

# JustSouth Monthly

JSRI Perspectives on FAITH DOING JUSTICE

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## A Dream Deferred

### DREAMERS' Reactions to the Trump Election

by Sue Weishar, Ph.D.

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If Donald Trump keeps his campaign promises, perhaps no group of people will be more immediately and negatively impacted when he assumes office than recipients of the [Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals](#) (DACA) program.

Launched by President Obama in 2012, DACA provides young undocumented immigrants brought to the U.S. as children temporary work authorization and protection from deportation.

Last week I asked two young women, both DACA recipients, about their thoughts and concerns on the election of Donald Trump.

Sofia\* was nine years old when her family left Mexico for a chance at a better life in the U.S. Since July 2015, she has worked as a youth minister at a Catholic church. Her response evidences the shock and dismay many immigrants are feeling:

"I am devastated, overwhelmed with fear and hopelessness. As an undocumented person, on DACA... my entire life is at stake here. My school, my job, my ministry and even my teens and their families... What scares me is that many people threw under the bus their brothers and sisters in Christ that are immigrants, Black, Latinos, Muslim, women, disabled, and LGBTQ. We're supposed to care for each other, respect and protect the ones who are voiceless... How can I look at my teens, [who are] ninety-nine percent Hispanic/Latino and remind them that God has not abandoned us in the middle of this storm? How do I respond to teens or adults that say, 'Trump is *Making America Great Again* by getting rid of you' or when they make comments such as 'are you ready to go back to Mexico?'"

Miranda\*, a recent graduate of Loyola University New Orleans, was only six years old when she was brought to the U.S. from Mexico. She currently works in a law office, but hopes to teach school one day. After the election she felt a combination of numbness and shock that left her "incapable of thinking." Yet, she also felt she had to "keep it together" for those around her who were even more upset. Additionally, she has found tremendous solace and support from friends:

"It's been very reassuring. The day after the election I woke up and I had a ton of text messages and Facebook messages and phone calls from friends—'Hey will you marry me?'... 'Are you going to be deported?'... 'Are you going to be OK?'... 'If you need anything, I am going to be there for you.' Being reminded ... there are still plenty of good people around that care about you, [regardless of] your legal status... So that is what really keeps me going and feeling optimistic, being surrounded by people that care."

Despite running a nativist campaign that inflamed anti-immigrant sentiments across the nation, I was awed by the compassion these two young women expressed for the president-elect and the American electorate:

Miranda said, "I am trying to understand what the other side was thinking, what fears they were facing, and what was motivating them... I really believe that there are not bad persons, but that people do bad things when they are placed in bad situations." Sofia said that she "will continue to pray for Mr. Trump and Mr. Pence, in the hopes that God will enlighten them to see and follow Christ's greatest commandment... to love one another as I have loved you."

It is unfathomable that a country would want to deport people like Miranda and Sofia. Please, stand in solidarity with our immigrant sisters and brothers. Join [JSRI's Action Alert network](#). Pray. Hope. Organize.

\* Pseudonyms have been used to protect the identity of the women I interviewed.

#### JSRI Recent Activities

##### November 13

Fr. Kammer led a workshop on Catholic Social Thought at the [Ignatian Family Teach-In](#).

##### November 12

At the Archdiocese of New Orleans cluster training on implementing the 9<sup>th</sup> Synod's priorities and goals at St. Joan of Arc Church in La Place, Dr. Weishar spoke about JSRI's Catholic Teach-Ins on Migration.

##### November 11

Fr. Kammer chaired the meeting of the board of the Ignatian Solidarity Network in Arlington, Virginia.

##### November 4-5

The JSRI Advisory Board met at Loyola University New Orleans.

##### November 1

Dr. Weishar lectured in Dr. Eileen Doll's Spanish class.

##### October 25-28

Dr. Weishar participated in the annual meeting of the Jesuit Network on Migration held in Guatemala City, Guatemala.

##### October 21

Dr. Weishar was a guest speaker at the 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Catholic Charities Archdiocese of New Orleans Symposium to End Mass Incarceration.

*Monthly articles reflect the opinions of the authors and not necessarily those of Loyola University New Orleans. Please send feedback to [jsri@loyno.edu](mailto:jsri@loyno.edu)*

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