Leaders

By: Donovan Blattner ('28)

Laying the foundation to build leaders takes time and effort. This past June, a Hilltopper had the opportunity to not only learn about civil government but also apply what he learned in a practical setting. Joseph Becker ('27) participated in Badger Boys State, a leadership and civics program where Wisconsin high school juniors and seniors learn about government, leadership, and civic responsibility through hands-on activities at the University of Wisconsin Eau-Claire. Joseph was placed with a group of people to collectively simulate a city government. Together, participants elected officials, passed laws, and managed a government up to the state level.

The annual event brings together students from across Wisconsin, which was a highlight for Joseph. He said, "It was a wonderful bonding experience where I got to experience deep conversations with some amazing people." He valued the experience greatly, recognized the lifelong lessons he gained. He stated, "Badger Boys taught me a lot about how the government and elections operate on many different levels, supplying me with invaluable experiences for the future." Overall, the program plays a key role in developing responsible, exemplary citizens throughout Wisconsin.

Joseph's experience at Badger Boys State not only expanded his knowledge of government and leadership but also connected him with peers who share a passion for making a difference. As he carries these lessons forward, he serves as an excellent example of how initiative, curiosity, and civic engagement can open doors to meaningful opportunities.

Ask a question, test it, and draw a conclusion: these are the steps of the scientific method. This process helps scientists determine whether their experimental data supports or rejects an original hypothesis and that is what the Biology II students at SLS experienced.

On September 13th, students presented their findings at the second annual Science Fair, led and founded by Ms. Nicole Peterson. Over the course of two weeks, students worked with a partner to develop a question, tested it through an experiment, and created a poster board displaying their results. Students, their families and SLS staff attended the fair, where they visited the various projects and heard presenters explain their experiments and findings. Projects like pH's Effects on Yeast Activation (Nhan Nguyen '27 and Theom Sajeew '27), Colorism in Bacteria (Dang Nguyen '27 and Sam Nhan '27), and Infinity Mirrors (Patrick Tran '27 and Joseph Becker '27) were just a few of the many creative and engaging experiments on display.

The Science Fair was not only enjoyable, but it also provided students with an opportunity to develop valuable skills. Ms. Peterson said, "Being able to come up with a question, test it, and share the results, is one of the best ways to build not only your knowledge in science, but also your public speaking and problem-solving skills!" Benjamin Dao ('29) noted, "Participating in the Science Fair was a great way to get real hands-on experience." SLS has always emphasized sharing talents and knowledge with others; and the Science Fair gave students an opportunity to share their ideas and continue to build a foundation of faith for the future.

Built in Discovery

By: Paul Nguyen ('28)



New Faces, New Dreams Introducing New Faces on the Hill

By: Joseph Saw ('29)

Every year, new students arrive at St. Lawrence Seminary eager to grow spiritually and academically while becoming part of the Hilltopper community. This year, four new students have brought their unique backgrounds, interests, and goals to the Hill.

One new face around campus is Damien Middendorf ('29) from Omaha, Nebraska. Damien is excited to build new friendships, get involved, and succeed academically. With aspirations to become a financial advisor, he hopes to use his future career to help others. He enjoys spending time with family and especially loves his father's delicious shrimp Alfredo. A fun fact about Damien is that he comes from a family of 10 children and is one of the youngest. As he begins his journey at SLS, Damien is excited to see where his time on the Hill will take him.

The Hill also welcomes Tri Nguyen ('29), an energetic student from Vietnam. Tri left his home, parents, and younger sister to pursue new opportunities at SLS. He hopes to become a successful businessman and plans to study economics and finance. Outside of academics, Tri enjoys balut, a traditional dish popular in the Philippines and other parts of Southeast Asia.

Another new face around campus is Bao Tran ('28) from Ha Tinh, Vietnam. Growing up with three siblings, Bao has been surrounded by family and has learned the importance of determination and hard work. He is excited to meet new people, experience SLS firsthand, and make lasting memories. Bao has high expectations for his future, hoping to become a pilot so he can travel the skies and explore the world from above the clouds.

Finally, Minh Luong ('28) comes all the way from Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. Minh came to St. Lawrence hoping to improve academically and pursue his dream of becoming an electrical engineer. As an only child, Minh enjoys spending time on his own and in his free time, he enjoys good old-fashioned grilled chicken.

