

SETON HALL LAW SCHOOL
COMMENCEMENT
NEW JERSEY PERFORMING ARTS CENTER
MAY 28, 2025, 11:00 A.M.

INVOCATION

Rosemerry Wahtola Trommer has been publishing a poem a day for almost 20 years. Known as “word woman” she muses:

I want a word that means
 okay and not okay,
 more than that: a word that means
devastated and stunned with joy.
I want the word that says
 I feel it all all at once.

....

The heart understands swirl,
 how the churning of opposite feelings
 weaves through us like an insistent breeze
leads us wordlessly deeper into ourselves,
 blesses us with paradox
 so we might walk more openly
into this world so rife with devastation,
 this world so ripe with joy.¹

Graduates of the Class of 2025, you leave here today degree in hand to meet a world colored by both devastation and joy. Your legal education has already given you ample opportunity to reflect on life’s complexity. The story of humanity is threaded through with paradox. Your job, your vocation, when all is said and done is safeguarding the American way of life by preserving the rule of law memorialized in a 237-year-old constitution. Without fear or prejudice, you will use your legal education to assist clients in sorting through life’s complexity.

¹ “For When People Ask” <https://grateful.org/resource/for-when-people-ask/>

Pope Leo XIV is also beginning new work. He chose to address representatives of the world media just four days after his election signaling the importance of the message he delivered to them. Exhorting the journalists he said:

We are living in times that are both difficult to navigate and to recount. They present a challenge for all of us, but it is one that we should not run away from. On the contrary, they demand that each one of us, in our different roles and services, never give in to mediocrity.

He explained no matter what one's vocation and occupation may be within the Church or beyond its confines, no one exists outside of time and history. Quoting St. Augustine, he said,

Let us live well and the times will be good. *We are the times* (*Discourse* 80.8).²

Let us pray...

Lord, bless these graduates. Inspire hope in them. Through dedication and discipline, they have acquired knowledge and skills equipping them for service to our nation as agents and guardians of the rule of law. Grant them their high destiny as your daughters and sons, effectively and ethically advocating for clients amid life's devastation and joy.

Bless the families and friends who have been a constant support during their graduate's years of study. Allow them to know the heartfelt gratitude of their loved one.

In his life and work, bless our commencement speaker and honorary degree recipient, Chief Judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit, the Honorable Michael Chagares, Class of 1987. Continue to sustain the 50th anniversary alumni in attendance and their classmates celebrating at a distance.

² **ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER LEO XIV TO REPRESENTATIVES OF THE MEDIA**, par.5, <https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiv/en/speeches/2025/may/documents/20250512-media.html>

Lord, accompany Seton Hall Law School and Seton Hall University in our mission, employing the gifts of the Catholic heritage to educate and enlighten.

We ask your unfailing guidance for President Msgr. Joseph Reilly; for Provost Katia Passerini even as she moves on to the presidency of Gonzaga University; and for Dean Ronald Reich, the University Regents and Trustees, and law school Board of Visitors and Alumni Council.

Inspire our outstanding faculty, sustain our administration and staff.

Invoking all the holy Names of God, we pray and say together...AMEN.

Rev. Nicholas S. Gengaro
Chaplain