

WE COMMIT OURSELVES:

A social justice newsletter of the Sisters of St. Joseph, Third Order St. Francis



Special Interest Articles:

- Dreaming and Remembering:
Theme of this issue
- Deepest Desire

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Sr. Cecilia Marie Morton, Sr. Donna Wilhelm, Sr. Dorothy Pagosa, Jennifer Dillon, Sr. Marjorie White, †Maxine Smith, Sr. Rose Grabowski, Sr. Shannon Fox
—Social Justice Committee

Dreaming, and Remembering...

by Sister Rose Grabowski

In this August issue of our newsletter we will be concentrating on two aspects of Immigration:

- DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals)
- Separation of Families

I am grateful to Sister Dorothy Pagosa, in our Social Justice Office, for providing information on these two issues.

We are also including reflections from committee

members on our associate, Maxine Smith, who had been a member of our committee, and who passed away on June 29th.

Enjoy this issue! ■

Keep Dreaming: DACA by Sister Dorothy Pagosa

On October 21, 2018, the Sisters of St. Joseph, TOSF will collaborate with the School Sisters of St. Francis, along with other interested groups in Milwaukee, in having a DACA Fundraiser to raise fees for those who are applying for DACA.

The fundraiser will take place in the St. Joseph Center Chapel at 1515 S. Layton Blvd. from 2:00-4:00 pm, followed by a reception. An enriching musical string concert will be provided by [Latino Arts, Inc.](#), and there will be an opportunity to hear the stories of D.A.C.A. recipients.

What is DACA?

Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) is an [American immigration policy](#) that allows some individuals who were brought to the United States illegally as children to receive a renewable two-year period of [deferred action](#) from [deportation](#) and become eligible for a [work permit](#) in the U.S. Unlike the proposed [DREAM Act](#), DACA does not provide a path to citizenship for recipients. The policy was announced by President [Barack Obama](#) on June 15, 2012, and [U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services](#) (USCIS) began accepting applications for the program on August 15, 2012. ([Wikipedia](#))

What are the eligibility requirements for DACA recipients?

Applicants to DACA have to be:

- At least 15 years old when applying but under the age of 31 as of June 15, 2012;
- Under the age 16 when entering the United States;
- Living in the U.S. continuously since June 15, 2007;
- Present in the U.S. on June 15, 2012, and at the time of applying;
- In school or have graduated or completed high school, or have been honorably discharged from the military;
- Not convicted of a felony, a significant misdemeanor or three or more other misdemeanors;
- DACA applicants also can't "otherwise pose a threat to national security or public safety," according to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. They couldn't have lawful status on June 15, 2012, either.

([FactCheck.org](#))

What's the process for applying?

There is a seven-page [application](#) that must be submitted along with documenta-

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tion proving the applicant meets the eligibility requirements, and there's also a form and a worksheet required for employment authorization. The total fee is \$495.

If the application is in order, USCIS will give applicants an appointment at a local Application Support Center to provide biometric data, including fingerprints, and USCIS [will conduct](#) background checks.

(FactCheck.org)

Why are we raising money for DACA Fees?

- Most of those who are eligible for DACA came to the U.S. as little children.
- The U.S. is the only country most of these young people know.
- Those who are working, pay income tax to the U.S. It is estimated that the U.S. will lose over \$400 billion dollars if DACA is rescinded.
- There are stories of heroic actions of those who have gone into the military or emergency services
- DACA recipients cannot have committed crimes or they lose their status
- It is the moral thing to do.

“Migrants and refugees are not pawns on the chessboard of humanity. They are children, women, and men who leave or are forced to leave their homes for various reasons, who share a legitimate desire for knowing and having, but above all for being more.”

– Pope Francis (Message for the 2014 World Day of Migrants and Refugees, September 24, 2013)

[Silver Spring, MD]

The Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) shares the disappointment of millions of people across the country who had hoped and prayed that President Trump would continue the protection offered Dreamers by Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA). DACA is a common sense path to stability for families, communities, and local economies and a reaffirmation of American values. Ending DACA will cause irreparable harm to families and communities and force 800,000 of our young people back into the shadows.

In the wake of this unconscionable action by President Trump, we urge Congress to immediately take up and pass the bipartisan Dream Act of 2017. ■

Separation of Families – the new “Sophie’s Choice”^{*}

by Sister Dorothy Pagosa

^{*}In the movie, “Sophie’s Choice,” Sophie, a Polish Jewish woman, is taken to a concentration camp. She must choose between keeping her son, or her daughter, or they both will be killed. She finally chooses her son. Her life is destroyed.”

Under the 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 protocol and adopted into U.S. law, the U.S. must recognize refugees that fear persecution and are not able to get help from

their home country.
(ABC News April 30, 2018)

In 1980 the U.S. also passed the Refugee Act which defined refugees based on the UN convention. One must come to a legal port of entry and turn themselves in saying that they are seeking asylum. In that case they are supposed to go before a magistrate and if accepted they are released to come back for additional hearings.

