



Lisbon, Portugal  
ft. The Pope!



Hilltoppers  
Across the Ocean

# Hilltoppics

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## Letter from the Rector

This past summer, I accompanied a group of eighteen SLS students and five staff members on a pilgrimage to Lisbon, Portugal, to attend World Youth Day 2023. It was the first time that St. Lawrence Seminary had sent a delegation to represent the school in that global encounter of young people (and the young at heart too) with the Pope. It was a pilgrimage to remember with memories that will be cherished for a lifetime.

We visited a number of beautiful historical sites, prayed at some of the most significant shrines and Churches (Our Lady of Fatima, St. Anthony, the Eucharistic Miracle), and attended a handful of catechetical and other faith-inspiring sessions throughout the week-long event. But the highlight of it all was our passing but proximate encounter with Pope Francis. To add to that excitement, Pope Francis gave us a wink and a thumbs up. We could not be more thrilled.

World Youth Day was established by then Pope now Saint John Paul II in 1985 to give the youth from around the world a unique opportunity to encounter the Lord anew, to inspire them and inflame their hearts with love for Jesus and their neighbor, and to send them forth as disciples of Christ and his ambassadors to the world.

At this year's World Youth Day events, Pope Francis urged the youth to be harbingers of God's Good News and bearers of joy to the people, and he pointed to the Blessed Virgin Mary, who rose and went in haste after receiving the message from the Angel Gabriel and visited her cousin Elizabeth, as an example.

During this new academic year, may we heed and bear in our hearts the counsel of our Holy Father, Pope Francis. May we open our eyes and our hearts to see and recognize the wondrous things that God is doing in our lives each day, so that like Mary, we too may become harbingers of the Gospel and bearers of joy to everyone we encounter.

# HIS WILL BE DONE

Thien Hanh Mai ('25)

Making decisions are hard; whether it is choosing what to eat for lunch or choosing a career path one might pursue, it is never easy. In the case of Father Nathan Linton and Father Truong Dinh, this holds true. They both knew the amount of effort it would take to pursue their vocation, and in the end, they were successful. Fr. Nathan said, "The process leading up to ordination took many years and a lot of dedication." He felt that God was slowly calling him to the priesthood and that his vocation was slowly being revealed to him.



AMEN.



THIS IS SO COOL.

The ordination mass took place on Saturday, June 24th, at Saint Francis of Assisi Church in Milwaukee, marking the beginning of their priesthood. The two were ordained along with another friar, Father Francisco Javier Rodriguez. They all shared the same opinions about the ordination process: it was nerve-racking, exciting, happy, and exhausting. They were all grateful to become closer to God in their journey. Shortly after being ordained, they both held their first masses. Fr. Truong's first mass was held in Texas, and he was joined by a few students and alumni, Joshua Choi ('26) and Jonah Lim ('26), Thien Hanh Mai ('25), and Jacob Lim ('22). Fr. Truong performed his first mass in Vietnamese, which made him very nervous. He was grateful to see his family, his fellow Capuchin Brothers, and a few students there supporting him. Joshua Choi said, "The mass was very exciting, and I thought it went very well." Fr. Nathan's first mass was held on the evening after the ordination. He celebrated mass with his family, close friends, and a few family friends. Fr. Nathan recounted the mass as being very intimate.

Now that the two are priests, they are very excited for the plan God has laid out for them in the future. Fr. Truong exclaimed, "I am loving every moment of being a priest. I love celebrating mass. It's hard to explain how it feels, but it feels good being here!" Fr. Nathan said, "God's goodness knows no bounds. I am thankful for the blessings he has given me and how he has worked in my life." These two extraordinary men put a lot of effort into their studies, as well as, balancing it with their life at SLS. Their efforts eventually paid off and they both savor the journey.





