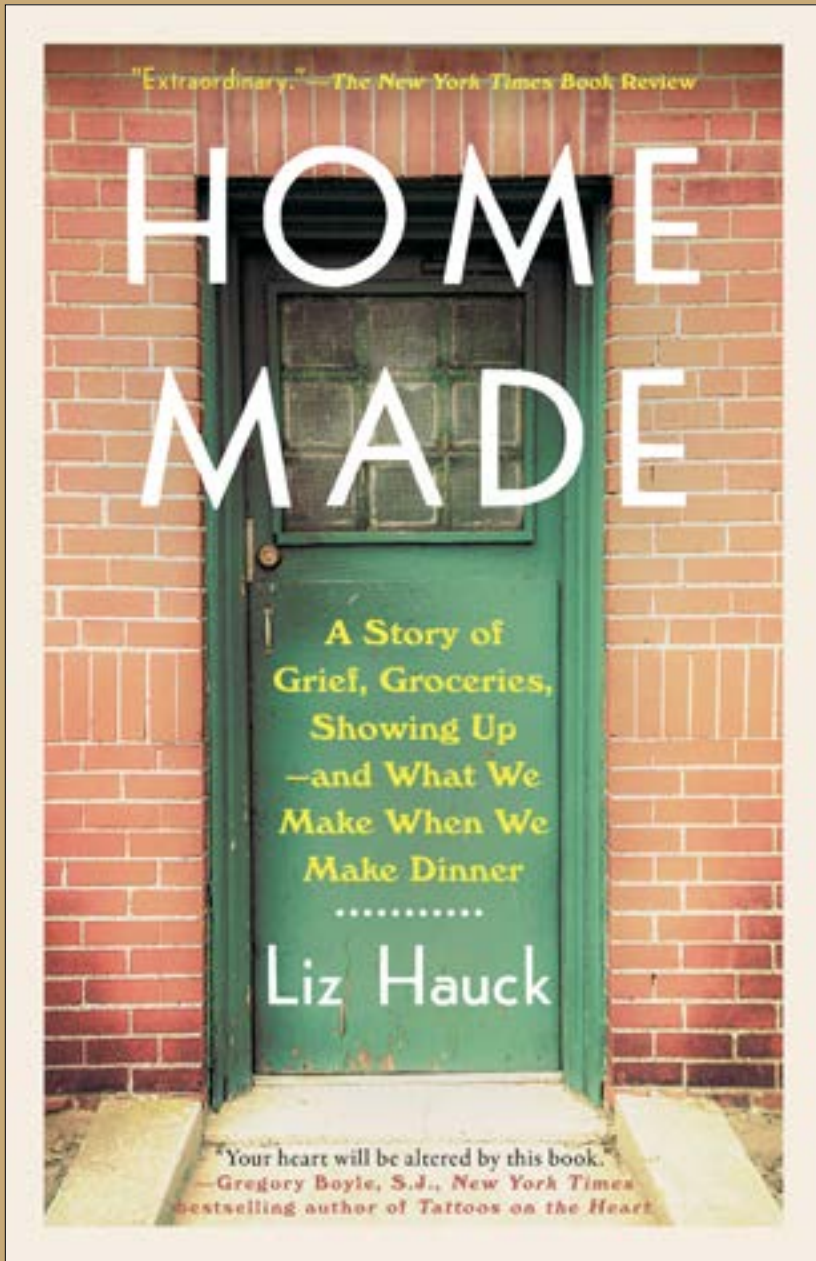


# BOSTON COLLEGE



**FIRST YEAR ACADEMIC CONVOCATION  
SEPTEMBER 2022**



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## CONVERSATIONS AT BOSTON COLLEGE

As a Jesuit, Catholic University, conversation is at the heart of the Boston College experience. From these Conversations in the First Year, to discussions in the classroom, to late-night confidences with roommates and friends, to discourse with on-campus speakers, to mentoring talks with faculty and staff members, to engagement with the Greater Boston community and with the global community through international programs – Boston College encourages students to ask big questions, to reflect, and to respond in the most loving way to the world around you.

*So, for Jesuit education, it is not enough to live authentically in the world. We have to participate in the transformation of the world (the Hebrew phrase tikkun olam conveys the same idea, of mending or repairing the world). For more than four hundred years, it has been said that Jesuit education educated “the whole person.” Today, we live with an increasingly global sense of what it means to be human. A person can’t be considered “whole” without an educated solidarity with other human beings in their hopes and fears and especially in their needs. We can’t pay attention to our experience and reflect on it without realizing how our own lives are connected with the dreams of all those with whom we share the journey of human existence, and therefore with the economic, political, and social realities that support or frustrate their dreams. This is why Jesuit education is so often said to produce “men and women for others” (from A Pocket Guide to Jesuit Education).*

This notion of engaging with the whole person encourages us to see all dimensions of the other, rather than reducing our relationship to a series of compartmentalized transactions. By recognizing that each person we encounter has their own story, hopes, dreams, and

vulnerabilities, we create greater opportunity to understand them as whole persons in a greater context.

