



THE LIONS' PRIDE
MEDIA GROUP

2023
December

Letter to the Editor

Letter to the Editor

Arielle Jacus

*Social Work and Psychology Major
Junior*

This letter to the editor was written in response to an article, published by Pew Research Center.

In September 2023, Pew Research released a study wherein U.S. Catholics stated that there is no significant discussion about climate change in priests' homilies. This is likely because environmentalism has become very politicized, and the Church and State function as separate entities.

However, Pope Francis has released two encyclicals on the environment – *Laudato Si'* (2015) and *Laudate Deum* (2023) – urging the faithful to consider this topic free from political agendas and in its purest essence: that we as Christians have the responsibility to be involved with environmentalism simply because the earth was created for us by God.

The pontiff's actions beg the question – should politics make it into homilies? The answer is yes. One must realize that not only do many political issues have a moral and theological background, but priests must take these political issues and reveal this background in their homilies – indeed, doing so upholds the responsibility that Christ entrusted to the Catholic Church.

We believe that Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6). For the 33 years that he was on this planet and became human flesh, he made sure to intentionally leave behind for us his teachings and guidance in a tangible form. This is the Gospels - the written accounts from his disciples - and eventually the collectively formed Bible with its Old Testament and New Testament.

However, the loophole is clear: if Jesus did not write these words himself – and if these words were written over two thousand years ago – how accountable can they be? And, how relatable can they be in a modern age?

Jesus knew that this book would encapsulate only the current amount of his teaching as it does – which, as we know, comes short despite its immensity because all the books in the world could not contain what would be written (Jn 21:25). He knew, then, that to re-visit and re-express, to retrieve and re-retrieve his messages and their deeper meanings in each generation would be necessary. Simply put, Jesus knew that while the truth does not change, context does.

So Jesus, knowing that this ministry of his could be easily twisted or restructured over the course of the ages, over the course of the eternity that he and the Father intended for his words to permeate,

left for his disciples a gift greater in proportion than anyone at the time could have imagined: the gift of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. This Spirit enabled his disciples to have the courage to “go out and preach the gospel and to baptize in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Mt 28:19).

Yet its power went beyond the initial courage needed to tend to the sheep - Jesus paved firmly the path this Spirit would follow. Knowing the frailty of man and his tendency to follow the crowd, Jesus organized a crowd; he designated a group of leaders for his sheep to follow, and he handpicked a shepherd in his place when he ascended into heaven: for Peter was handed “the keys to the kingdom of heaven,” in Peter was established the hierarchy of the Church and its leaders, and in the apostles was given the ability to appoint and reappoint over the course of history, as eternity unfolded (Mt 16:19). It is through these the Spirit was sent to work.

That is why today, the lineage of those appointed by Jesus have a responsibility to provide guidance that exceeds the spiritual realm, even extending into politics. When a priest steps up to give his homily, his formation includes millenniums of wisdom. It is an incorporation of the answers found since the Church's first attempts to evangelize through the Spirit after

Jesus ascended, to those found through the various councils and synods, encyclicals and letters that called upon the Spirit as the centuries unfolded.

The Church's beauty and credibility lies in her choice to never throw away or disregard the work of her forefathers but to preserve it, re-visiting and re-expressing their work to adapt to the context of the current age. In this light, a priest can be viewed as set aside by Christ for the Spirit to work through him as it happened to the very first apostles. Further, a priest can be viewed as justly answering his pastoral call to minister to Christ's flock when he acknowledges that they have political needs in addition to spiritual ones.

It is important to keep in mind that while this gift of the Lord in no way signifies that priests will speak without fallacy, it establishes that they must have the courage to speak. Without the Spirit, the Church would be an institution that lived and conceptualized all things from the mindset of a first century Jew – in which case, she would have fallen away and lost credibility throughout the ages.

With the Spirit, the Church becomes a living vessel that continually conceptualizes all things alongside the Savior who himself promised us: “I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you” (John 14:18).

Newsroom

The Lions' Pride Media Group is the student-run publication of Saint Leo University, free from institutional interference from conception to print. We publish in print once monthly, and weekly online at our website and through our social media sites. It is the mission of The Lions' Pride Media Group to provide accurate news and diverse opinions that are important to the Saint Leo community, and our goal is to inform and entertain readers while providing thought-provoking journalism without fear of reprisal. We are located in the Student Activities Building in Office 106.

Letters to the Editor & Advertising:

Send letters to the editor to TheLionsPrideNewspaper@gmail.com. Guidelines: 500 word maximum. Do not use profane or slanderous language. Faculty must include name and rank. Students must include name, major, and graduation year. Include phone number to verify authorship. We reserve the right to edit for grammar, spelling, or libel.

To inquire about putting an advertisement in the newspaper or social media, please contact Isa Riaño at isabella.riano@email.saintleo.edu.

Satyne Doner
Editor-in-Chief
satyne.doner@saintleo.edu

Sarah Gilley
Editor-in-Chief
sarah.gilley@saintleo.edu

Michaela Cleary
World News Editor
michaela.cleary@saintleo.edu

Sophia Sullivan
Arts & Culture Editor
sophia.sullivan@saintleo.edu

Isa Riaño
Advertisement Editor
isabella.riano@saintleo.edu

Crystal Smith
Managing Editor
crystal.smith02@saintleo.edu

Emily Dominguez
Campus News Editor
emily.dominguez@saintleo.edu

Bao Han
Online Editor
bao.han@saintleo.edu

Pia Perthen
Sports Editor
pia.perthen@saintleo.edu

Erick Angeles
Layout Editor
erick.angeles@saintleo.edu

Daria Krainova
Social Media Editor
daria.krainova@saintleo.edu

Caitlyn McGregor
Layout Editor
caitlyn.mcgregor@saintleo.edu

Dr. Valerie Kasper
Faculty Advisor
valerie.kasper@saintleo.edu

Saint Leo partners with local chef, reopens Café 36 space

Satyne Doner
Editor-in-Chief

After the 36 acres of land Judge Edmund F. Dunne offered as a gift to the Benedictine monks and sisters in 1886, Café 36 opened in spring 2022 inside the Wellness Center. Located downstairs of the main gym, Café 36 gave students a healthy on-campus dining option.