# Countries Gathering in God's Banquet

Jonah Lim ('26)

Just before coming back to school, a group of SLS students and staff members traveled to Lisbon, Portugal for the 2023 World Youth Day. World Youth Day (WYD) is an event started by Pope John Paul II where different countries all over the world come together to celebrate their Catholic faith by worshiping, praying, singing, and much more. Portugal was the country to host this year's event, which over 1.5 million Catholics attended. Our group from St. Lawrence was fortunate enough to be there because of generous benefactor's contributions and support. Throughout the week, the group traveled to many parts of Portugal led by Señora Sonia, a representative from 206 Tours. One of the most memorable moments of the trip was seeing the Pope's procession, where Pope Francis winked and gave a thumbs-up to Father Zoy. Miguel Herrera ('26) said, "This was a once in a lifetime experience, and it was definitely worth going, especially to Fátima." Going to WYD taught everyone how "universal" our Catholic faith is by seeing all the different countries worshiping the same God.

# Path to Peace

Nile Montes ('24)

The SLS delegation group landed in the Humberto Delgado Airport in Lisbon. While the group had some difficulties at the airport, they made it on a bus and arrived at Hotel Tivoli, where they would be staying for the rest of the trip. The students and staff were excited to see what Lisbon had to offer, for some had not even left the United States before. The group walked throughout the city with the help of 206 Tours guide, Senora Sonia. After some rest, the delegation celebrated mass at a nearby church with Fr. Nathan Linton and Fr. Zoy Garibay co-presiding. After a long day of sightseeing, meeting new people, and celebrating mass, the group headed back to the hotel.

After a good night sleep, the SLS delegation prepared themselves for the first actual day of the WYD events. The group visited the St. Anthony Church where they celebrated mass. The group then went to the Commerce Plaza, where many other WYD participants gathered. There were many food stands, bands singing on a stage, and people enjoying the day. The group tried a local Portuguese pastry called *pastel de nata*. After a delicious lunch at a local restaurant near the ocean, the group ventured to the main plaza in which WYD was held. Jonathan Prado ('24) stated, "It was breath-taking to see how many people were gathered to celebrate God and our faith." There was a very positive mood from the participants, for many were singing and dancing and getting to know people from across the globe. After an eventful day of praying, meeting new friends, and celebrating the beginnings of WYD, the group headed back to Hotel Tivoli to rest.

The following day was one of the most pivotal moments of the trip. The delegation ventured to Fatima and saw the place of the apparition of the Blessed Mother to Lucia, Jacinta and Francisco. Our group also saw the juxtaposition of the old and the new basilica. They also saw the many pilgrims who walked on their hands and knees around the apparition site as a sign of penance and devotion. Tyler Le ('24) mentioned, "Fatima reminded me of the reasons why I decided to participate in WYD. I got to reflect upon my family, the benefactors who sponsored our trip, and everything in my life that has led up to this moment." After praying at Fatima, the group visited the surrounding areas and after a prayerful and peaceful day, the group headed back to the hotel for the night.



SO MANY PEOPLE!!



WHERE ARE THE CASTLES?



# From Parks to Plains

Jonathan Prado ('24)

Following Pope Francis's motorcade at the Eduardo VII Park in Lisbon, Portugal, the SLS delegation embarked on a scenic trip to the mountainous town of Sintra. Sintra was a town speckled with local shops, fresco churches, a Moorish castle, and a palace that formerly housed many Portuguese rulers.

Following a mass with the 206 Tours group from New Jersey, the delegation visited the Cabo da Roca, the westernmost point of Europe, before taking a short lunch break in the coastal town of Cascais. The SLS delegation returned to Lisbon to participate in an interpretive dance rendition of the Stations of the Cross, the group was given a short reflection on the Station of the Cross, by Pope Francis. Iñaki Falcon ('24) stated, "The interpretive dance of the Stations of the Cross helped me pray in a different way and the speech from Pope Francis was truly electrifying, especially hearing him in-person."

Following a restful sleep, the SLS delegation rose early to make the 2.6-kilometer trek to El Parque de Tejo, WYD 2023's final venue. Braving 100-degree weather and dense crowds, the pilgrims arrived at El Parque de Tejo and set up camp in the dusty, rocky field near a water station. Waiting almost 7 hours for the vigil with Pope Francis, the pilgrims enjoyed each other's company, exchanged tokens with other pilgrims, prayed for our benefactors, and danced to the very repetitive theme song.