In October 2000, Fr. Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J., Superior General of the Society of Jesus at that time, spoke to representatives from Jesuit colleges and universities about their commitment to *cura personalis*, or education of the whole person.

*For 450 years, Jesuit education has sought to educate “the whole person” intellectually and professionally, psychologically, morally and spiritually. But in the emerging global reality, with its great possibilities and deep contradictions, the whole person is different from the whole person of the Counter-Reformation, the Industrial Revolution, or the 20th century. Tomorrow’s “whole person” cannot be whole without an educated awareness of society and culture with which to contribute socially, generously, in the real world. Tomorrow’s whole person must have, in brief, a well-educated solidarity...*

*We must therefore raise our Jesuit educational standard to “educate the whole person of solidarity for the real world.” Solidarity is learned through “contact” rather than through “concepts,” as the Holy Father said recently at an Italian university conference. When the heart is touched by direct experience, the mind may be challenged to change. Personal involvement with innocent suffering, with the injustice others suffer, is the catalyst for solidarity which then gives rise to intellectual inquiry and moral reflection.*

*Students, in the course of their formation, must let the gritty reality of this world into their lives, so they can learn to feel it, think about it critically, respond to its suffering, and engage it constructively. They should learn to perceive, think, judge, choose, and act for the rights of others, especially the disadvantaged and the oppressed.*

(The Service of Faith and the Promotion of Justice in American Jesuit Higher Education

Address by Rev. Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J., Santa Clara University, October 6, 2000)

In his article “*Cura Personalis*: Some Ignatian Inspirations,” Boston College faculty member Barton T. Geger, S.J., explains the value of this care for the whole person for our students:

*In 1986, cura personalis received prominent exposure in a document entitled “The Characteristics of Jesuit Education,” published by the International Commission on the Apostolate of Jesuit Education.<sup>17</sup> In a passage that reads as if it might have been drawn from Ledóchowski’s “Instruction,” we find: Teachers and administrators, both Jesuit and lay, are more than academic guides. They are involved in the lives of the students, taking a personal interest in the intellectual, affective, moral and spiritual development of every student.... They are ready to listen to their cares and concerns about the meaning of life, to share their joys and sorrows, to help them with personal growth and interpersonal relationships.... They try to live in a way that offers an example to the students, and they are willing to share their own life experiences. “Cura personalis” (concern for the individual person) remains a basic characteristic of Jesuit education.<sup>18</sup> (From “Cura Personalis: Some Ignatian Inspirations,” Fr. Barton T. Geger, S.J., Jesuit Higher Education 3(2): 6-20 (2014).*

While Geger notes that St. Ignatius and the early Jesuits did not use the phrase *cura personalis*, the way they engaged the world in their ministry and teaching espoused an integrated approach to caring for the whole person.

The Jesuit values of caring for and educating the whole person and engaging in conversation with others are intimately connected with the practice of accompaniment.

As you enter Boston College, you must consider how we live in the 21st century and how the world is growing rapidly and changing in unforeseen ways. In the midst of this globalized and technologically driven world, we ask you to critically evaluate all that has come before us. To enter into the University core curriculum is to enter into a foundation of knowledge and experiences that will better equip each of you to synthesize and adapt to the ever-changing

world that you are part of each day. Being able to read, write, and think critically will be important building blocks within your academic journey here at Boston College.

To fully embrace your Jesuit, Catholic education, you also need to consider how you will grow in your own understanding of faith. There are many conversation partners, including members of the Jesuit community, faculty, staff, and administrators, who are here to be your companions in contemplative action and reflective conversation as you search for truths in your life and the world around you.



## WHY READ *HOME MADE*?

As a member of the class of 2026, each of you will have the opportunity to read *Home Made* and to welcome its author, Liz Hauck '00, M.Ed. '09, to Boston College to discuss this work.

In this book, Hauck acknowledges the formative experience she had with service during her time at Boston College – one that we hope all students will have during their years here. After graduating from Boston College, Hauck spent two years in an alumni service program in Chicago and then returned to Boston to begin teaching. She references not only the importance of service but also the integral nature of reflection throughout these experiences.