Staffing constraints limited Café 36's impact on the student body, resulting in a temporary closure. However, the university devised a plan to revitalize the space,

continue providing students with nutritious meals, and connect with the local community.

"We're looking to lease the space to local vendors to come in and be a partner with Saint Leo, but also take the opportunity to showcase their food," Anthony DeSantis, associate vice president of student affairs, says.

Chef John Richardson founded Jon's Gourmet Nutrition 11 years ago, turning his passion for cooking and healthy living into a thriving business. He takes pride in provid-

ing the Tampa area with organic spreads, dips, and wraps.

After attending an award ceremony at the Small Business Development Center and getting connected with Saint Leo, he knew it would be a fantastic opportunity.

"We realized that what John provides is very similar to what Café 36 provided in the past," DeSantis says. "He's keeping some of the old menu and providing his own products ... it was a perfect fit."

Richardson will continue with the well-loved fruit smoothies and offer milk alternatives. He will provide protein shakes with whey and plant-based proteins and spreads made from turkey, chicken, and salmon.

"My main goal is to have clean food, meaning no additives, no preservatives, no color, and organic, if possible," Richardson says.

Only a tiny section of the menu will be available for students during the revamped café's soft opening, which will take place from Dec. 4 through the 15. When students return in January for the spring semester, Richardson hopes to incorporate elements of Café 36's old menu with his own creations in a full-sized menu: salads, hotplates, flatbreads, wraps, and more.

While the café will be closed over winter break, a grand open-

ing event will take place officially on Jan. 16, and once in full swing, Richardson's café will be open seven days a week in the Wellness Center.

It will be open Monday through Thursday, 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.; Friday, 11 a.m. - 6 p.m.; Saturday and Sunday, 11 a.m. - 5 p.m. Students can use their Bonus Bucks and Lions Loot at the café, but not their meal swipes.

Overall, Richardson looks forward to continuing Café 36's original mission: to help the community live healthier.

"Cafe 36 has always been on the healthy side of nutrition, and my goal is to continue to give the community healthy options," Richardson says. "I want to keep everything all natural and clean, so people can maintain a nutritious lifestyle."

For DeSantis, this partnership is an excellent opportunity to impact the campus on many levels: hiring students, meeting with RAs, speaking with student government, and becoming familiar with Saint Leo.

"I think it's just an amazing partnership that we've been able to develop and show people that we can provide another option for people to eat on campus and benefit our local community," DeSantis shares. "I think it's a win-win from both perspectives."



Richardson is known for his delicious spreads, perfect for dipping (Photo via Jon's Gourmet Nutrition on Facebook).



Richardson is heavily involved with the local community and is often seen working tables at places like KRATE at the Grove in Wesley Chapel (Photo via Jon's Gourmet Nutrition on Facebook).

A winter wonderland at Saint Leo University

Hannah Lynn
Contributing Writer

Christmas spirit was in the air at Saint Leo University on Nov. 30. The campus turned into a winter wonderland as the school held its traditional Christmas tree lighting and blessing of the tree for the holiday season.

The Christmas tree lighting event had something for everyone to enjoy, regardless of age! There was festive music, great food, vendors selling fun holiday gifts to fill stockings, and even special appearances from the Grinch, Fritz, and Santa Claus that put a smile on every at-

tendee's face.

"The lighting of the Christmas tree tradition started before I was here, but the event used to be much smaller," remarked Mike D'Ambrosio, mayor of Saint Leo. "It included the traditional blessing of the tree among other ceremonial activities. The tree lighting that we know today is new."

When asked how successful he felt the event was, Mayor D'Ambrosio reflected on the sheer number of attendees who showed up, all ready to witness a tradition that wove its way into the fabric of Saint Leo's history.

"This was one of the most successful tree lightings that Saint Leo has had, and people have said this year was one of the best," D'Ambrosio said.

Many people from the community, students, and staff came to see the lit Christmas tree and experience everything Saint Leo had to offer around the holidays.

For Brooke and Brianna Brinker, first-year students at Saint Leo, who major in business management and digital communications, their favorite activity at the Christmas tree lighting was the snow globe that took pictures of the

people inside, which spared lots of laughs. They also mentioned having fun sitting on the sidewalk and making ornaments for their Christmas tree with friends.

First-year criminal justice student Kendell Ryan said her favorite part of the tree lighting event was "the lights turning on the Christmas tree and the snow globe."

Even with all the nods to Christmas fun, there were still reminders during the event of what the holiday season is truly about. Mayor D'Ambrosio mentioned that the birth of the savior Jesus Christ is the reason for the Christmas season.



The Saint Leo University Christmas tree lit up, marking the start of the holiday season for students (Photo taken by Hannah Lynn).



Freshmen Brooke and Brianna Brinker partake in a tree making activity (Photo taken by Hannah Lynn).



Crowd favorites appeared: Santa, Fritz, and Mrs. Claus (Photo taken by Hannah Lynn).



Delicious food was offered at the tree lighting event (Photo taken by Hannah Lynn).

Seasonal depression: Moving forward



The Counseling Center hosts events throughout the school year for students to learn about mental health, work on their self-esteem, and connect with other Lions. (Photo Credit: Isa Riano)



Organizations like Green Dot could help students with SAD see green flags in others and reframe their negative thoughts. (Photo Credit: Isa Riano)

Isa Riano

Advertisement Manager

TW: This article discusses depression, Season Affective Disorder, and mental health.

Although many see Christmas as a time of joy and laughter, others struggle with their mental health during the holidays. Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD), also known as seasonal depression, often affects people's moods during a specific time of the year, often during late December and early January. Follow along to learn the symptoms of this disorder and some solutions to move forward and start 2024 on the right foot.

Seasonal depression has many symptoms that people experience with the change of seasons during the year.

"Some common symptoms are feeling listless, sad or down most of the day, nearly every day; losing interest in activities you once enjoyed; having low energy and feeling sluggish; having problems with sleeping too much; overeating and weight gain; having difficulty concentrating; and feeling hopeless, worthless or guilty," said Lorianns Kardok, a licensed mental health counselor for Counseling Services at Saint Leo University.

There are some reasons why some may experience these symptoms, especially during the holidays.

