

## 2026 Sister Rose Thering Fund Literary, Digital & Visual Arts Competition

### Specific Instructions – Essays & Poems

1. Watch the 2004 Oscar-nominated documentary [Sister Rose's Passion](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1LfSyWVscHDN17kgJ26zh1VMbQ-ZVv6nL/view) link to <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1LfSyWVscHDN17kgJ26zh1VMbQ-ZVv6nL/view>.
2. After you have watched the film, write an essay/poem addressing this year's theme and answer one or more of the suggested questions below.

#### Theme: TRANSFORMING APATHY INTO EMPATHY

Through her words and actions, Sister Rose Thering fought against anti-Jewish prejudice not merely to create understanding but to educate Catholics about the Jewish faith.

This year's literary and visual arts competition provides an opportunity for you to focus on the theme of **TRANSFORMING APATHY INTO EMPATHY**. All entries must relate to this theme.

**Empathy** and **apathy** represent opposite ends of an emotional spectrum.

**Empathy** is the ability to understand and share the feelings of another person, while **apathy** is a lack of feeling or concern. Essentially, **empathy** involves feeling with someone, while **apathy** involves feeling nothing at all.

- Think about a situation you have experienced or a person (a historic figure, someone you know or a literary figure) for whom apathy has been turned into empathy.
- Describe the situation.
- Why were you drawn to this particular person?
- What actions did you/this person take that turned your/his/her apathy into empathy.
- What lessons have you learned from this person that can be applied to your own life?
- How does this situation relate to Sister Rose's legacy?

3. If you submit an **essay**, it should be entirely original and unpublished. It should be no more than 500 words. If you submit a **poem**, it must be entirely original and unpublished. It should be a minimum of 20 lines and a maximum of 50 lines. **Submit your work to your teacher as a printed document.**
4. **Essays** must be in 12-point type, double spaced and limited to 500 words. **Poems** must be entirely original, in 12-point type, single spaced and a minimum of 14 lines and a maximum of 50 lines. Give your essay/poem an original title.
5. All entrants must complete and sign the **Entry Form**. By signing this form, participants and their parents/guardians grant permission to allow the Sister Rose Thering Fund to use their names and submissions in print or internet form.
6. Your entry must be submitted to your teacher by an agreed-upon date *before* the competition deadline of **Friday, February 6, 2026**. A signed **Entry Form** must accompany all submissions.
7. No revisions will be accepted once an entry is received. All work must be original and published.
8. **JUDGING CRITERIA:** Originality. Relevance to theme and Sister Rose's message. Use of correct grammar, spelling and punctuation. A mention of Sister Rose.
9. Winners will be recognized at an awards ceremony at Seton Hall University on **Sunday, April 19, 2026**. All winners, their families and their teachers are strongly encouraged to attend.
10. Any submission that falls outside the guidelines or theme of this competition cannot be accepted as an entry into the Sister Rose Thering Fund competition.