In *Home Made*, Hauck chronicles her practice of a self-designed service program to teach young men in a youth protective services group home how to cook as she grieves her late father – and the reflection this expression of service invited. Through this service, she developed solidarity with the young men in the home and a deeper understanding of her father's legacy and her own call to be a woman for others.

“This book is my story about dinners and conversations with six boys, or twenty-seven boys, living in foster care who were assigned to a group home run by the human services agency my father had cofounded, during the three years I ran a weekly cooking program there as a volunteer. It’s a story about the interconnectedness of food and memory, and community service and community care. This is also a story of modern America.” p. 352

In an interview with Boston College University Communications in September 2021, Hauck discussed her impetus for writing the book:

*In some ways, the impulse to write this book was not unlike the impulse to put a stone or marker in the world to mark a place in memory of someone who has gone, to literally try to fill a bit of that emptiness and leave some proof that a person—who lived and was loved—was there and hold that space. My book is a little monument in that sense. Since it’s been out in the world, I’ve been getting letters from people (mostly strangers) who do this kind of care work or have suffered similar losses and at first these letters are about my story but then quickly become about other people’s stories and then a bigger conversation about realizing that we are not alone in the hardest, darkest corners of our lives and how there’s comfort in knowing and feeling that. As a volunteer, I knew in real time that the cooking project was about accompaniment, but I’m only now appreciating as a writer how reading and being read are practices of accompaniment, too. I was grieving when I started this and I’m still grieving, but in a different way now; a thing that I learned about grief in the process of translating my experience—of cooking and eating dinners with these teenaged boys in state care for three years—into this story about food and grief and community is that we need to pay more attention to grief and who gets space to grieve and how we can help people, especially kids, deal with grief. The kids at the House were all grieving compounded losses of family, expectations, and experiences of childhood, but so much of the time their grief was only read and treated as anger and withdrawal and violence...*

(Cooking meals, finding grace, Boston College University Communications, September 2021)



Since 2004, Conversations in the First Year has engaged members of the incoming class in an intellectual and reflective dialogue with a common text, embodying the richness of the Catholic intellectual tradition at Boston College which calls us to examine our faith and experience in conversation with other thinkers in order to pursue the greater glory of God. This conversation among thoughtful leaders that will begin for you with this common text will carry over to conversations with all members of the Boston College community during your next four years.

*Boston College proposes an explicit and intentional approach to a broader vision of student formation, drawn from the understanding of what it means to be human that is at the heart of the Jesuit educational tradition. In this view, student formation has three interconnected dimensions—an intellectual dimension, a social dimension, and a spiritual dimension—and a student's growth along all three dimensions ideally moves toward integration. Fostering this integrative movement is the responsibility of all the adults in the university. Their roles give them different points of entry into students' lives, each of which is an opportunity to engage students in the kind of "expert conversation" that helps them pay attention to their experience, reflect on its meaning, and make good decisions in light of what they have learned. This conversation already happens in many places at Boston College. An explicit and intentional concept of formation will draw all the adults in the university community into a collective effort to build on what we are already doing well in order to facilitate the full human flourishing of all our students. (From *The Journey to Adulthood*, p. 1)*

This ongoing conversation is part of the University's commitment to finding God in all things. "Contemporary Jesuit schools maintain the original commitment to rigorous intellectual development, to personal, moral, and religious formation, and to the discernment of God's action in all aspects of the student's experience. The pursuit of the greater glory of God remains rooted in a worldview that God can be encountered in all creation and through all human activity, especially in the search for truth in every discipline, in the desire to learn, and in the call to live justly together." (From *The Catholic Intellectual Tradition: A Conversation at Boston College*)



## A WAY TO APPROACH THE TEXT

As you enter Boston College, we will ask each of you to engage in conversation, to live together, and to share your life with one another. As members of the Class of 2026, your conversation will include this book which invites you to consider how service and solidarity with others lead to greater understanding of yourself and how the experience of vulnerability and reflection inform how you engage with the world around you.

*The early Jesuits struggled to describe what they called “our way of proceeding.” Their distinctive spirituality can be seen as a three-part process. It begins with paying attention to experience, moves to reflecting on its meaning, and ends in deciding how to act. Jesuit education, then, can be described in terms of three key movements: being attentive, being reflective, and being loving. It results in the kind of good decision-making that St. Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Society of Jesus, called discernment. Discernment enables each of us to seek the greater good before us. Having this deep interior knowledge of the heart is to communicate with God and trust that the hand of God is at work fortifying and directing us in our lives. One of the many goals of a Jesuit education is to produce men and women for whom discernment is a habit.*

*We can think of discernment as the lifelong process of exploring our experience, reflecting upon its meaning, and living in a way that translates this meaning into action that creates a harmonious community for us all. We can also think of this process as something that we focus on with special intensity at particular moments in our lives, for example, during the four years of college or when we have to make important decisions. When we discern, we want to do so freely and with a sense of what God is calling us to do.*