After returning to the hotel for a very relaxing sleep, the SLS delegation returned to El Parque de Tejo to participate in the closing mass, led by Pope Francis and concelebrated by Saint Lawrence's very own Fr. Zoy and Fr. Nathan. At the end of the closing mass, Pope Francis announced that the next WYD would be held in Seoul, South Korea. Following a quick break, the delegation had an excursion to Praia de Guincho, a beach on the Atlantic Ocean. Finally, the Hilltoppers attended their final mass in Lisbon before returning home after a fun, prayerful, and life-changing experience at WYD 2023.





# Journey's End

Christian Cruz ('25)

The Portugal trip was very educational and entertaining for the students that travelled to WYD. During the final days of the trip, many students came together with others from all around the globe to see the Pope on the big screen one last time. The area was filled with thousands of people. Patrick Donohue ('25) said it best, "It was a once in a lifetime opportunity." Jerry Escamilla ('25) said, "I was excited throughout the whole trip! My favorite memory was seeing the Pope! I felt alive!" Mrs. Andrea School added, "It was such an honor to attend this event and represent not only the USA or Wisconsin, but our small, tight knit community of St. Lawrence Seminary High School. There were so many young people present who were unafraid to sing, dance, and interact while being unapologetically Catholic."

The SLS students and staff have treasured memories that were made together. The Pope made a huge impact on everyone's trip. This past summer was unforgettable!



POPE FRANCIS APPROVED!



WOW YOU'RE TALL!



LISBON'S PRETTY COOL

# Trials and Tribulations

Hung Nguyen ('25)

With the beginning of school, also starts the fall sports season on the Hill of Happiness. Starting their journey at SLS, students will have arduous assignments, but if you are looking for an activity to fill your free time, get in shape, enjoy the beautiful scenery around the Hill, or build your stamina, try an extracurricular activity like cross-country.

This year Mr. Kevin Buelow and Fr. Truong Dinh are coaching the cross-country team. When asked what was expected out of the cross-country season, Fr. Truong said, "I hope that new runners can learn something from running and that the varsity team improves on their personal records. I can also hope that after high school, running continues to be a fun for the students." Cross-country is not only a competitive sport, but also a hobby for some. Nam Nguyen ('24), whom has run cross-country for four years said, "I love running cross-country. I can view the beautiful scenery and run in places I do not normally see, such as potato patch and the triangle run." This year many freshmen and sophomores have challenged themselves with the sport and with the skillful guidance of Fr. Truong and Mr. Buelow, they all have the opportunity to conquer the challenge. To all runners and coaches, I wish you a good season.



FINAL SPRINT



GOAL!!

The SLS 2023 soccer season is full of challenges and promises. Under the instructions of Mr. Sebastian Vervaeck and Mr. Grant Bargender, the soccer season has started out smoothly. The coaches want the players to achieve their goals and continue to improve their skills. The players are focusing on teamwork and have set a goal to place high in the conference. Mr. Grant Bargender said, "For this year, I expect them to work hard since we have a lot of new players. I also hope that our team can achieve our goals." Recently, SLS's soccer varsity team had an astounding victory over New Holstein (8-3). However, they did not rest on their laurels; they regularly practice with high intensity to improve their skills and achieve more. When asked about this year's lineup, Huy Tran ('24), a varsity players said, "This year's lineup is well balanced, and with the addition of a talented young goalkeeper, Levi Van Asten ('27). The team will try to attain wins for the school." SLS's soccer path is still very long, but with coaches Vervaeck and Bargender by their side, they will continue to be focused and successful.





WHY IS IT SO BRIGHT?!



SMILE FOR THE CAMERA!

## Fun, With Lots of Sun!

Bao Tran ('26)

Labor Day this year fell on September 4<sup>th</sup>, and it was fun. It was a hot, and exhausting day at SLS. The day started with a special school schedule. Students had classes until noon, and then went to lunch in the refectory. After lunch, students had the opportunity to compete against one another, by class, in many games and activities.

