



Sept. 12, 2025

Dear Friends,

We came together in prayer yesterday and filled the Sacred Heart Chapel to overflowing. My heartfelt thanks to those of you who joined us to pray for the souls of 9/11 as well as so many victims of recent violence including Fletcher Merkel and Harper Moyski of the Annunciation School in Minneapolis; Political activist and author Charlie Kirk, the husband and father of two beautiful children; Rep. Melissa Hortman and her husband Mark of Minnesota; Ukrainian immigrant Iryna Zarutskia of Charlotte; Matthew Silverstone and another yet-to-be named student from Evergreen High School in Denver.

In the face of such violence, it is only natural to feel shaken, fearful, and even angry. And to ask that all too familiar question once again: “why do bad things happen to good people?” By now, we realize that a simple answer to so profound a question is not fully within our grasp. The more relevant question, in the present moment, is what do good people (like you) do when bad things happen?

As a Catholic and Jesuit university, we must remember that, in this Jubilee year, we are called to be “pilgrims of hope.” In the face of repeated tragedies and turmoil, let's recall the words of Saint Oscar Romero:

*The violence we preach is not the violence of the sword, the violence of hatred. It is the violence of love, of brotherhood, the violence that wills to beat weapons into sickles for plowing.*

We must all share in the hard work of healing, reconciliation and solidarity. Our prayers are so very important but so is our work for peace, our labors for building the Kingdom of God. If we give up the great task of peacemaking, what will be left? Let us commit ourselves once again to cooperating with the will of God. Someday, in the vision of our Lord, the world will be rid of guns, and all weapons of violence and people will treat each other as sisters and brothers. We will get there someday, but only if we stay together, remain close to God, and dedicate our lives to justice and peace. In the meantime, I will hold onto the image of so many of you crowding the Sacred Heart Chapel yesterday to remember, to pray, and to envision a better and gentler world.

Please remember the resources available to you on campus should you need assistance: Counseling Center, Campus Ministry, Dean of Students Office and other Student Life Offices. Be good to yourself and to those around you, especially now. We are Scranton Royals and we can make a difference. May our Lord surround you with every grace and blessing.

Yours faithfully,

Fr. Marina