*Through the practice of discerning, we grow in our ability to imagine how we are going to live our lives and discover our vocations. The novelist and theologian Frederick Buechner describes vocation as “the place where your deep gladness and the world’s deep hunger meet.” When we arrive at this place of convergence, we understand the fit between who we are and what the world needs of us; St. Ignatius urges us to be unafraid to live with the consequences of this realization and to respond with generosity and magnanimity, because this is the way that we can love as God loves. (from A Pocket Guide to Jesuit Education)*

From the very beginning, the goal of Jesuit education has been to form men and women for others. To cultivate this formation, St. Ignatius and his companions translated their distinctive spirituality into an educational vision by describing it as a three-part process. It begins with paying attention to experience, moves to reflecting on the meaning of experience, and ends in deciding how to act moving forward. Jesuit education, then, can be described in terms of three key movements: **Be attentive, be reflective, be loving.** (from *A Pocket Guide to Jesuit Education*).

As part of their formation, St. Ignatius and his early Jesuit companions were committed to living in the world. At that time most religious orders did not espouse this global view, yet the Society of Jesus believed it was critical to engage people where they were, to be present in the world, to go out to the margins. These same principles of living a life of service, care for the whole person, and accompaniment provide the framework for today’s Boston College experience.



## ACCOMPANIMENT: WITHIN AND BEYOND BC

*So, for Jesuit education, it is not enough to live authentically in the world. We have to participate in the transformation of the world (the Hebrew phrase tikkun olam conveys the same idea, of mending or repairing the world). For more than four hundred years, it has been said that Jesuit education educated “the whole person.” Today, we live with an increasingly global sense of what it means to be human. A person can’t be considered “whole” without an educated solidarity with other human beings in their hopes and fears and especially in their needs. We can’t pay attention to our experience and reflect on it without realizing how our own lives are connected with the dreams of all those with whom we share the journey of human existence, and therefore with the economic, political, and social realities that support or frustrate their dreams. This is why Jesuit education is so often said to produce “men and women for others” (from A Pocket Guide to Jesuit Education).*

This notion of engaging with the whole person encourages us to see all dimensions of the other, rather than reducing our relationship to a series of compartmentalized transactions and to open ourselves to those we encounter. By recognizing that each person has their own story, hopes, dreams, and vulnerabilities – and being present to them – we create greater opportunity to understand them as whole persons in a greater context.

This emphasis on accompaniment and presence supports Ignatius’ definition of conversation as “turning towards someone: to live with, keep company with and even to help oneself and the other person toward new experiences and new interpretations of them.”

The practice of accompaniment is also an integral part of the Boston College community, and there are many opportunities for students, administrators, faculty, and staff members to engage

in conversation as each seeks to develop greater empathy and understanding and to be changed.

In Summer 2020, Boston College developed an online series titled *The Show@6* which modeled the importance of conversation and explored critical issues through the lens of the common good. The June 5, 2020 episode focused on “Jesuit Accompaniment in Vulnerable Times” and the importance of conversation in the life of Boston College.

Haub Vice President for Mission and Ministry, Fr. Jack Butler, S.J., spoke about the way we accompany one another on our journey at Boston College, “We’re meant to be relational. We’re meant to fall in love. We’re meant to have friends. We’re meant to have difficult conversations. We’re meant to figure out life together.” He added that administrators, faculty, staff, and students all participate in these conversations together. “I think, as the VP... that the very dynamic of the University itself is what am I doing to help people to remember who they are at their core, human beings, called to be in relationship and that the greatest power we have as a human being is the skill of empathy, because that’s what change is going to come about when we allow people to touch us, to challenge us in a way that makes us feel vulnerable. That’s where we join for the pilgrim, I think.”

Vice Provost for Global Engagement and Theology Department Professor Fr. James Keenan, S.J., noted that administrators, faculty, and staff members are eager to serve as conversation partners with students. “...They begin to see, through accompaniment, that they can be a receptive pilgrim, that they can provide an open door, that they can be ready to be present and listen, that they may not have to solve everything, but receiving and being present and accompanying are really rather key.”