The afternoon consisted of events, such as, Ultimate Frisbee, Dodgeball, Mario Kart, Kickball, and a water balloon fight. The water balloon fight was the favorite of students. Each student picked a water balloon to throw at another student. It was the perfect activity with the temperature in the 90's. Christopher Vu ('26), said, "The cold water was so refreshing in the hot sun." After being refreshed by the water balloon activity, the students ate supper outdoors in the courtyard. Following dinner, the sophomore, junior and senior classes held the election for class officers. The offices that needed to be filled were; president, vice president, spiritual life representative and student council representatives. After the elections to choose their leaders, the students had an ice-cream party, by class, in their dorm. The entire day was fun and exciting, but also exhausting.

## Summer's Out, School Is In

Diego Soto ('25)

School is back in session for SLS, with an all-new freshman class, and some new sophomores and juniors. Summer break is over and when a few students from each class were asked how their summer was the following are the answers I received.

Daniel Cornejo ('24) said, "I got my appendix removed over break, I was fortunate enough to make a trip to Mexico to visit family and I was also able to participate in World Youth Day in Portugal with other SLS students." Thomas Kim ('25) had an eventful summer as well. Thomas admitted, "I studied a lot for the SAT over break, but I still balanced my time to visit some recent alumni, Noel Choi, and Mac Kim. I also practiced golf, and golfed with my classmate, ThienHanh Mai." Wah Shee Gay ('26) shared, "I played a lot of soccer this summer, mainly with my friends back home. But the highlight of my summer was going to visit my family in Canada." While talking with a new Son of Calvary, Alphonse Biju ('27) he replied, "I practiced a lot of basketball with my older brother, and I went to Kentucky with my family for a simple trip." It seems that the students had a busy and eventful yet, relaxing summer break.



PAR! (I HOPE)



COOL BIRDS!

# Guide Us Always

Justin Tran ('25)

Welcome our new guidance counselor to the Hill of Happiness, Mr. Vanissaveth! Though currently in Milwaukee, he is from Laos. However, he was born in Thailand and then moved to the United States with his family. Mr. Vanissaveth studied for many years, and received a bachelor's degree in psychology from Wisconsin Lutheran College. He also received a master's degree in counseling at Concordia University, Chicago. He took part in the YMCA Mentor Program in Washington and worked for CFO Services in Wautoma. He's even spent summers working as the Teen Central Director at Camp Phillip in Wautoma. Why did Mr. Vanissaveth come to SLS? Mr. Vanissaveth has two cousins who are SLS alumni from the 90's. He also said, "It was fate that led him to SLS." Mr. Vanissaveth has set some goals for the year ahead; he wants to focus on being a good guidance counselor.



Mr. Vanissaveth shared, "I'm starting to get to know the students and really appreciate the hospitality here on the Hill." He also hopes to be a coach for the tennis team. He also shared his plans for the future. Mr. Vanissaveth wants to

travel the world, because he loves to explore and learn new things about different places. Mr. Vanissaveth's journey has just started at SLS. He would love to listen and visit with everyone to learn more so he can truly help students. To the SLS students, he wants you to know, that choosing SLS is

great preparation for college and beyond; and to appreciate the experiences SLS has to offer. He also has some advice for the student body: "Continue the mindset of Jesus in everything you do because it is how you will succeed." Best wishes and good luck, Mr. Vanissaveth!

## A New Beginning

Max Trinh ('25)

To the new students, welcome. To the returning students, welcome back! After a short, but restful summer, the Hilltoppers are fully refreshed and ready to tackle another school year. Registration and move in day for juniors, sophomores, and freshmen was held on Saturday, August 19<sup>th</sup> and for the seniors, it was on the Friday the 18<sup>th</sup>. After unpacking and saying their final goodbyes to their loved ones, the students hung out, embraced their friends, and got to know some of their new classmates. Jae-Seoung "Jason" Hong ('25), a returning junior, was so excited about returning to SLS, he arrived on Thursday. Jason stated, "I'm especially excited about the new dorm, the upperclassmen privileges, and the new supervisors. It felt good to see my brothers again and I was excited to meet some of the new guys."