"SAD is common and especially prevalent in the north during the winter, or holiday season, where the days are shorter and the nights long," said Kardok.

For some people, finances and time management during December and January may be a struggle, as they are pressured to buy gifts, decorate the house, talk to relatives who may not be close to the family, and travel.

For college students, the end of the semester may increase anxiety levels.

"There is the added pressure of completing the semester, finals, leaving friends, and traveling home or staying with someone else's family," said Kardok.

While going home for the break is an excellent experience for

some students, others may struggle to return to a toxic environment while college was their escape.

Although Seasonal Affective Disorder is challenging, we can support those who struggle with it.

"Listen and empathize with them. Encourage them to have healthy habits that promote positive mental health. Invite them to exercise classes, go outside or encourage them to reach out to the counseling center for additional support," said Kardok.

Saint Leo students should be mindful of the resources available for their friends if they struggle with

Seasonal Affective Disorder. Lions need to support others while understanding that it is not their responsibility to fix their problems.

"Encourage your friends to seek help, and if you're worried about their safety, always report your concerns to faculty, an RA, or the counseling center," said Kardok.

For those struggling with Seasonal Affective disorder, there are many possible solutions, such as light therapy.

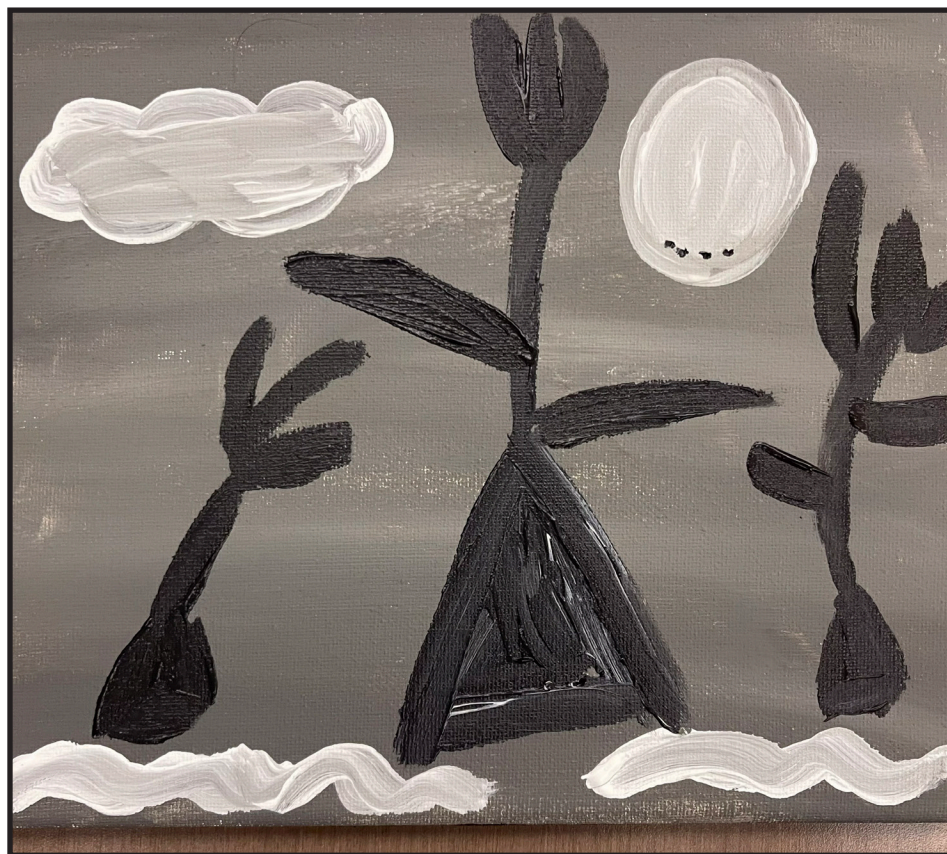
"With light therapy you sit a few feet from a specific light box so that you're exposed to bright light within the first hour of waking up each day," said Kardok.

Apart from therapy, counseling, and psychotropic medication, some lifestyle tips can help those who feel down during the holidays improve their mood, such as going outside when the sun is shining bright.

"Make your environment inside brighter as well. Open the blinds or windows and sit closer to the window when at work or in class," said Kardok.

Other lifestyle tips include exercising and sleeping well. People can exercise with yoga, pilates, swimming, or even going out for walks regularly. Sleeping well is essential, as the brain does not work well when sleep-deprived.

Students who want to talk if they struggle with Seasonal Affective Disorder can reach the counseling center at 352-588-TALK or Counseling@saintleo.edu. When calling the phone number, they can get someone 24/7.



While the changes in weather might affect people's moods during the fall, they can have a support system that helps them overcome their sadness and anxiety (Photo Credit: Isa Riano)

Holiday traditions bring people together across cultures and backgrounds

Sophia Sullivan
Arts and Culture Editor

Saint Leo University's campus is teeming with students, staff, and faculty who share diverse backgrounds and come from various places worldwide. The beauty of the holiday season is that it promotes a sense of community, just as Saint Leo promotes in its core values.

While Christmas is a well-known holiday celebrated each year on Dec. 25, it is essential to remember that only some celebrate Christmas. The end of the calendar year is also home to the beginning of Hanukkah and Kwanzaa.

Hanukkah, a Jewish festival, is celebrated each year at varying dates because it is situated in the Jewish calendar, which can differ from the most familiar Gregorian calendar. This year, Hanukkah will begin on Dec. 7 and end on Dec. 15.

It celebrates the arrival of light and warmth into the homes of Jewish families. It remembers the actions of the Maccabees, Jewish warriors who reinstated the Temple in the second century BCE after the Greeks took it. It is a time of celebration, family, and remembrance.

Another lesser-known holiday which takes place this time of year is Kwanzaa. This year's celebration will take place from Dec. 26 to Jan. 1.

Kwanzaa, created in 1966 by Maulana Ron Karenga, means "first fruits" and stems from African culture. The holiday highlights unity, faith, creativity, purpose, and more.

According to the National Museum of African American History & Culture, "Kwanzaa is a time for families and communities to come together to remember the past and to celebrate African American culture."

Part of this culture includes

the food. On the sixth day of Kwanzaa, there is a feast called Karamu, where various foods can be served. The focus is on the community and who one is eating with.