While each of these students come from different backgrounds and has different goals, they all share one thing in common: a desire to grow, succeed, and make the most of their time at SLS. As these new students adapt to life on the Hill, they are sure to create friendships and memories that will last a lifetime.



Déjà Vu.

By: Fr. Bill Hugo

That's the first thing that came to mind when the editors of *Hilltopics* came to my office for an interview and then asked me to write an article for the first issue of the year. Déjà vu: something from the past is happening again.

Fifty-six years ago, I was the editor of *Hilltopics*, and I asked the rector to do the very same things! I also remember Fr. Joe, the rector at the time, telling me about the mission of St. Lawrence—which is exactly what I want to do now. Déjà vu!

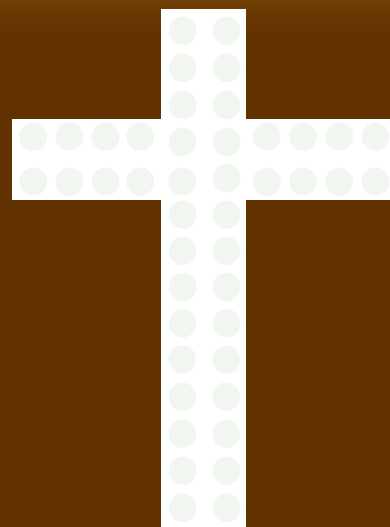
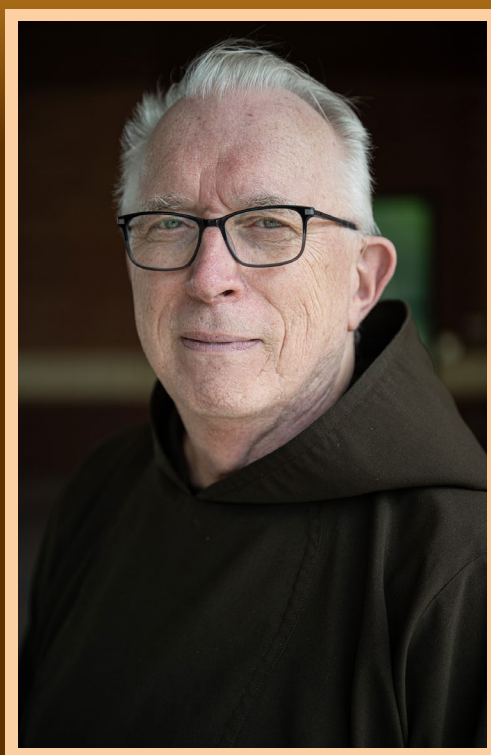
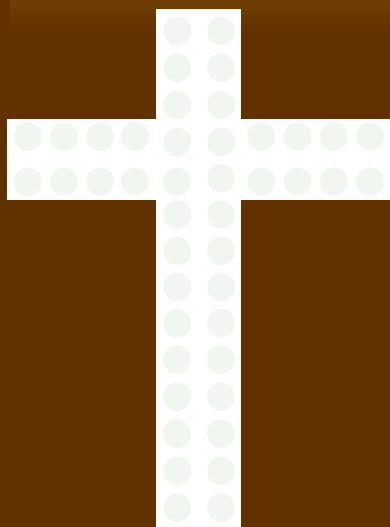
Over the summer, St. Lawrence adopted a new tagline for its public relations: *A Catholic Franciscan Education for Life*. Ms. Rebecca Turba challenged us to define what makes St. Lawrence Franciscan. The Capuchins working in the school identified four characteristics: **Servant-Leadership, Sister-Brotherhood, Discipleship, and Grateful Reverence**. In my first four reflections for *Hilltopics*, I want to explore each of them.

Servant-leadership comes first. Those two words immediately conjure up strong images. A servant-leader is not haughty or prideful and does not look down on others. At St. Lawrence, servant-leadership demands love of neighbor, no matter who that neighbor might be. In other words: **everyone**.

There is a selflessness and humility at the heart of servant-leadership. People can count on servant-leaders because they consistently look out for the needs of others. A servant-leader is also not a lone ranger. The best leaders know how to work collaboratively with others. Finally, servant-leaders do not expect others to do what they are unwilling to do themselves. **They lead by serving.**

St. Lawrence is about more than academic education. We strive to form our students holistically—in every aspect of life. Yes, we are a school that builds leaders. But not just any kind of leaders.

We strive to form servant-leaders.



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