

ORIENTATION
SHU SCHOOL OF LAW
ATRIUM
THURSDAY, AUGUST 20, 2026, 9:00 A.M.

INVOCATION

Don't ask what the world needs. Ask what makes you come alive and go do that, because what the world needs is *more people who have come alive*.¹

The advice is from Howard Thurman, American author, philosopher, minister, theologian, Christian mystic, educator, and civil rights leader. He was a classmate of Martin Luther King, Sr., and later a mentor to Martin Luther King, Jr.

Some misunderstand the sentiment as self-involved. In the second century, Church Father Irenaeus of Lyons wrote,

The glory of God is *a human being fully alive*; and human life consists in beholding God.²

Elizabeth Ann Seton drew inspiration from Irenaeus' perspective.³ I think both Irenaeus and Thurman mean to communicate the imperative assigned every woman or man to live fully *aware* and *present* to the world as they find it, prepared to do the work only they can do, ready to contribute their unique array of talents to the human community.

You want to be *lawyers*. In some way the notion of being a lawyer makes you come alive. Seton Hall promises not only to educate you, to teach you information you don't already know, but also to *form* you, to show you how to view the world through the prism of law. Starting

¹https://www.google.com/search?q=source+for+thurman+quote+come+alive&rlz=1C1GCEW_enUS1118US1118&oq=source+for+Thurman+quote+&gs_lcrp=EgZjaHJvbWUqBwgFECEYqwlyBggAEEUYOTIHCAEQIRigATIHCAIQIRigATIHCAQMQRigATIHCAQQIRirAjiHCAUQIRirAjiHCAYQIRiPatIBCjMyODExajBqMTWoAgCwAgA&sourceid=chrome&source=chrome.rb&ie=UTF-8

² *Adversus Haereses*, Book 4, Chapter 20, Section 7. In Latin, the phrase reads: *Gloria enim Dei vivens homo, vita autem hominis visio Dei*.

³ Suzanne M. Wolfe, <https://setonshrine.org/the-glory-of-god-is-man-fully-alive-saint-irenaeus-and-mother-seton/>

today you begin to come alive to a larger purpose, one that serves the cause of a free, fair, open, and just society.

Let us pray...

Lord, God, bless these students. Discerning a call to the legal profession, they willingly give themselves over to education, training, and formation. Make them effective and ethical advocates and faithful guardians of the rule of law. May they approach their studies with a sense of wonder and awe to sustain them through a lifetime of practice. They are grateful for the personal gifts you have bestowed upon them, equipping them for the learning adventure ahead.

Bless our distinguished faculty. Aid them in teaching with inspiration, in modeling the profession with integrity, and in displaying the joy of lives lived with passion and purpose.

Assist University President Msgr. Joseph Reilly, Interim Provost Erik Lillquist, Dean Ronald Weich, and all who help administer Seton Hall University and its law school.

May our school support staff always know respect and gratitude for their work.

Glorifying your Name, O God, we say...AMEN.