And, of course, Christmas will take place on Dec. 25 this year. Christmas is a Christian holiday which celebrates the birth of Jesus Christ. While Christmas has become secularized for some, some still celebrate in the religious sense as well, especially here at Saint Leo.

Cole Washko, a senior majoring in English, shared one of his family's Christmas traditions.

"On Christmas Eve, my mom puts a red tablecloth on our dinner table and calls me (and each of my brothers) up to the table to trace our dinner plate and write what we are thankful for," said Washko.

Traditions like these are what characterize all holidays. Sharing knowledge and passion through-

out multiple generations of one's culture brings people together.

"Holiday traditions are important to me because they remind me of what the holidays are all about and add additional excitement," said Washko.

Saint Leo loves to include its international community in their holiday traditions, regardless of the time of year. And, even though Saint Leo primarily celebrates Christmas as a Catholic college, everyone is always invited to join in on the festivities, such as the annual Christmas Tree Lighting.

Although everyone has different holiday celebrations and traditions, there is one thing everyone has in common: traditions.

Understanding and educating oneself on these traditions is vital to connect across cultures, just like we do here at Saint Leo.

Happy Holidays, Lions!



The annual Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony at Saint Leo fosters community between all—students, faculty, staff, and neighbors! (Photo via @saintleouniv on Instagram)



Organizations like the Intercultural Student Association at Saint Leo do a wonderful job of forming bridges between the traditions of cultures worldwide. (Photo by Satyne Doner)

Maintaining sustainability in Pasco County: Is it growing too fast?

Michaela Cleary
World News Editor

Over the past decade, Pasco County has seen a significant increase in housing developments, shopping centers, and restaurants.

Although there are many benefits to this new growth, there are equally, if not more, consequences to consider regarding sustainability and conservation.

The issue of sustainability has been discussed for decades when it comes to progress growth, especially within the environmentalist community.

According to the Department of Energy, "Sustainability means to create and maintain conditions under which humans and nature can exist in."

Unfortunately, proper measures are not always taken when many new projects are built. This causes a significant decrease in air and water quality and the unnecessary destruction of many local ecosystems and habitats.

Sustainability is only sometimes something prioritized or considered when new projects arise. This is a huge problem, especially in Pasco County.

According to the last United States census, Pasco County was the 11th largest city in Florida, with 591,048 residents. As Pasco's population booms, additional construction is required.

Many argue that these new developments allow for more job opportunities and resources. This, of course, is true, which is a positive aspect of development. Most people would agree that they enjoy the conveniences that new construction provides. However, it is essential to recognize that many additional factors must be considered for progress growth.

In 2015, the Tampa Premium Outlets and Cypress Creek Town Center opened. This was met with a lot of mixed reviews, as the building of this mall required

developers to destroy the habitat of many threatened gopher tortoises.

Sustainability is important in the eyes of young adults, too. Global warming and carbon footprints have been increasingly noteworthy for the younger generation.

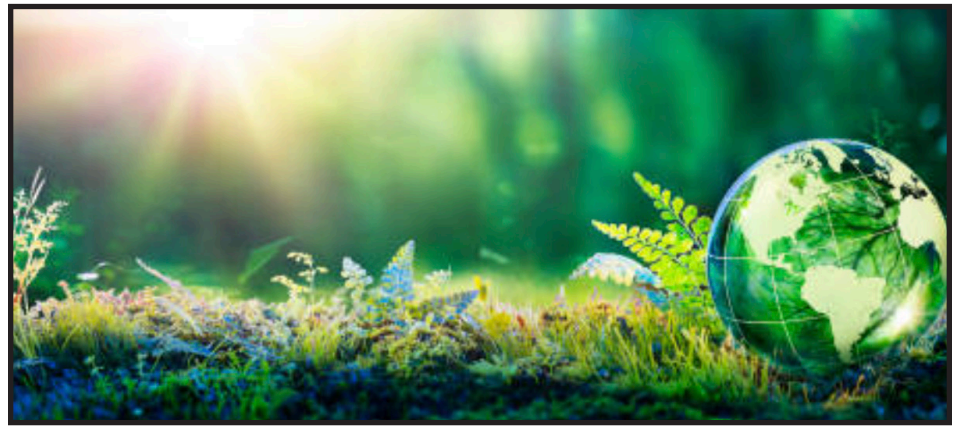
Janet Segovia, a senior majoring in criminal justice at Saint Leo University, expressed, "Sustainability is vital, and developers should factor it in before starting construction. Creating new corporations to improve Pasco County provides essential things to the community, which is important. But they must be conscious of the locations they decide to build, given that there may be habitats or other things already there."

Furthermore, Kelly Arias, a sophomore majoring in ecology, shared her thoughts on sustainability.

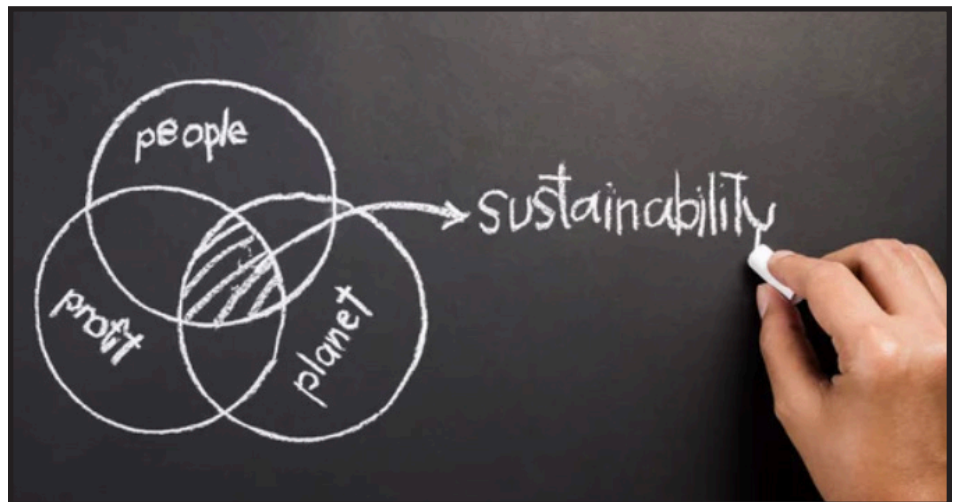
"The beautiful natural landscape is a key feature of our home in Pasco County, and we must take steps to ensure it remains healthy for future generations to enjoy. Sustainable environmental practices will help us do just that."

