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Speech - Commencement 2022 Invocation

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**SETON HALL LAW SCHOOL
COMMENCEMENT
NEW JERSEY PERFORMING ARTS CENTER
JUNE 1, 2022, 11:00 A.M.**

INVOCATION

Class of 2022, let me acknowledge from the outset...you have not had an easy time of it. The coronavirus pandemic swept us from the law school building barely halfway through your first year and we suddenly became images on a screen to each other.

As you graduate, the world at home and abroad, not yet recovered from the pandemic, finds itself in the turmoil of war and widespread economic dislocation. On the one hand it may seem you cannot catch a break. On the other, it should be clear your talents, your knowledge, your dedication to the rule of law and the principles that make our nation a great democracy, are urgently needed.

Howard Thurman was a Black minister, theologian, author, educator, and mystic. A college friend of Martin Luther King, Sr., he later became a mentor of Martin Luther King, Jr. and elder in the civil rights movement. Pondering the apparent inability of Christianity to achieve justice in society, even within Christian churches themselves, he wrote the prose poem: *The Great Incarnate Words*.

**The word was Love,
Hate is the last great fortress of the weak...
Thou must not make division.
Thy mind, heart, soul, and strength must ever search
To find the way by which the road
To all men's need of thee must go.
This is the Highway of the Lord.**

Despite the struggles Dr. Thurman endured and witnessed his people endure his whole life—a people he referred to as those “who stand with their backs against a wall”—he never gave up on the power of love. “For the privileged and underprivileged alike,” he wrote, “if the individual puts at the disposal of the Spirit the needful dedication and discipline, [they] can live effectively in the chaos of the present the high destiny of a son [or daughter] of God” (*Jesus and the Disinherited*, p.98).

Let us pray...

Lord, bless these graduates. Through dedication and discipline, they have acquired the knowledge and skills to serve civil society as agents and guardians of the rule of law. Grant them their high destiny as your daughters and sons who will be effective advocates amidst the chaos of the present.

Bless the honorary degree recipients, Professor Michael Ambrosio and the Honorable Zahid Nisar Quraishi.

Bless the families and friends of the graduates, who have supported them in so many ways during their years of study and let them know and believe they are appreciated.

Continue to sustain the 50th anniversary alumni in attendance and their classmates celebrating at a distance.

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

For President Joseph Nyre, Provost Katia Passerini and Dean Kathleen Boozang, the University Regents and Trustees, and law school Board of Visitors, we ask your unfailing guidance in their institutional leadership.

Inspire our wonderful faculty, support our administration and staff.

May we travel resolutely and compassionately the “Highway of the Lord.”

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