

On Illegal Immigration and My Granddaughter's Eyes

(Or, when grace comes into the world illegally)

My oldest granddaughter's father—let's call him Carlos—immigrated to the U.S. from Guatemala to escape poverty and the lawlessness engendered by drug cartels in his country. Once in America, he stayed. He worked without proper authorization, hence illegally. How an illegal immigrant from Guatemala ends up in South Bend, Indiana is a puzzle: why *here*? Who in Central America has even heard of this place? No matter, he ended up here.

Carlos and my one of my daughters—let's call her Katrina—fell in love. Katrina conceived and gave birth to a girl. She is now nine years old. We call her “Daughter of the Stars.”

My granddaughter's eyes are dreamy and brown; they sparkle when she visits us, which is often. With joy, she skip-dances from room to room in our house; with excitement, she informs us of things she learned at school—today it was oligodendrocytes and their role in the growth of brain cells; in amazement, she pores over art books and paintings of great artists. Her favorite is Van Gogh's *Starry Night*. She reclines on our sofa, reading novels.

She is a child of God without whom our lives would be impoverished. She helps unravel the darkness that sometimes surrounds unfulfilled lives; dawn rises in our souls.

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