



## Fr. Greg Boyle, S.J. Speaks at Magnificat

Last month, Magnificat, in partnership with St. Ignatius High School, hosted **Father Greg Boyle, S.J.**, Founder and Executive Director of Homeboy Industries. Homeboy is the largest, most comprehensive and most successful gang intervention, rehabilitation and re-entry program in the country. The evening presentation was open to the public and there was an all-school presentation the following day. Father Boyle traveled with two co-workers (or homies) who also presented their personal stories of how they left the gang life and came to work at Homeboy Industries.

Admittedly, Father Boyle's stories were specific – they were about his work and ministry at Homeboy Industries. They were about his encounters and relationships with gang members in Los Angeles. Many of these stories were at once heart wrenching, heartwarming and funny – really funny. While we could appreciate these stories from afar as experiences of much joy amidst deep tragedy, most of us would easily admit that the closest experience we may ever have with a gang member might have been the homies' presentations that evening.

So the stories were specific; but the message was vast. Father Boyle spoke of compassion and kinship and God's "no matter what-ness" – a message that makes sense because of his encounter as a companion of Jesus through the Spiritual Exercises. Suddenly the stories of former gang members weren't so distant – we were invited to listen to the stories of **Father Boyle, Nick**, and **Luis** grounded in the deep awareness of a God who desires to walk alongside us – to be our own companion – no matter what.

The Campus Ministry Team is filled with deep gratitude for Father Boyle's message and ministry.

*\* The pictures are from a Magnificat retreat prayer service which was inspired by a story from Father Boyle's book *Tattoos on the Heart* in which an old campesino in Bolivia blesses a much younger Fr. Boyle by dropping rose petals on his head. On retreat, Magnificat students bless each other by name saying "You are God's beloved" as they drop rose petals on each other's heads.*