We can maintain sustainability and be more environmentally conscious with these new developments in many ways.

The Zeitz Foundation, an organization that focuses on



Sustainability is vital for a growing community. (Photo was taken from iStock.com)



There are many important aspects for creating sustainability. (Photo was taken from Adobe Stock)

achieving ambitious standards in sustainability and balance, created a developmental philosophy that describes the specific ways we, as people, can help maintain and promote sustainability and conservation. According to the foundation, there are "4 Cs" of sustainability.

These include conservation, community, culture, and commerce. Conservation means to preserve and maintain the natural state of the environment. Community refers to developing with a conscious outlook. Culture refers to maintaining the rich heritage of an area. Lastly,

commerce means creating products in-house to sell and distribute. This promotes a sustainable economy. Each of these methods is equally important in conservation and environmental sustainability.

Progress growth is not harmful. However, many important things must be considered to ensure equality and sustainability are maintained. By following these separate ways to support sustainability, we can build a stronger community that is more conscious of the future of Pasco County.



Near to the Tampa Premium Outlets is the Wiregrass Mall. (Photo was taken from Instagram @shopsatwiregrass)



20
PHO
REC





23
OTO
CAP



Studying abroad: Worth the investment?



For fans of Harry Potter, Scotland has so many opportunities to interact with this magical world. Hop aboard the Jacobite Steam Train and take the same route as Harry, Hermione, and Ron! (Photo via Sarah Gilley)

Sarah Gilley
Editor-in-Chief

Studying abroad is something so many people dream of, but few achieve. However, at Saint Leo University, the support and guidance students will receive is unmatched. Let me introduce myself. My name is Sarah Gilley, and I am one-half of the editor-in-chief team here at The Lions' Pride Media Group. For the past fall semester, I have been abroad in Glasgow, Scotland, studying at the University of Glasgow.

While there are plenty of places to study, Scotland emerged as my prime choice as my distant family is from Scotland. Also, historical academia pairs nicely with my field of study, and the natural beauty of Scotland pulled me in. So, is studying abroad worth it? I am here to tell you that it is!

Academic and personal growth is something most only

dream of. Do not get me wrong, I am a very introverted person who loves a good routine, but as my time at Saint Leo was ending, I knew I needed to get out of my comfort zone and explore the world while I still could.

The chance to interact with an entirely new academic system propelled me to study abroad in the first place. I have been able to take courses I could never have dreamed of, such as Old Icelandic Literature or Writing the English Revolution (do not be confused; this course is not on the American Revolution). While the different academics were academically and mentally challenging, they helped me prepare for when I go on to higher education in the future. There is nothing wrong with a little challenge.

The personal growth you will go through while abroad is entirely your own and what you make of it. The independence you

will gain is unlike anything you have ever experienced; do not let that scare you away. You are entirely on your own in the best way possible. You decide your schedule, what to cook, what to do with your spare time, and where you want to travel.

Traveling is another wonderful thing about being abroad. While being out of the country, I have been able to travel to England, Wales, Ireland, Northern Ireland, and the Netherlands. If you choose to study in Europe like I did, the ability to travel from one country to the next could mean a 3-hour train ride to a 35-minute flight! I know it is cheesy to say, but the world is your oyster!

I recommend studying abroad through the Institute for Study Aboard (IFSA) program. All the programs offered at Saint Leo are through this program or International Studies Abroad (ISA). IFSA was the perfect choice for me as the entire time you are abroad, you have

a set support system of on-site staff who are just a phone call away or a quick train ride! You can also go on excursions, trips, and activities with the people in your program.

Having the people in your program helps you by having a set group of friends and people going through the same experience as you. Through this program, I met some wonderful friends I cherish, and without them, I would not have enjoyed this experience as much.

All right, have I convinced you to study abroad yet? Studying abroad is something everyone could have the chance to do, so if you can, just do it. I am beyond happy for taking such a giant leap, and I hope you can do the same!

If you are interested in studying abroad, contact Paige Ramsey Hamacher, executive director of the Center for Global Engagement, at paige.ramsey.hamacher@saintleo.edu.



One of the many hikes I took throughout Europe was in Snowdonia National Park in northern Wales. (Photo via Sarah Gilley)



The main building of University of Glasgow feels like something straight out of a fantasy novel. (Photo via Sarah Gilley)

Updates on the Israel-Hamas and Russia-Ukraine wars: What to know and what to expect next

Myla Shashiki-Moya

Contributing Writer

Israel-Hamas war and the humanitarian crisis at Gaza

Since the beginning of the war between Israel and the terrorist organization Hamas following the Oct. 7 attack on the Nova Music Festival at the Israel-Gaza border, a humanitarian crisis has broken out on the Gaza strip.

Israel was quick to retaliate to the attack, and the war was declared on Sunday, Oct. 8. They closed the border, with Gaza blocking essential supplies and aid from entering the territory. This has led to thousands of people who have been injured because of the conflict, being unable to receive medical attention and healthcare.

“Only two of the hospitals in the north and seven in the south are still operational due to damage caused by attacks and the lack of electricity and fuel,” says an article by the BBC.

“In Gaza, according to the Ministry of Health, 9,500 people have been killed, including 3,900 children and over 2,400 women. More than 23,000 injured people require immediate treatment within overstretched hospitals,” mentions a joint statement from the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, which reunites several UN agencies, in which they also plea for “More aid—food, water, medicine and of course fuel” to be able to reach Gaza for those in need, and for a ceasefire to happen.

On Friday, Nov. 24, Hamas and Israel agreed to a four-day truce mediated by Qatar, in which Hamas acceded to release 50 hostages, all of them women and minors, in exchange for the release of 150 Palestinian prisoners that were being held in Israeli jails, consisting also of women, children, and teenage boys who were awaiting trial for a variety of charges.

Israel was also willing to extend the truce one more day for every ten additional hostages being set free.



(Photo via CNN).

This temporary pause has fortunately also allowed shipments to enter Gaza after a security inspection.

