

Seton Hall Law School Commencement Address
New Jersey Performing Arts Center

Good morning. I am pleased to be delivering this charge for President Reilly who could not be here with us today but wanted to make sure that you receive his blessing and regards.

To the Seton Hall Law Class of 2025 — **congratulations!** Today marks the culmination of years of study, sleepless nights, courageous decisions, and commitment to the pursuit of justice. What an achievement. You have made it — and we are so proud of you.

To your families and loved ones — thank you for your support, your patience, and your belief in these graduates long before they ever stepped into a classroom.

To our faculty, staff, and administrators — and especially Dean Ron Weich, thank you for the extraordinary care, commitment, and excellence you bring to this law school every day.

And to our distinguished keynote speaker, Chief Judge Michael Chagares of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit — thank you for honoring our graduates with your presence and your wisdom.

Let me begin with a line I believe speaks directly to this moment. It comes from Justice Sonia Sotomayor, who said:

“There are no bystanders in this life”

Today, you leave Seton Hall Law not as bystanders, but as advocates, defenders, and architects of a more just society.

If there is one reality that echoes through every courtroom, it is this one: **Laws mean little without those who ensure they are upheld, without those who enforce the Law, and those who defend the ones who are wrongly accused.**

And that is your calling. As attorneys, you are not just interpreters of law, you are the guardians of accountability, defenders of rights, and builders of trust in **democratic** institutions.

It is easy in today's world to be cynical about power. But lawyers - **good lawyers** - don't give up when systems are strained. In fact, they tend to apply *en masse*, even more than ever, to Law School. Yes, there are a lot more applications this year, **I am told**.

Because lawyers, **YOU**, step in. You ensure that power has limits, that voices are heard, that executive and legislative branches stay in balance, and that the rule of law remains intact.

Whether you go into litigation or legislation, advocacy or arbitration, your **tools**, your **words**, and your **swords** will be invincible: they will be **reason, ethics, and integrity**.

Because what the world needs now is not just legal expertise, but **moral** clarity. It needs **LAWYERS** who can **argue persuasively** and **act justly**. Who can navigate **complexity** without losing sight of our **humanity, made in God's image and likeness**.

You are prepared for this moment. You have read the cases, written the briefs, survived cold calls, and found your voice through your studies here, at Seton Hall. And **what a VOICE it will be**.

So, as you leave this place, Class of 2025, [President Reilly] offers you this charge:

Be courageous. Be compassionate. Use your God-given **VOICE** for the good of us all.

Congratulations, and God bless you all.