The Society of Jesus emphasized this commitment to accompaniment in 2019 when they announced the Universal Apostolic Preferences that will guide their mission and work over the next ten years. One of the four Universal Apostolic Preferences is “Walking with the Excluded”:

*“The Universal Apostolic Preferences are a call to conversion. They are an invitation to rethink how we live, how we work and how we relate to the people we serve.”*

With those words, Fr. General Arturo Sosa took the floor at the Discernment and Leadership meeting in Rome, Italy. Before a group of 50 leaders of Jesuits ministries across the world, both Jesuits and lay colleagues, Fr. General explained his vision for the “Universal Apostolic Preferences” and how they will guide the Society of Jesus. (<https://www.jesuits.global/2019/04/02/universal-apostolic-preferences-call-us-to-conversion/>)

America Media editor-at-large and author Fr. James Martin, S.J., M.Div. '98, Th.M. '99, also a Boston College graduate, wrote about the importance of this preference in a recent article in America magazine:

“Here is how the preference is described by the Jesuit Curia: “Walk with the poor, the outcasts of the world, those whose dignity has been violated, in a ministry of reconciliation and justice.” I find that so beautiful. It is exactly what Jesus did, as he reached out to those on the margins, and it is what so many of my brothers and our colleagues in ministry have done since the founding of the Society in 1540.”

(James Martin, S.J.: Four lessons from my Jesuit ministry of walking with the excluded, March 29, 2022)

Martin summarized these lessons:

Four lessons learned in ministry, in many places over many years:

1. Treat people like individuals, not categories.
2. Treat people like kings and queens.

3. Don't assume you know what they need.
4. Don't assume you know everything about their lives.

@JamesMartinSJ Twitter post March 29, 2022

Fr. Gregory Boyle, S.J., M.Div.'84, a Jesuit priest and founder and director of Homeboy Industries, emphasizes that accompaniment comes through service and recognizing our kinship with those whom we encounter:

*The measure of our compassion lies not in our service of those on the margins, but only in our willingness to see ourselves in kinship with them. For the truth of the matter is this: If we don't welcome our own wounds, we may well be tempted to despise the wounded. We discover in speaking the whole language and seeing the whole person, in welcoming our wound and the wounded, that Christianity is what we do, and not just adherence to a list of beliefs we hold in our head. We embrace the same architecture of the heart of Jesus. And so we seek to take seriously what Jesus took seriously.*

*They're only four things. They're big, but only four: inclusion, nonviolence, unconditional loving kindness, and compassionate acceptance. If we do those things, we have aligned our hearts with the mystical heart of Jesus, being held by the notion of God that is spacious and expansive, the God who loves us without measure and without regret. And that's the hope in our mystical seeing, that we will embrace the very things that Jesus took seriously. And so we go to the margins, not to make a difference, but so that the folks at the margins make me different.*

(Boyle, S.J., Boston College School of Theology and Ministry Daniel J. Harrington Lecture "The Whole Language: The Power of Extravagant Tenderness," March 25, 2021)

In an interview with NPR's Krista Tippett for *On Being*, Boyle talked about how the Jesuits – the Society of Jesus – led him to this work of accompaniment:

*...“la Compañía de Jesús” is what St. Ignatius called the thing, so it’s about being in companionship with Jesus. And St. Ignatius, in his spiritual exercises, has a meditation called “The Two Standards.” And in it he says, very simply, “See Jesus standing in the lowly place.” It’s not about saluting a set of beliefs, necessarily; it’s about walking with Jesus and being a companion. And I haven’t found anything that’s brought me more life or joy than standing with Jesus, but also with the particularity of standing in the lowly place with the easily despised and the readily left out, and with the demonized so that the demonizing will stop, and with the disposable so that the day will come when we stop throwing people away. And I find the fullness of life in trying to, as best I can, in my own way, to stand there.*

(*On Being* with Krista Tippett, Greg Boyle *The Calling of Delight: Gangs, Service, and Kinship*, Original Air Date February 26, 2013, Last Updated December 19, 2019)

In the introduction to *Home Made*, Hauck describes her experience, “living a life significantly less bold than the one I had imagined waiting for me on the other side of a diploma.” p. xi, xii

**As you begin your BC experience, we want you to imagine the bold ways in which you will live your life, as well as the bold ways you will experience the sacramentality in the every day, the sacred in the ordinary.**





## SOME QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

Reflection is a key element in the spirituality of St. Ignatius Loyola, the founder of the Society of Jesus (the Jesuits). As the class of 2026 enters Boston College, you do so as the Society of Jesus completes the celebration of the 500th anniversary of Saint Ignatius conversion experience. In May 1521, Ignatius Loyola was wounded in a battle in Pamplona, Spain. His leg was shattered by a cannon ball and he was forced to return home to recover from this injury. For a wounded soldier returning home from battle, this was a time of shame and isolation. Ignatius spent several months convalescing and during that time he read two books, *The Life of Christ* and *Butler's Lives of the Saints*. These books encouraged him to reflect on his own life – his relationship with others, his relationship with himself, his relationship with God. This “cannonball moment” that led Ignatius into this reflective experience changed his life and as a result, Ignatius changed the world.