Lately, tactics have been used at the border to

discourage asylum seekers. Some are made to wait for hours or days. Some choose to cross illegally and claim asylum out of fear that they might not get in otherwise. Some are stopped on the Mexican side.

Children have not been separated from asylum seekers...until now.

The “Sophie’s Choice” many mothers have had to make is to self-deport to get their children back, going

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Remembering Associate Maxine Smith

Members of the SSJ-TOSF Social Justice Committee were invited to share a brief reflection of Maxine for this issue of the newsletter. Below are a few of these reflections.

In remembering Maxine I believe there are some people who God put on this earth who are extremely sensitive to God and the needs of others.

I also believe that these people will go over and above everything to help in whatever way they can, when it comes to pouring out God's love for them and all those in need.

It's like a sixth sense that God had given to Maxine. Now it's time for her to rest in the loving arms of Jesus.

– Sister Cecilia Marie Morton

Maxine Smith was truly an Associate of the SSJ-TOSF community. She claimed the community as her own. She was so helpful with our sisters living in the downriver area of Detroit.

She helped to companion our Detroit area associates and attended

many congregational gatherings.

She called me when Sister Juanita died, wondering if she could go to the funeral home to pray a blessing over her body since Sister was to be transported to Cleveland for burial. I affirmed her desire and so she went. She was present at the memorial Mass that was celebrated at St. John the Baptist Parish in Dearborn, Michigan.

I became aware of Maxine's devotion and commitment to the community when she agreed to serve on the Futuring Steering Committee which was formed in 2010 in preparation for the 26th General Chapter. She wished to be a part of our 27th General Chapter but her health did not permit it.

She is deeply missed.

– Sister Marge White

Maxine Smith was on our Social Justice Committee for many years. She was

very faithful in following through on newsletters and passing on information about the water situation in Flint, Michigan. She had great concerns about poverty and racism in our country.

On a personal note: When my sister died two years ago, she came all the way from Belleville, MI to Cleveland, OH to provide support at the funeral. It meant a lot to me, but that was Max.

– Sister Dorothy Pagosa

Maxine was a valuable contributor during our committee meetings and especially when she brought to our attention the water problem in Flint, MI. It was in the August 2016 issue where she wrote:

"We are again reminded that clean water is a basic human right and we must continue to provide it to all people in our country and all countries of the world."

– Sister Rose Grabowski

Rest in Peace, Maxine!



Associate Maxine Smith

Member of the Social Justice Committee who passed away on June 29, 2018

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back into the same dire situation they came from or continue on to the asylum judge and stay in detention without seeing their children.

Now a judge has demanded that the children be returned. Some parents, however, have been deported without their children. There are some stories out there of how parents were tricked into leaving thinking they would get their children, but did not. Trying to find the parents and the

children has been a daunting task. But it is a task the judge is demanding of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

One thing you might not be aware of is that if you cross illegally once, it is a misdemeanor charge. If you are seeking asylum, you are not breaking the law at all.

The separation of families has been widely condemned by many religious denominations. ■





Quotes You May Find Interesting

“Stemming from our Franciscan values and the fact that all life is interconnected, members, vowed and non-vowed, are encouraged to be engaged in ministry with those living on the margins of society and struggling to live with dignity.”

SSJ-TOSF Congregational
Commitments
26th General Chapter

- When we forget that politics is about weaving a fabric of compassion and justice on which everyone can depend, the first to suffer are the most vulnerable among us – our children, our elderly, our mentally ill, our poor, and our homeless. As they suffer, so does the integrity of our democracy.
– Parker Palmer
- We must accept finite disappointment, but never lose infinite hope.
– Martin Luther King, Jr.

As FRANCISCANS centered on the revelation of the emerging COSMIC Christ, contemplating and celebrating this DIVINE action in our lives, (one of) our deepest desires is to:

SPEAK to the Church and to the world from our common understanding that there be no outcasts in our experience of life on this earth.

Deepest Desires
26th General Chapter

“O snail, climb Mount Fuji, But slowly, slowly” the haiku master Issa writes. This is a call to endurance. There are great important things to do in life however small, however frail we feel, however stacked the odds are against us. Conditions might well change as we go and demand a revision of both our plans and our schedule.

The difficulties involved in a project must be confronted head-on, though probably not solved. The snail’s journey is clearly, like the fourth step of humility, a call to live life with a quiet mind. Then, like the psalmist, we can “wait in patience for God’s promise is forever” to help us do what must be done in us.

– Excerpts taken from Sister Joan Chittister, in “Vision and Viewpoint,” a weekly e-newsletter

Keep Dreaming

REMEMBER...

We welcome your submissions in the form of

- “Sightings”
- Brief write-ups of your activities, suggestions for workshops, books, articles, films, resources, etc.

Note: The **next issue** of *We Commit Ourselves* will be published in **October**.

Please send any items for inclusion in this next issue to **Sister Dorothy Pagosa** no later than **September 25th**.

~ Your Social Justice Committee