“200 trucks with humanitarian aid entered Gaza via the Rafah Crossing and were delivered to international aid organizations working in the southern Gaza Strip,” according to a press release from the Israel Defense Forces.

What will happen now?

On Monday, Nov. 27, Dr. Majed Al Ansari announced through his account on the platform X (formerly known as Twitter) that “as part of the ongoing mediation, an agreement has been made to extend the humanitarian truce for an additional two days in the Gaza strip.”

Hopefully, this will mean that more people who have been using social media, as well as various other means of communication, for the past month to share their painful stories and plea for the liberation of civilians being held hostage.

Nonetheless, the war is expected to continue once the truce is over as both parties keep fighting for control over the Gaza strip, with Israel being committed to destroying Hamas’ leaders.

Russo-Ukrainian war

In the past few months, the Russian invasion of Ukraine has continued. Ukraine has managed to make progress by recovering territory in Kharkiv with its counteroffensive.

“Ukrainian forces have continued to make significant gains in the Kharkiv region. Russia has withdrawn units from the area,” stated an intelligence update posted on Sept. 11 by the British Defense Ministry on the social media platform X.

However, on Sept. 30, Putin announced the annexation of four Ukrainian territories: “Today we will sign treaties on the accession of the Donetsk People’s Republic, Lugansk

People’s Republic, Zaporozhye Region and Kherson Region to the Russian Federation,” he declared in a presidential address, although this annexation went mostly unrecognized by other international leaders.

What will happen now?

Many Russian citizens have been fleeing the country in the past years to avoid both the consequences of the war as well as being drafted after Putin’s announcement of a partial mobilization and the increase of the maximum age for conscription from 27 to 30.

“About 98,000 Russians have crossed into Kazakhstan in the week since President Vladimir Putin announced a partial mobilization of reservists to fight in Ukraine,” says an article by Voice of America.

Unfortunately, circumstances are expected to worsen for both soldiers and civilians as harsh winter conditions and storms approach.

Unifying forces: How humanitarian efforts and social work foster world peace

Emily Hernandez Dominguez
Campus News Editor

In 2023, many humanitarian crises unfolded globally, ranging from inevitable catastrophes such as natural disasters to enduring conflicts that span generations. Within these crises, countless innocent individuals find themselves entangled, enduring substantial suffering.

During times of crisis, when first responders like law enforcement, EMS, and firefighters are expected to be the initial responders, the presence of a social worker in such situations is not the first consideration.

Often, social workers are linked with roles in child welfare, school support, or therapy, which is accurate, yet the scope of their profession extends far beyond these realms.

Dr. Ebony Perez, an assistant professor of social work at Saint Leo University, sheds light on the profession's misconceptions: "We're often labeled the expressive people, but that's a misconception. We pair empathy and social compassion with action. That's what social workers do."

Social work is committed to enhancing the well-being and quality of life for individuals, families, groups, and entire communities. Social workers offer crucial services during and after events in critical moments, contributing significantly to prevention efforts.

"It's that focus and the prevention on societal problems. So it's a combination of responding when something happens but also wanting to look at our world and set provisions in place to avoid conflict in the first place," explains Perez.

Equipped with specialized training, social workers employ various techniques such as problem-solving, empathic responses, support provision, and resource offering. Their primary goals involve aiding individuals or groups in recognizing a crisis and intervening to minimize disruption, distress, and potential danger.

"Most recently, I would say,

with the COVID-19 pandemic, if you think about what was happening in our hospitals, particularly at that time, where you have people who are dying, we're not understanding what's going on and people are dying quickly," Perez recalls. "Somebody has to help people kind of process that trauma to be able to continue to do those jobs. And that's another area where social workers come into play."

In social work, there are three primary levels of practice: micro, mezzo, and macro.

Micro involves smaller units like families or individual relationships. Mezzo deals with medium-sized systems like communities, while macro tackles larger systems and policies within social work. Social workers addressing humanitarian crises often operate at the macro level.

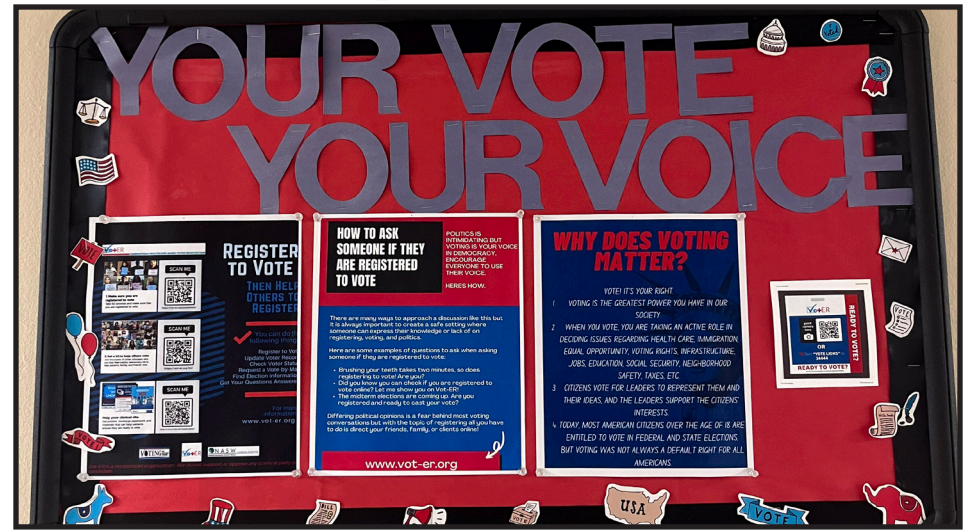
They engage in large-scale advocacy, known as macro-level work, by influencing local and global policies. Their advocacy involves promoting peace-centric policies, backing international efforts to resolve conflict, and collaborating to alleviate disputes worldwide.

Additionally, they conduct research, educate policymakers and the public, and advocate for systemic changes that address inequality and discrimination and promote equity and social justice for a more peaceful society.

Social work professors are doing just that on the Saint Leo University campus.

Christina Cazanave, M.S.W., is the director of field education and instructor of undergraduate social work at Saint Leo University. Her focus includes initiatives within the social work profession to combat social injustices using advocacy and public policy. Working together with Perez, they use their platforms to support social justice.

