

Honors Philosophy Summer Reading

Sophie's World by Jostein Gaarder

Tattoos on the Heart- Gregory Boyle

This year we will be embarking on a journey together through philosophy that is designed to give you a basic fluency in the history philosophy and the opportunity to learn to think philosophically. Due to the large number of students enrolled, there will likely be two sections of the class and two teachers. This requires a restructuring of the class, including the summer reading component. Both books are available at Amazon.com and Barnes and Noble.

Jostein Gaarder's book traces the history of western philosophy and will be used during the year. You should read this book carefully and thoroughly and keep it for class. You will have an essay that will be counted as a text grade during the first week of classes on this book.

Shared with all of the Religion 4 classes, we will read Tattoos on the Heart where Father Greg Boyle shares with us the beautiful, terrible, heartbreaking, and magnificent stories of many young people he has encountered throughout his life & ministry in East Los Angeles and within the prison system. I urge you to read this book carefully, and to apply the lessons you learn in class this year. As you read Tattoos on the Heart, you will be completing journal entries for each chapter. You will need to turn in one journal (composition book, notebook, or other journal of your choice), with each prompt answered in order.

Each prompt is correlated to a chapter in the book, and has several questions within each prompt- read carefully and answer all aspects of each prompt. This assignment references specific information from the book but is also a personal reflection, so the use of pronouns and informal jargon is allowed. Please handwrite your journal entries within the journal. If you have poor handwriting you may type the entries. This assignment will also represent a test grade and must be completed prior to the start of classes. If you have any questions about this assignment contact me during the summer ebeckett@gchsrms.org. It parallels, but is different than the assignment for the other Senior Religion classes. This is important – think of it as “one class, one book” & feel free to discuss the chapters with other members of your class. Maybe your discussions will find their way into your journals!

DO NOT LEAVE THIS ASSIGNMENT UNTIL THE LAST WEEK OF SUMMER!

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 another book, Fr. Boyle writes “God is too busy loving us to be disappointed in us.” In your journal reflect on one of the images of God that speaks to you the most. 1. Briefly share that image, 2. How/Why does this speak to you? 3. Reflect on your own image of God- was is based on something that happened to you, a family member, a close friend? 4. Finally, Fr. Boyle asked Willy two questions. What are the questions he asked? What were Willy's answers? What is your answer to these questions at this point in your life? Explain.

Dis-Grace: 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. Explain the difference between the “one false move” God and the “no matter whatness” of God. Fr. Boyle also reflects that, “we all just want to be called by the name our mom uses when she’s not pissed off at us.” Choose one incident from the chapter where someone being called by name makes a difference. Share one incident where someone calling you a name or by name impacted you.

Compassion: In this chapter, start off in your journal with recounting what Boyle says Jesus’ strategy is with the “outcast” or “sinner.” It starts with erasing margins and prejudgments. Key to this is Fr. Boyle’s conviction that “You have to be able to imagine lives that are not yours.” How did Anthony & Dennis show that, “if we love what God loves, then, in compassion, margins get erased?” 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?

Water, Oil, Flame: “Tu’ eres basura.” In this chapter Boyle highlights the importance of family, and how many of the young people who had been destroyed by their home life began to rebuild and became resilient. Where does Boyle say that “Resilience” comes from? What actions/words/people/experiences in your life have helped to build your resilience? Conversely, which of those things have chipped away at your resilience? What is your plan to develop resilience for your senior year? What perspective did Baptism give George that prevented him from seeking revenge?

Slow Work: In this chapter, Fr. Boyle highlights that sometimes faith or the journey is “slow work.” Another Jesuit priest, Horace McKenna, worked for racial and social justice in Maryland during the civil rights era and used to say that God performs “slow miracles”, like feeding the hungry through a soup kitchen instead of instantly multiplying loaves or providing health care to the poor rather than simply healing someone on the spot. In an age with instant gratification of “likes” on a selfie, or the answers to any questions just one click away, “slow work” and “slow miracles” can seem foreign to us. Reflect in your journal on what the Lord is slowly working on in your life. How have you been cooperating with or blocking this work? Have you ever been part of or witnessed a “slow miracle”? What was it like? And how does Fr. Boyle reinterpret “take care of everything.” Does this make sense to you? If so, why? If not, why not?

Jurisdiction: What is Fr. Boyle’s logic in employing gang enemies in the same store? Do you think Homeboy Industries and Fr. Boyle’s approach to gang violence offer a realistic solution to a nationwide epidemic of poverty-violence-despair? How? Why? Much of the chapter deals with the reality of entering into different “jurisdictions”. Describe a time when you have wandered into God’s own jurisdiction.

Gladness: Fr. 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 and how to be, “watchful for the hilarious and the heartwarming, the silly and the sublime.” Share in your journal a story of something you experienced that reminds you

of the "Duty of Delight." Recognizing the sources of delight, especially in God, is sometimes hard. Describe an example of a tiny God that shows you know how to recognize one, as Socorro did.

Success: Do you agree with Fr. Boyle and Mother Theresa's contention that "We are not called to be successful, but to be faithful." Why or why not?

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? What is kinship? How does kinship happen in an airplane in this chapter? Finally, what does Fr. Boyle mean when he says, "the soul feels its worth?" Can you describe a time when you have felt your soul's worth?