

***Who is Dayani Cristal?***  
**A Film Screening and Discussion (2 hrs. 15 min.)**

***Opening Words:***

Our journey through life is long and hard. We cannot make this trip alone; we must walk together on the journey.  
Help us to see the Spirit in those who journey with us.  
In the refugee family, seeking safety from violence,  
Help us to see the Spirit.  
In the migrant worker, bringing food to our tables,  
Help us to see the Spirit.  
In the asylum-seeker, seeking justice for himself and his family,  
Help us to see the Spirit.  
In the unaccompanied child, traveling in a dangerous world,  
Help us to see the Spirit.  
Teach us to recognize that we can only walk beside each other.  
Teach us to welcome not only the strangers in our midst but the gifts they bring as well: the invitation to conversion, communion, and solidarity.  
This is the truth we hold: we are not alone.  
We are together on the journey, and for this we give thanks.

~ Adapted from “Collected Prayers of Immigrants,” *Interfaith Worker Justice*.

***Opening Exercise (10 min.):***

*(Ask participants to stand as they are able, and create a hypothetical spectrum along which they will physically arrange themselves as each statement is read, with one end of the line being “strongly agree” and the other “strongly disagree”. Read each of the following declarative statements and give people time to place themselves according to how they feel).*

- 1) Every nation should have the sovereign right to decide who can or cannot enter its borders and for how long they can stay.
- 2) The United States should have a fairly generous immigration policy, but a policy of open borders would be a disaster.
- 3) Most people coming to the United States from Central America or Mexico are looking for a better life for themselves and their families.
- 4) A major driver of undocumented migration is the false promise of a “permiso” or visa, offered by coyotes and people smugglers.
- 5) There is a refugee crisis facing the U.S. similar to the one facing Europe, with catastrophic violence in Central America a primary cause of migration into the U.S.
- 6) If the U.S. legalized the status of people who are already here while also stepping up enforcement along the southern border, this would fix our broken immigration system.
- 7) The U.S. should be cautious about letting in more people while there is still so much poverty among people already living here.
- 8) No country can maintain its identity without rigorously enforcing its borders.
- 9) Legalizing the status of undocumented immigrants would drive down wages and employment in the United States.

- 10) The United States should have a basically open border with Mexico, albeit with some screening for security.

*Optional Variant for Youth:*

- 1) If people want to come to the United States, they should be able to do so.
- 2) Countries have to be careful about how many people cross their borders.
- 3) If people are refugees fleeing violence or oppression in their home countries, there should be some way for them to legally stay in the United States.
- 4) If I came to the United States from another country without legal permission, I'd be afraid of being sent home.
- 5) Having too many people entering the country can hurt the economy.
- 6) If my parents were (or if they are) undocumented, I'd be afraid for what might happen to them.
- 7) There shouldn't be any distinction between "documented" and "undocumented" people. We're all human beings.

**Viewing of Film (1 hr. 30 min.)**

***Discussion (25 min.):***

Before looking at some specific discussion questions, let us reflect silently for a minute or two and try to think back to which moments in the film especially struck us or moved us.

- What were some of the images that came to mind while you were reflecting?

What are some of the different reasons migrants give in the documentary for their decision to cross the border?

- Were these mostly the same reasons you would have expected before seeing the film, or did some of them surprise you?

What are some of the dangers the migrants in this film face on their journey north?

- Did the film's depiction of this journey surprise you? Or did it reflect your previous understanding of what was involved in migration?

Fr. Alejandro Solalinde of the *Hermanos en el Camino* shelter says in the film: "Migrants are not a threat, they are an opportunity. [...] Poor people are the spiritual reserve of the world."

- What does the statement mean to you? What are some of the ways in which immigrant people might represent opportunities?
- What does it mean to you to speak of offering someone (or a society) a "spiritual" opportunity, or a "spiritual reserve"?

Did you learn anything from the film's depiction of the impact of U.S. policies (NAFTA, the 1994-5 "Strategic Border Security Plan," e.g.) on the lives of migrants that you did not know before?

- Has this film affected your view of these policies? If so, in what way?

Dr. Bruce Anderson, of the Pima County Office of the Medical Examiner, asks rhetorically at one point in the film: "How many deaths does it take, to say enough is

enough?” and goes on to add: “There’s gotta be some number where someone in Washington is gonna say, ‘We can’t have this happening anymore.’ It upsets me and it galls me that some number is in some people’s mind. We just haven’t reached it yet.”

- What feelings does this quotation bring up for you?
- Why do you think the situation in the borderlands hasn’t been treated by our government as a humanitarian crisis calling for a concerted response?

The brother of Dilcy Yohan Sandres Martinez (the “John Doe” at the center of the film), remarks near the end of the film: “As I understand it, the United States is investing billions of dollars in that wall [along the border]. Why invest in something that is inanimate? It’s a dead investment. Why not invest in human beings?”

- What would it look like to have a more human-centered border policy?

In the scene in which Gael García Bernal crosses the border between Guatemala and Mexico, he reflects that no one needs to show a passport there and says, “Perhaps all borders should be like this.”

- What feelings come up for you when you consider García Bernal’s suggestion that borders should be as open as the one between Guatemala and Mexico was in 2013 (since then, this border has become much more tightly patrolled, in part due to pressure from the U.S. government)?
- If the suggestion brings up feelings of concern or fear, what might be some other ways of looking at the suggestion that do not have this same effect for you? Are there other possible outcomes from an open borders policy from the ones you first envisioned?

### ***Sharing Further Resources (5 min.):***

Audience members can gain a sense of the magnitude of the humanitarian crisis in the borderlands by seeing the “Map of Migrant Mortality,” made available through the Pima Country Office of the Medical Examiner (featured in the documentary) and Humane Borders Inc. (<http://www.humaneborders.info/app/map.asp>). By visiting this website and clicking “search” with no search terms, audience members can see a visual record of every migrant who has died or gone missing in the desert, as well as detailed information about each case.

The Center for Investigative Reporting’s “Reveal” project has likewise created a database bringing together information on all missing persons and unidentified remains cases in the United States, including the thousands of cases of migrants who go missing in the borderlands. Members of the audience can visit the database here:

(<http://lostandfound.revealnews.org>). They can learn more about the missing migrant crisis and how ordinary people can use the database to track missing persons here: (<https://www.revealnews.org/episodes/inside-americas-coldest-cases/>)

Participants in this session who wish to help migrants in the desert can make an in-kind or financial contribution to No More Deaths, a ministry of the UU Church of Tuscon, AZ (<http://forms.nomoredeaths.org/en/>). They can also volunteer with this organization or sign up for an experiential learning trip to the borderlands through the UU College of Social Justice.

### ***Concluding Exercise (5 min.):***

Turn back now to the questionnaire you answered at the beginning of this session [*note: the facilitator should either read the statements again or have them posted on a screen or large writing pad*]. Are there any answers you would alter after seeing the film? Have your feelings of agreement or disagreement changed with regard to any of the statements? If so, what moments from the film helped to bring about that change?

***Closing Words:***

For those who are far from home,  
We wish you shelter  
For those who walk with bare feet across hot sand,  
We wish you respite  
For those who sleep in detention  
We wish you freedom  
For those who are thirsty and in need of food  
We wish you nourishment  
For those of you who cannot go home again  
May you find peace and plenty with us.

For those of us in safety, may we find  
Courage to risk more than we dared  
Strength to face more than was easy  
Purpose to try our own limits  
And compassion to give more than we once believed was possible.