

RELIGION DEPARTMENT SUMMER READING

**SUMMER 2020**

SENIOR READING

TATTOOS ON THE HEART: THE POWER OF BOUNDLESS COMPASSION BY GREGORY  
BOYLE

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# 2020

Religion 4 Summer Reading:

*Tattoos on the Heart*- Gregory Boyle

After reading *Tattoos on the Heart*, choose one prompt from the 9 below. Each prompt is correlated to a chapter in the book, and has several questions within each prompt. This assignment references specific information from the book but is also a personal reflection, so the use of pronouns and informal writing is allowed. However, your reflection must be typed, double spaced, TNR, size 12 font, and at least 1-2 pages in length. In addition to this assignment we will also be having a class discussion on the entire book which will count as your first quiz grade. If you have any questions about this assignment contact me during the summer [asilber@gchsrams.org](mailto:asilber@gchsrams.org).

1. *God, I Guess*- In this chapter Boyle shares many stories of the people he has met in his life, and their image of God. Through these accounts Boyle highlights the fact that, "God seems to be an unwilling participant in our efforts to pigeonhole Him." In your journal reflect on one of the Homeie's image of God that speaks to you the most. 1. Briefly share their image, 2. How/Why does this speak to you? 3. Reflect on your own image of God- was it based on something that happened to you, a family member, a close friend? 4. Finally, reflect on Boyle's quote, "God's unwieldy love, which cannot be contained by our words, wants to accept all that we are and sees our humanity as the privileged place to encounter this magnanimous love."
2. *Dis-Grace*: This chapter is all about names- and the importance of names. Read this chapter and in your journal reflect on how something simple, like knowing a name, affected someone's life. Next- challenge yourself this week to be on the lookout for someone who looks/seems/feels like they need to be "called by name." The Lord says, "I have called you by name. You are mine," so put words into action this week by getting to know someone new, by name, and share their story in your journal. Social Justice requires us to frequently step out of our comfort zone and meet Christ where he is: on the street, in the poor and vulnerable, through our disgrace and shame, everywhere. Boyle reflects that, "we all just want to be called by the name our mom uses when she's not pissed off at us."
3. *Compassion*: In this chapter, start off in your journal with recounting what Boyle says Jesus' strategy is with the "outcast" or "sinner." What is He trying to say here? How can we apply this method to the service we are preparing to perform this year in class? Next, reflect on what the "stink" in the church represented, and how Boyle was able to change how the parishioners saw it. Was there ever a time in your life where you prejudged someone without knowing their story? Share in your journal. What factors contributed to your judgement? How/why did you change your mind? Who helped to change the way you saw that person? I'll leave you with this quote, "You have to be able to imagine lives that are not yours." We will be called to do this throughout our year together.

4. *Water, Oil, Flame: "Tu' eres basura."* In this chapter Boyle highlights the importance of family, and how many Homies who had been destroyed by their home life began to rebuild and became resilient. Choose the Homie's story that speaks the most to you this chapter, (George, Miguel, Natalie, Andres or Fabian), and reflect on what experience tore down their resilience, and then what helped to build it back up? Where does Boyle say that "Resilience" comes from? What actions/words/people/experiences in your life have helped to build your resilience? Comparably, which of those things have chipped away at your resilience? Finally, what is the "don't move" mentality that is referenced throughout this chapter? How can we apply this to our life?
5. *Slow Work:* In this chapter Boyle highlights that sometimes faith or the journey is "slow work." In an age with instant gratification of "likes" on a selfie, or the answers to any questions just one click away, "slow work" is a foreign term to us. Reflect in your journal on what the Lord is slowly working on in your life. How have you been working on this? What are the difficulties surrounding this slow work? Next, what lesson is Boyle trying to teach Bugsy with his "question"? How can we apply this lesson to social justice and the "good" we will try to accomplish this year? Finally, what lesson/metaphor does Pedro reveal to Boyle (and us) in his dream? Describe a time when someone has held the flashlight for you, or you have held the flashlight for someone else.
6. *Jurisdiction:* This year we will be challenged to step into various jurisdictions that are new and even uncomfortable to us. Boyle urges us to, "close both eyes; see with the other one." What lesson does Boyle teach us with the story of the iguana stew? Next, reflect on what "ingredient" you are going to bring to both class and service this year. How does that ingredient represent you? How will that ingredient make the stew better? Finally, what does Boyle teach us about relationships in this chapter? How does he use the personal accounts of the Homies to highlight this message?
7. *Gladness:* This chapter, as the name foreshadows, should fill you with gladness and have you laughing out loud. Start off by telling me which "Homie-propism" you enjoyed the most. Boyle, with the help of Dorothy Day and FDR, remind us of the "Duty of Delight," reflect in your journal on what this term means. **Challenge:** This week be, "watchful for the hilarious and the heartwarming, the silly and the sublime." Share in your journal a story of something you witnessed this week that reminds you of the "Duty of Delight." Finally, identify two different Homies mentioned in this chapter, and what their "Duty of Delight" moment was.
8. *Success:* What is frustrating about the "success" stories that Boyle shares in this chapter; be specific and detailed. How does Boyle use these stories to teach us about success? Next, what is your definition of success? How does your idea of success compare to Boyle's? Finally, reflect on what Boyle has to say about the issue if your

"primary concern is results" (pg. 178). With that in mind- what are your primary concerns for this year, both in service and in class.

9. *Kinship*: In this chapter Boyle states that the wrong idea has taken root in our world- what idea is he talking about? Where do you see this "wrong idea" being played out in the world today? Next, identify two different Homies from this chapter and share the moment when their, "soul feels its worth." This year we will be called to kinship with each other and with those who we will serve. Remember the stories and lessons from this chapter as our goal this year will be to make other's "souls feel their worth."