In *Home Made* Hauck reflects upon her own cannonball moment with her father's death: “He died two months later, three months after his fifty-seventh birthday, six months after his diagnosis, eleven months after we made our Pépin plan. At four o'clock one Tuesday morning in December, as night shift staff bought croissants and coffee from the cafe in the hospital lobby, I walked with my mother through the huge revolving exit into a world without my dad. With the spin of an automatic door, the world as I knew it shifted into the past tense.” p. xvi

***Is there a cannonball moment in your life that changed your course?  
Have you had the time to reflect on what this moment has meant in  
your life? How has it changed you and how have you changed the world  
as a result?***

Hauck's desire to channel her grief into a way of honoring the life her father lived inspired her service program with young men in a youth protective services' group home, where her father had dedicated most of his own career.

"GRIEF IS THE ultimate marinade. You become more of whatever you were already: the lonely, lonelier; the angry, angrier; the restless, more restless. Sometimes the faithful manage to emerge more faithful. It's hard to describe the infinite loop of loss. The closest sensation might be hunger, if eyes and ears and fingertips could be hungry." p. xvi

***What losses have you experienced in your life? How has your grief moved you forward or caused you to withdraw from the world?***

Hauck shares in the book why food was an important way for her to connect:

"FOR MY DAD, life was a series of meals. Food was his favorite thing to talk about, and it never felt like small talk. Who did you go with? What did you eat? How was it served? Did you order dessert? Food was important to him, a frame for the world." p. 54

***How does food frame your world? Are there certain foods that evoke memories? Meals that have made an impact on you – not only what you ate but also with whom you shared the meal?***

Accompaniment takes place with those with whom we are in relationship and those who are on the margins for us.

"And so in the covenant God says, "As I have loved you, so must you have a special preferential care and love for the widow, orphan, and the stranger." And these were the people who were left out. These were the people who society at the time looked at and said, we can live without you. And so we want to go to the margins and say, we refuse to live without you, widow, orphan, stranger. " (Boyle, S.J., Boston College School of Theology and Ministry Daniel J. Harrington Lecture "The Whole Language: The Power of Extravagant Tenderness," March 25, 2021)

***Who are the people who have accompanied you on your journey? In what ways, have they told you that they refuse to live without you?***

“That was the eventual grace, and that was all that was actually homemade. The food, the flavors, the sharing: it was all the truth. Sometimes improvisation in kitchens is disastrous. But sometimes, a combination of elements produces something spectacularly unexpected. I think that’s why, when we don’t know what else to do, we feed our neighbors: because the chance of grace outweighs the probability of mess. When we claim our neighbors we commit to our communities, and when we feed our neighbors, we serve them. When we consider ourselves bound together in community, the radically civil act redistributing resources from tables with more to tables with less our responsibility; it is the social, practical work of justice.” pp. 358-359

***How do you conceptualize home? Who are your neighbors? When have you felt bound in community? By whom have you felt truly understood, embraced, and accepted in your life? As you enter into this new university community, how will you be proactive and intentional in your effort to make Boston College a home?***

Boyle stresses the importance of kinship and connection in accompaniment:

“Well, you have to find, I always call it, your own particularity. Because my margins aren’t your margins. And so you have to find anybody who’s left out, and every community has people who have been denied access. This isn’t about assimilating people who are at the margins. This is about – you’re not inviting them to the center; you’re going to the margins. And the poet Wallace Stevens says, we live in the description of the place and not the place itself. And we’ve settled for the description of the place, and we need to hold out for the place itself, which is exquisite mutuality. Where there is no us and them, where you will obliterate the illusion that we are separate. And so you find a way, in your own town, in your own city, in your own community. If you can’t find it in your own

community, you go outside of it. Where you find people who carry more than the rest because we really do want to live in the place itself, of kinship and connection.” (Boyle, S.J., Boston College School of Theology and Ministry Daniel J. Harrington Lecture “The Whole Language: The Power of Extravagant Tenderness,” March 25, 2021)

***Who are the people who are on the margins in today’s world, who are left out? Who are the people in the margins in your own life? What does it mean to you to go to the margins to accompany them?***

Presence and accompaniment are particularly important as we wrestle with the racial, social, and political tensions in our world. Allowing ourselves to see through the lens of another can challenge us to reframe our perspective. When we commit to being vulnerable and open to change, we learn more about ourselves and those with whom we are in relationship.