**WATCH OUT!**

Sunday was orientation, which involved all classes and an introduction to the school year, going over the expectations for the year. Patrick Sande ('25) is a new face on the Hill, from Jefferson, WI. Patrick has described his first experience at SLS as, "different and like a home away from home." Patrick stated during an interview, "So far, so good! The teachers are helpful, the staff is kind, and the students are respectable. I'm looking forward to doing well academically, building tight relationships, and having fun." There is no doubt about it; a great start will lead off to a great year.





## And the Award Goes to...

Alan Mora ('26)

Last spring, the second week of May, a team of evaluators from the Archdiocese of Milwaukee came to evaluate St. Lawrence Seminary. The team was on campus to evaluate the school to determine if SLS did indeed educate the whole student. The qualifications of this award require the school to be in good partnership with the parents of the students attending, provide support for the students to succeed, and an overall good student environment. While here, the members of the team interviewed some of the school staff, faculty, parents and students. Father Zoy Garibay stated, "I felt honored and grateful they came to visit the school."

After a careful review, the Archdiocese of Milwaukee awarded SLS with, "Exemplary Recognition Status" in the category of Whole Child Education. Mr. Bruce Varick, a member of the evaluation team returned to SLS to present SLS with the award. The award was presented to Father Zoy after Mass on Friday August 25<sup>th</sup>, the first liturgy of the school year attended by all staff and students. After receiving the award Father Zoy stated, "I wasn't surprised, and I was grateful." Fr. Zoy was confident in St. Lawrence's ability to obtain the recognition. SLS will retain the award for the next four years until another review takes place. Father Zoy is confident that we can earn it again.

## A Week to Change a Lifetime

Said Villa ('25)

Over the summer, two SLS seniors, Cesar Gonzalez and Jonathan Prado, had the opportunity to go to a week long program called Badger Boys State. The event was started over 80 years ago by the Wisconsin American Legion to teach incoming seniors about local and state government. Over 900 young men attend this event each year, and they theoretically "create" the 51<sup>st</sup> state of the United States of America.

Throughout the week, students form a new government and they are elected into various positions of power from Governor to Chief Justice. This year Cesar Gonzalez was elected into the position of City Clerk and County Treasurer, and Jonathan Prado was given the position of Press Corps Editor in Chief and City Public Defender.

During the week, the students also attend different classes to learn about the different careers and how the government works. Jonathan Prado chose classes in Law and Psychology. Jonathan said, "It was an incredible experience, working with some of the best high school boys from across Wisconsin was privilege". This is an amazing opportunity that the local American Legion has blessed SLS with for so many years.





Hilltopics  
301 Church Street  
Mt. Calvary, WI 53057



## From the Editors

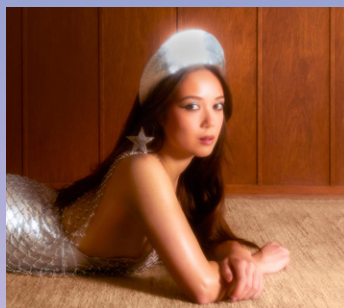
Senior year has finally begun, and thus starts our run on Hilltopics! Both of us are very excited to tackle what this year has to offer, and we want to make the most out of it. Senior year has the potential to be the most memorable year yet, so we can't wait to see what comes out of it. Let's savor each moment and do our best!

-Nile and Jonathan

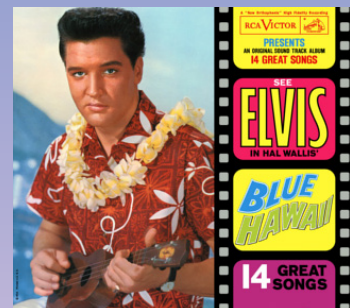
## What we're listening to:



Left & Right by SEVENTEEN



Bewitched by Laufey



Blue Hawaii by Elvis Presley