"As a Macro social worker, I am tasked with looking at issues from the perspective of the broader society. It is the belief of a macro social worker that society only succeeds when everyone has equitable access to goods, services, and basic



Outside Professor Cazanave's office, a bulletin shows the importance of voting and information on voting rights and how to check voter registration forms. (Photo taken by Emily Hernandez Dominguez)

needs," Cazanave states. "Without it, we jeopardize humanity, peace, and the foundation of justice."

Through her work as a professor, Cazanave uses courses such as 'Advocate for Justice' and 'Social Issues in Pop Culture' to educate students on various local, federal, and international students.

Additionally, in her role as the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Florida chapter Legislative Chair, she uses her voice to advocate for the needs of others.

"We are one human race who should have the ability to choose for themselves what makes them happy, healthy, and prosperous. For those who do not have those choices, it is the job of a macro social worker to mobilize, advocate, vote, change policies, run for elected positions, and partner with international organizations to use their voice and power to ensure that all citizens can live the life they choose without persecution of their beliefs, lifestyle, and identity," Cazanave says.

Perez contributes to global harmony through her courses and involvement as the Co-chair of the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) Council on Racial, Ethnic, and Cultural Diversity, supporting initiatives aimed at inclusivity and understanding.

While contributing to humanitarian efforts mainly happens at the Macro level, both micro and mezzo Social Workers have a role to play. Advocacy for world peace at the micro level involves engaging in

actions that promote understanding, empathy, and conflict resolution in everyday interactions.

Mezzo-level initiatives, like community engagement programs and school-based initiatives, promote peace by fostering understanding and conflict resolution within communities.

"The broader society is not just the inner circles people interact with daily, but all those locally, nationally, and internationally," Cazanave emphasizes.

Mary Moonen, a clinical social worker in Bradenton, sells handmade jewelry to raise funds for humanitarian efforts in Ukraine. Geoff Simons, a social work adjunct professor at Saint Leo University, led a workshop explaining unconscious and implicit bias, how we develop unconscious bias, examples, and management tips.

Across micro, macro, or mezzo social work, social workers strive in diverse ways toward a common goal: fostering world peace and social justice and ensuring safety for all.

"What social work is about is really fighting for peace," Perez stresses. "If we are moving towards peace, we can not just say we want peace. We really have to fight for justice. And when you fight for justice what you do is you move society to a peaceful journey. We are people out in the world who are fighting for justice and that ultimately globally can lead to peace."

President's Club – Astonishing honor for student-athletes



Student-athletes were recognized for their academic success based on the GPA from last Spring semester. (picture by Women's Golf Head Coach Lyndsey Bevill)



This year's President's Club was held on November 29 in the halftime of the men's basketball game against Eckerd College. (Picture by Hailey Latief)



For their outstanding academic achievement, student-athletes were rewarded with a certificate. (picture by Pia Perthen)

Pia Perthen Sports Editor

Many student-athletes are working hard on the field or court and striving to give their best in the classroom. To honor this hard work, Saint Leo University holds the President's Club every semester to honor the athletes whose GPA is in the top 15 percent of all Saint Leo student-athletes of the previous semester.

According to records on the Saint Leo Athletic website, the President's Club was started in 2001 by the President, Dr. Arthur Kirk, and Vice President and Director of Athletics at the time, Fran Reidy.

At the event, the athletes are recognized by the current President, Dr. Dadez, coaches, administrators, and members of the president's staff at Saint Leo University.

"I am proud to say that we had a 3.34 overall department GPA, which is pretty good, and we

have always had great academic success from our student-athletes," Marcal Lazenby, the current director of athletics, said.

On Wednesday, Nov. 29, 2023, the President's Club ceremony, where the student-athletes will be honored for their academic successes in the Spring 2023 semester, is held during the halftime of the Men's Basketball game vs. Eckerd College in the Marion Bowman Center.

"One of the reasons why the President's Club was held during the halftime of the Basketball game was that the student-athletes get the chance to receive more recognition and applause from the crowd that is also watching the basketball game," Lazenby said.

The student-athletes arrived at 7:30 p.m. at the reception in the hospitality area on the gym balcony, and the athletes changed their usual athletic wear to business casual apparel.

During the reception, light hors d'oeuvres and drinks were served, and the athletes connected with other students from the President's Club while rooting for the men's basketball team.

It is possible to be selected for the President's Club as often as the student-athlete is in the top 15 percent of all student-athletes per semester. This means that, in the very best case, an athlete can be honored eight times if they have pursued their standard undergraduate degree within the usual time frame of four years.

Before half time, the student-athletes will be lined up in the order by the number of times they have been selected for the President's Club and presented to the crowd.

"Being honored for already the fourth time makes me even more motivated to give my best since I am a very competitive

person," Spencer Bronner, a graduate student majoring in criminal justice specializing in investigation and part of the Acrobatics and Tumbling Team, said.

Students in the stands cheer for each student-athlete as their headshot appears on the Marion Bowman Center gym screen while they walk across the court.