Attentive to the systemic racism that exists in our country and our community, and reflecting on how the University can respond to the issue and its root causes, Boston College has committed to developing initiatives for listening, dialogue, healing, reconciliation, and understanding, including establishing The Boston College Forum on Racial Justice in America and a number of programs through University Mission and Ministry. In a letter to the Boston College community in June 2020, University President William P. Leahy, S.J., wrote, “The current anger, division, and alienation result from long-term, systemic causes, and they call for resolution of underlying issues through immediate and sustained action,” and described the loving response that Boston College has pledged to take against racism – both personal and systemic.

***How can you engage in conversation around these issues on a societal and on a personal level? Are there ways that you can foster dialogue and promote reconciliation in these divisive times? Are there ways that you can bring to light structural, personal, and social issues underlying racism by being open to others and engaging in conversation?***

*As our country struggles with issues of racial justice, how do you approach conversations about and across difference? What experiences have helped you empathize with people who are different from you? What experiences have helped you to be more vulnerable with people?*

In a recent homily, Morrissey College of Arts and Sciences Dean Gregory Kalscheur, S.J. urged the community to show that same reconciliation and spirit of conversion in the way they treat others on campus: “Do we look at one another with compassion?” Kalscheur asked. “We know we live in a world that needs reconciliation – and that begins with the compassion with which we look on each other.” (Gregory Kalscheur, S.J., Homily on Laetare Sunday, 11:00 a.m. Mass, March 27, 2022).

*How can you be an agent for reconciliation in today's world? How can you show compassion to those you encounter at Boston College?*



## CONTINUING THE CONVERSATION

Hauck's heart for service was nurtured during her time as a Boston College student. In the book, she describes her participation the Appa Volunteers Program and the lessons she learned during a week-long service trip where she and her tripmates were charged with digging a hole and building an outhouse. She cites several volunteer experiences during her time at Boston College as crucial in her formation:

*It's not an exaggeration to say that my community life at BC was formed in service programs—from freshman year through senior year. My best friendships, my worldview, and nearly all of my beyond-the-classroom college education emerged from early morning, messy but*

*great service projects through the Emerging Leader Program and Shaw Leadership Program as well as Appalachia Volunteers and 4Boston, and then Ignacio Volunteers. And after graduation, I was a Jesuit Alumni Volunteer for two years in Chicago with two fellow BC grads. All of these programs had a tremendous impact on my understanding of ideas about community and who our neighbors are and issues related to equality and distribution of resources, as well as my evolving sense of what one person can actually do. The Ignatian ideal of the education of the self for the service of others is a practice I learned at BC and have carried through the work of my life.*

(Cooking meals, finding grace, Boston College University Communications, September 2021)

“It was the do something impulse that led me to the House in the months after my dad died, and what I learned volunteering in the years before that had oriented me to the task of starting this small-scale service project as a way to be in community while also grieving my life-shaking loss. I copied some of the structural logic of the service-learning programs I had been a part of in college and facilitated in Chicago, designating a set day and fixed time window, identifying one small, accomplishable task, bringing most of the necessary materials with me, and expecting the unexpected, or trying to. You have to have a kind of discipline to be a volunteer, to show up for a small amount of time, work, and leave. This is true of teaching and other jobs, too, but when you are a volunteer, there’s nothing keeping you in place except your word that you’d show up. Sometimes it’s hard to leave. Sometimes it’s harder to come back. Your range of motion is small. You have to stay on task. You’ll probably be frustrated that you cannot do more. Sometimes it’s hard not to take the little rejections personally. But if the frustration consumes you, you won’t be effective. You have to learn the awkward, fluid posture of accompaniment; it’s sitting, it’s standing, it’s reaching, it’s digging, it’s showing up, it’s keeping company. Sometimes your only task is letting the other person know they are not alone; that affirmation of humanity is the smallest, biggest thing one person can do for another, and it’s always graceful,

and always reciprocal. Sometimes, you have to make the call. Sometimes the hole takes longer to dig than you thought; you have to decide whether you're going to stay and dig. Sometimes the hole is a metaphor, and sometimes it is actually a six-foot-by-six-foot hole that you know will eventually be filled up with shit, but you signed up to help dig it, so you do. When I suggested cooking at the House, I had no idea how it would all turn out. But I believed that this little service project had the potential to take on a life of its own". pp. 29-30

Boston College provides a number of opportunities to engage in service – on campus, in the local community, and on the margins.

Service and Immersion programs through [Campus Ministry](#), the [Volunteer and Service Learning Center](#), the [Boston College Neighborhood Center](#), [Campus School Volunteers](#), the [PULSE Program for Service Learning](#), the [Thea Bowman AHANA and Intercultural Center](#), the [Schiller Institute for Integrated Sciences and Society](#), the [Jenks Leadership Program](#), the [McGillycuddy-Logue Fellows Program](#), the [Devlin Student-Athlete Development Program](#), individual undergraduate schools, and many other offices provide opportunities for solidarity with others.

