



Tattoos on the Heart: The Power of Boundless Compassion

By Gregory Boyle

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For twenty years, Gregory Boyle has run Homeboy Industries, a gang-intervention program located in the Boyle Heights neighborhood of Los Angeles, the gang capital of the world. In *Tattoos on the Heart*, he distills his experience working in the ghetto into a breathtaking series of parables inspired by faith.

Arranged by theme and filled with sparkling humor and glowing generosity, these essays offer a stirring look at how full our lives could be if we could find the joy in loving others and in being loved unconditionally. From giant, tattooed Cesar, shopping at JCPenney fresh out of prison, we learn how to feel worthy of God's love. From ten-year-old Lula we learn the importance of being known and acknowledged. From Pedro we understand the kind of patience necessary to rescue someone from the darkness. In each chapter we benefit from Boyle's gentle, hard-earned wisdom.

These essays about universal kinship and redemption are moving examples of the power of unconditional love and the importance of fighting despair. Gorgeous and uplifting, *Tattoos on the Heart* reminds us that no life is less valuable than another.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Starred Review. In this artful, disquieting, yet surprisingly jubilant memoir, Jesuit priest Boyle recounts his two decades of working with homies in Los Angeles County, which contains 1,100 gangs with nearly 86,000 members. Boyle's Homeboy Industries is the largest gang intervention program in the country, offering job training, tattoo removal, and employment to members of enemy gangs. Effectively straddling the debate regarding where the responsibility for urban violence lies, Boyle both recounts the despair of watching the kids you love cooperate in their own demise and levels the challenge to readers to stand in awe at what the poor have to carry rather than stand in judgment at how they carry it. From moving vignettes about gangsters breaking into tears or finding themselves worthy of love and affirmation, to moments of spiritual reflection and sidesplittingly funny banter between him and the homies, Boyle creates a convincing and even joyful treatise on the sacredness of every life. Considering that he has buried more than 150 young people from gang-related violence, the joyful tenor of the book remains an astounding literary and spiritual feat. (Mar.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Review

"Destined to become a classic of both urban reportage and contemporary spirituality."

—"The Los Angeles Times

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"Incandescent, always hope-filled and often hilarious. Boyle somehow maintains an exuberant voice that celebrates the strength, compassion and humanity of people often demonized. He simply highlights charity and goodness wherever they are found. Boyle intersperses his narratives about gang members and his work with them with theological and spiritual reflections from a variety of theologians, poets and other writers. By introducing book-buying, highly educated readers to people we may never otherwise encounter, Boyle aspires to "broaden the parameters of our kinship."--"The Christian Century"

"Father Boyle reminds us all that every single child and youth is a part of God's 'jurisdiction'--and when they know that we are seeing them as God does, they are capable of great things. Father Boyle is a national treasure."

--MARIAN WRIGHT EDELMAN, PRESIDENT, CHILDREN'S DEFENSE FUND

"A spiritual masterpiece touching the innermost sanctum of the human soul. Boyle approaches each person as a child of God and fully deserving of love and compassion. His capacity to reach the heart of the most hardened, and to see the best in everyone, inspires. I laughed, wept, and underlined on virtually every page."

--KERRY KENNEDY, FOUNDER OF THE RFK CENTER FOR JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

"One of the bravest, most humane, heartbreaking, brilliant, and hopeful stories I've read in ages. Father Greg, the Gandhi of the Gangs, fills Tattoos with unquenchable soul force and down-to-earth love." --JACK KORNFIELD, AUTHOR OF A PATH WITH HEART

"Tattoos on the Heart is an astounding book and a remarkable testament. No one brings more triumph and tragedy to the street gang story than Greg Boyle. No one brings more conviction and compassion than Greg Boyle. And no one writes the gang story more beautifully."

--MALCOLM KLEIN, PROFESSOR EMERITUS, UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

"Sometimes we are allowed to see in our own lifetimes what we were supposed to see in the life and ministry of Jesus. Read, and let your life be changed!"

--FATHER RICHARD ROHR, O.F.M., CENTER FOR ACTION AND CONTEMPLATION,
ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO

"Destined to become a classic of both urban reportage and contemporary spirituality."

--"The Los Angeles Times

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"An astonishing book . . . about suffering and dignity, death and resurrection, one of my favorite books in years. It is lovely and tough and tender beyond my ability to describe and left me in tears of both sorrow and laughter."--ANNE LAMOTT, AUTHOR OF GRACE (EVENTUALLY)

"Tattoos on the Heart is an honest, raw, and compelling collection from Father Greg Boyle's life and work with gang-involved youth. His commitment should teach us all a lesson in compromise, sharing, learning, loving, and, most important, living life to the fullest." --ANJELICA HUSTON

"An extraordinary reflection of a life totally committed to reshaping and redirecting the lives of countless young gang members (from L.A.'s gang culture), Greg Boyle's Tattoos on the Heart proves one man with courage is a majority." --MARTIN SHEEN

"Destined to become a classic of both urban reportage and contemporary spirituality."

--"The Los Angeles Times

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About the Author

Father Gregory Boyle was ordained a Jesuit priest in 1984. He received his Master of Divinity from the Weston School of Theology and a Sacred Theology Masters degree from the Jesuit School of Theology. In 1988, Father Boyle began what would become Homeboy Industries, now located in downtown Los Angeles. Fr. Greg received the California Peace Prize, the "Humanitarian of the Year" Award from *Bon Appétit*; the Caring Institute's 2007 Most Caring People Award; and received the 2008 Civic Medal of Honor from the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce. He is the author of *Tattoos on the Heart* and *Shoulder to Shoulder*, for which he is donating all his net proceeds to Homeboy Industries.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Richard Vazquez:

Have you spare time to get a day? What do you do when you have much more or little spare time? That's why, you can choose the suitable activity for spend your time. Any person spent their own spare time to take a wander, shopping, or went to the actual Mall. How about open or read a book called Tattoos on the Heart: The Power of Boundless Compassion? Maybe it is to become best activity for you. You understand beside you can spend your time along with your favorite's book, you can smarter than before. Do you agree with it is opinion or you have some other opinion?

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