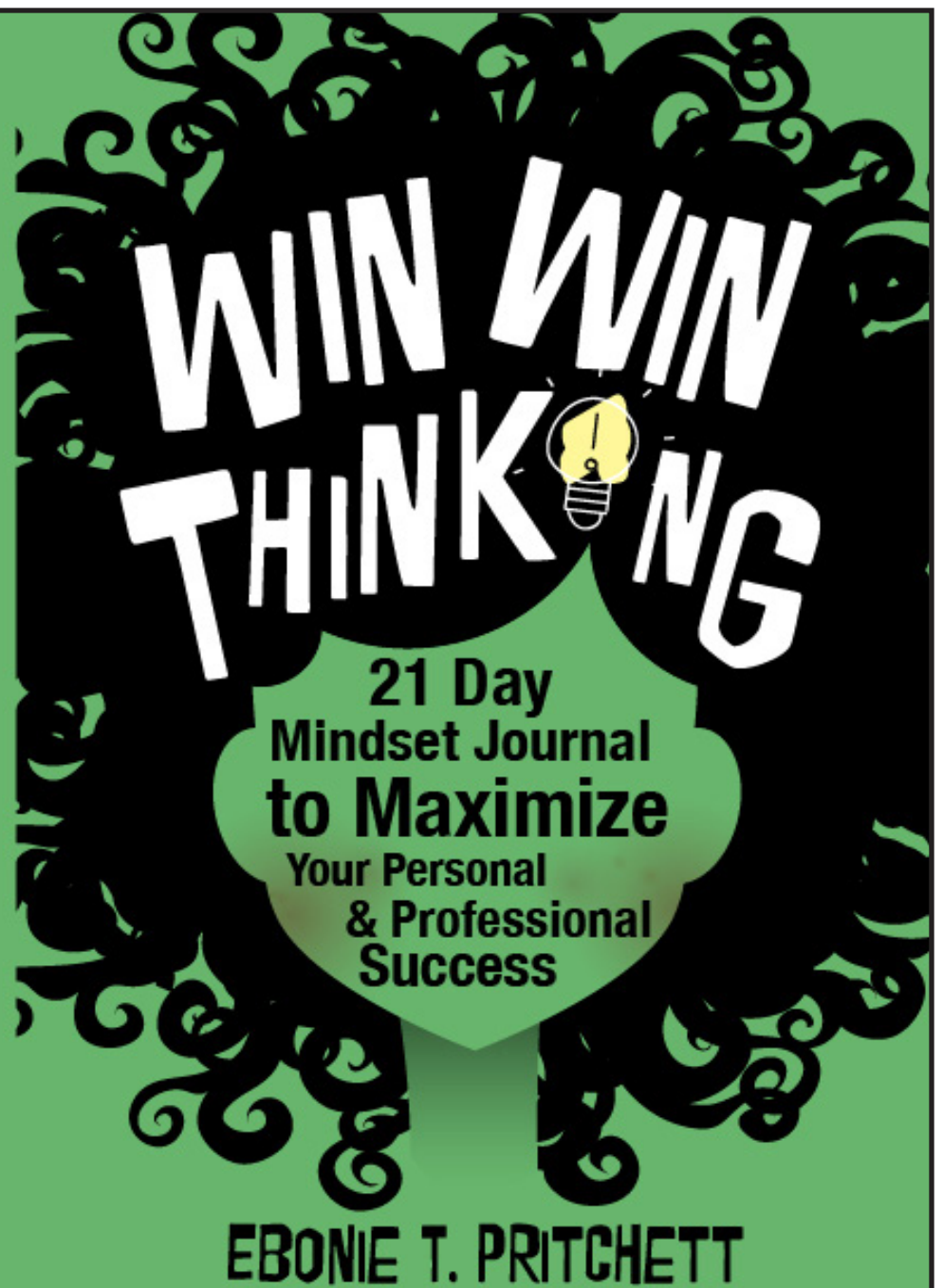
The athlete's final destination is to receive a firm handshake from Saint Leo University President Dr. Dadez, their certificate, and a little surprise gift.

"The President's Club is a great opportunity to showcase what it means to be a student-athlete and highlights the great achievement of having a high GPA," Dr. Dadez said.

Even though Eckerd College won with a score of 81-73, the President's Club honorees could be satisfied with a successful evening since it was filled with recognizing their academic success mixed with exciting basketball action.

**DISCOVER THE AMAZING
THINGS YOU CAN DO WITH
A WINNING MINDSET!**

**Win Win Thinking is a 21-day
guided mindset journal designed
to help you build confidence,
overcome obstacles,
and achieve your wildest dreams!**



Pritchett is currently a co-author in two other books; one is an inspirational devotional book called "Breakthrough Moments," and the second is called "Uncuffed Voices" for women in Law enforcement.

An overview of the "Win Win Thinking" Journal

Ebonie Pritchett

Sponsored Article

"Win Win Thinking: 21 Day Mindset Journal to Maximize your Personal and Professional Success" is a helpful journal for young adults written by Ebonie Pritchett. The journal helps those wanting to become better people and move towards a successful career.

Pritchett is a Saint Leo University alumni who graduated in 2019 with a Master of Science in cybersecurity. Before obtaining her master's, she completed a Bachelor of Arts in sociology at Norfolk State University and graduated in 2015. Pritchett is now working towards a doctoral degree in strategic leadership at Regent University and expects to graduate in 2026.

Pritchett's professional experience includes multiple capacities, including a stint in law enforcement.

In 2015, she relocated to the DMV region, where she discovered her professional passion. From October 2018 until May 2023, she served as a police officer with the Metropolitan Police Department in Washington, DC. She continued in her law enforcement career, which led to a temporary job in Doha, Qatar.

Her love for writing started with a desire to help others through her books. Pritchett started writing in 2020; however, she did not publish until January of 2023.

"I am the proprietor of InspiredbyEbonie, LLC, a small business that provides writing services for individuals needing assistance with blog posts, press releases, white

papers, and other written materials pertinent to their personal or professional requirements," Pritchett says.

She recommends anyone who wants to write their own literature to embrace their values and authenticity while remembering their audience could be very diverse.

"Avoid attempting to anticipate people's desires and instead, fervently narrate stories that you are genuinely enthusiastic about sharing. Continue to write incessantly," Pritchett continues.

Writers must also have discipline and follow through with their creations.

"To become a writer, it is imperative that you engage in the act of writing," Pritchett adds.

"Win Win Thinking" is a journal Pritchett wrote to support

others and get a deeper understanding of her life experiences.

"I wrote 'Win Win Thinking' to engage in a process of ongoing self-reflection and self-discovery that can support my personal and professional growth, deepen my relationships with others, and help myself live a more authentic and fulfilling life," Pritchett says.

The journal has 21 days of guided thinking, and its goal is to help people overcome challenges, be surer of themselves, and use their potential to achieve their personal and professional goals.

Those interested in learning about the journal can purchase it at <https://www.amazon.com/author/ebonie-pritchett> or follow [_ebonie_](#) on Instagram or Ebonie Pritchett on Facebook.

**NEW
IMPROVED
TASTE**

ZERO NEVER TASTED SO GOOD



**NOW AVAILABLE
AT
SAINT LEO
UNIVERSITY**

All brands are the property of their respective owners.



Lions Pride Newspaper



@Lionspridenewspaper



@Lionspridenewspaper



@LionsPrideNewspaper