These programs often provide a reflection component to enable students to integrate their experience into their formation at Boston College. As Kolvenbach noted in his address:

"...the measure of Jesuit universities is not what our students do but who they become and the adult Christian responsibility they will exercise in future toward their neighbor and their world. For now, the activities they engage in, even with much good effect, are for their formation."

(The Service of Faith and the Promotion of Justice in American Jesuit Higher Education

Address by Rev. Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J., Santa Clara University, October 6, 2000)



## THE EXAMEN

Toward the end of the book, Hauck recounts a conversation with Gerry, who founded the agency with her father.

He laughed.

“That’s right. A vanity project.” Then Gerry got serious.

“You have to tell the story. That something happened here.

Or there will be no trace of any of it. There is nothing left.”

His eyes welled again.

I looked out the window. What is left of a job when it’s done?

How do we count what we have made and known, and let go of what escapes us?

How do you accurately inventory a life, and track its various intersections with other people’s lives? How does the work of our life become the work of our life? p. 335

**How do we count what we have made and known? One of the ways in which St. Ignatius did so was through the Examen.**

The Ignatian tradition encourages reflection on our experience of God in the world in a mode of prayer called the Examen. The Examen is a prayer in five parts which helps individuals move through an examination of conscience, allowing the experiences of the day to guide one’s reflection. Its basis is in Christianity, but it can also be considered in light of other faith traditions.



*At first it might be helpful to move through all five of the points, spending two or three minutes on each, just to see what works for you. Or you may want to remain on the first point, giving thanks, after an especially great day. Or there may be times when you want to consider your career or a possible long-term relationship and then you might spend time on orienting your future. There is no single way to make the examination. The only essential is to bring your day before God. At the core of the examination is self-awareness before God. Its power lies in the way you become conscious of your own relationship with God, with your own spirituality.*

- **Giving Thanks.** I thank God for the way God has met me today—in the work I have done, in the people I have encountered, in the letters from home, etc. I begin my prayer with the solid hope that God cares for me, knows me and loves me with an everlasting love.
- **Seeking Light.** I ask for light to understand the specific moments in which God has clarified who I am, what my gifts really are, and how I treat other people. I ask not to hide from the truth. I ask to be gentle with myself and honest, too. I ask to learn from God who I am.
- **Reviewing Life.** I go over the events of the day, noticing the ones where I felt closer to God and the ones where I felt distanced from God. Where today I met weakness or failure, I ask for forgiveness and self-acceptance. Where today I have lived faithfully and productively, I rejoice in God's service. God does not ask the impossible from me, only the good that I can do and be.
- **Noting Patterns.** I stand before my history as God does—lovingly wise about who I am, eager to make me part of the work of the Kingdom, allowing me to understand the patterns of my life that lead me to a more personal sense of how God calls me here at Boston College. Are there emerging insights about the life I should live? Are

there difficulties that I keep trying to avoid and know I must face? Are there people, places and occasions that especially open me to God? And are there people, places, and occasions that bring out the worst in me? What does God want me to do with the person that I am becoming?

- **Orienting My Future.** Finally, I ask to live as Christ did. I look at the pattern of openness and the essentials of his teaching. I look at the trust he had in God's design for the world. I look at his availability to people. I accept the strategy of forgiveness, truthfulness and service that Christ portrayed. I want to believe that I am called to live just as Christ was, as a woman or man for others. Of course, I will fail. But failure can be the way to wisdom and compassion if I use failure to know myself better and to understand the human heart more deeply. More important, I look ahead out of the successes of the day. I ask to live with a growing sense of God's trust in my future. (The Red Book 2009, pp 115, 117)

Teach us, good Lord, to serve You  
as You deserve;  
to give and not to count the cost;  
to fight and not to heed the wounds;  
to toil and not to seek for rest;  
to labor and not to ask for any reward,  
save that of knowing that we do your will.

—St. Ignatius Loyola

### **Falling in Love with God**

Nothing is more practical than finding God,  
that is, falling in love  
in a quite absolute, final way.  
What you are in love with,  
what seizes your imagination,  
will affect everything.  
It will decide  
what will get you out of bed in the morning,  
what you will do with your evenings,  
how you will spend your weekends,  
what you read,  
who you know,  
what breaks your heart,  
and what amazes you with joy and gratitude.  
Fall in love,  
stay in love,  
and it will decide everything.

—Pedro Arrupe, S.J.



CONVERSATIONS IN THE FIRST YEAR:  
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