

If you're having trouble viewing this email, you may [see it online](#).

Share this:    

 [send this to a friend](#)

JustSouth Monthly

JSRI Perspectives on FAITH DOING JUSTICE

LOYOLA
UNIVERSITY
NEW ORLEANS



Connect with
JSRI on [Twitter](#) &
[Facebook](#)

Number 80

February 2018

Of Guns, Dreamers, and Politics Hope in the Face of the "Impossible"

by Fred Kammer, S.J., J.D.

JSRI Future Activities

March 6-8

Fr. Fred Kammer will moderate the Plenary Meeting of the International Catholic Migration Council in Rome, Italy.

The headlines staring from my morning newspapers are all too familiar: Another unstable person uses an automatic weapon to slaughter teenagers at their high school and the U.S. Senate stumbles again on immigration reforms. We have been down both roads far too many times and bemoaned our inability to take common sense steps to remove combat weapons from our communities or to reasonably accommodate people fleeing poverty, starvation, and war. The world's oldest continuous democracy flails about in the face of real but not insoluble problems.

JSRI Recent Activities

February 15

Dr. Sue Weishar participated in a planning meeting of the Ethical Policing Is Courageous (EPIC) Conference to be held at Loyola's law school.

February 13

Dr. Weishar helped organize a presentation of the Greater New Orleans Interfaith Sanctuary Coalition for the Gillespie-Senter Memorial Community Breakfast at the First Unitarian Universalist Church of New Orleans.

February 6

JSRI helped organize an Ignatian Teach-In on Mass Incarceration where 48 Loyola students and faculty members heard the life stories of six

formerly incarcerated persons in small listening groups.

February 5

Dr. Weishar participated in a planning meeting of the Greater New Orleans Interfaith Sanctuary Coalition.

February 5

Fr. Kammer participated in the Baltimore meeting of the JVC Board of Directors.

February 4

Dr. Weishar provided training and orientation to eight Loyola service-learning volunteers with Café con Ingles, an ESL and community-building program that Dr. Weishar co-directs at St. Anthony of Padua Church.

January 30

Dr. Weishar participated in a meeting of the Board of Directors of Seashore Mission/EI Pueblo in Biloxi, MS, which serves immigrants and homeless persons on the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

January 23

Dr. Weishar participated in a meeting of criminal justice reform grantees at the Langeloth Foundation in New York City.

January 16

Dr. Weishar was interviewed by the Spanish-language newspaper [Meridiano 90](#) about the fate of Dreamers.

CLICK TO JOIN
OUR ADVOCACY
NETWORK



Despair is not an option. While almost everyone acknowledges the current heightened political polarization, we must not abandon the political process. Political participation is one essential way in which we exercise our responsibility for co-creating the world entrusted to us by God and through which we express the communitarian nature of the human person. “Justice is both the aim and the intrinsic criterion of all politics.”[1] Political participation also enhances human freedom because, “Freedom acquires new strength ... when a person consents to the unavoidable requirements of social life, takes on the manifold demands of human partnership, and commits himself to the service of the human community.”[2]

As the U.S. Bishops put it recently, “In the Catholic Tradition, responsible citizenship is a virtue, and participation in political life is a moral obligation.”[3]

This obligation flows from our duty to promote the common good and “is inherent in the dignity of the human person.”[4]

When we look at the issues facing us now, despair tempts us powerfully. Yes, the National Rifle Association repeatedly has used its disproportionate wealth and power in servitude to gun manufacturers to block the expressed desire of the American people for safer streets and safer schools. Yes, unwarranted fears of dark-skinned foreigners have been stoked intentionally for political gain, even from the highest offices in the land. But there is an antidote to despair.

It is hope. Hope tells us that we must go to the public square again and again, demanding what is right and just from policy-makers—whose fundamental moral responsibility is the common good. They must be reminded continually that they are to serve “we the people,” not party, nor donor, nor career. If that is too high a moral standard for them, they should step down; or we the people must remove

them from office. Hope tells us that “no” is not an acceptable answer and failure is not an acceptable endpoint.

In 1986, in the face of the Communist oppression of his homeland, Czech poet Václav Havel described hope this way:

Hope, in this deep and powerful sense, is not the same as joy that things are going well, or willingness to invest in enterprises that are obviously headed for early success, but rather, an ability to work for something because it is good, not just because it stands a chance to succeed.

Hope is definitely not the same thing as optimism. It is not the conviction that something will turn out well, but the certainty that something makes sense, regardless of how it turns out. . . . It is this hope, above all, which gives us the strength to live and continually try new things, even in conditions that seem as hopeless as ours do, here and now.[5]

This irrepressible hope must renew and sustain our ceaseless efforts to create the just and peaceful world longed for by people of good will here and across the world.

[1] Pope Benedict XVI. (2005). *Deus Caritas Est: God Is Love*, 28.

[2] Second Vatican Council. (1965). *Gaudium et Spes: The Church in the Modern World*, 31.

[3] U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. (2015). *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship: A Call to Political Responsibility*, 13.

[4] United States Catholic Conference. (1995). *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1913.

[5] Havel, V. (1991). *Disturbing the Peace: A Conversation with Karel Huizdala* (Chap. 5). New York: Vintage Books.

Monthly articles reflect the opinions of the authors and not necessarily those of Loyola University New Orleans. Please send feedback to jsri@loyno.edu

LOYOLA UNIVERSITY NEW ORLEANS

As our number of enrolled students continues to rise, we need to make sure that each and every one has access to an exceptional educational experience. We can't do it without your help. [Give today!](#)

Published by the Jesuit Social Research Institute

Office Phone: 504- 864-7746 | **E-mail:** jsri@loyno.edu | **Website:** www.loyno.edu/jsri

Mailing Address: 6363 St. Charles Avenue, Campus Box 94, New Orleans, LA 70118

6363 St. Charles Avenue | New Orleans, LA 70118

This email was sent to kaodowd@my.loyno.edu.

To ensure that you continue receiving our emails, please add us to your address book or safe list.

[manage](#) your preferences | [opt out](#) of all Loyola e-newsletters

Got this as a forward? [Sign up](#) to receive our future emails.