

Directions: Welcome to Week 5, where we will explore Chapters Eight and Nine of *Cherished Belonging*. Each week we will pose several questions related to the text that encourage you to apply ideas to your personal development. Think about, pray about, annotate, and reflect on the questions that stir and challenge you, in a method of reflection that works for you, and leave questions that do not resonate.

A short text for further reflection will follow each set of questions.

Chapter 8: *The Household of God*

Reflection Questions

1. “Staying is abiding,” Boyle notes (172). How does this idea build upon the mandate to greet and to cherish? Where do you need to “stick around and keep cherishing”? What tasks, actions, opportunities, or challenges are added or offered to us when we choose to stick around?
2. How is a movement to advance social justice “Gospel living... the agency to present God’s hope in the world” (172)? Does our Basilica community live up to this? Are we engaged, or calcified? Are you engaged, defensive, or calcified? Where do some see the threat in this understanding- the implication that the setup will be upset (173)? How do you respond to their concerns? How should we respond as a community?
3. How do we ensure that historically marginalized people have voices and power in the Church? In our faith community?
4. Kinship isn’t “a place but a stance. It’s not a position; it’s a disposition and a temperament. It’s where we abide, an anchor. It’s *acatamiento*,” (173) Boyle proclaims. We were introduced to *acatamiento* in chapter 5. How has your understanding of *acatamiento*, hope, kinship, and persistence deepened over the course of this text?
5. How did you react to Boyle’s claim that “for Catholics, the Catholic Church holds the faith but isn’t the faith” (174). What might feel threatening about that? What opportunities for dialogue and an end to tribalism arise? What “connective tissue” between us and those of other Christian or faith communities becomes more transparent with this view?
6. “God did not stop speaking at the end of the Bible,” Boyle notes. “God is still speaking... in Bishop Dave, in Esperanza, in Javi, in the Beloved present in every kindness and gentle moment” (183). Who comes to mind when you think about current “true disciples” (184)? What are they doing, or talking about, today? Do you need to join them? What would that look like? When have your words or actions “spoken” for God?

7. Boyle provides an interesting play on words when he encourages us to be awake- after all, advent is all about “waking up” and Jesus encourages us to not let our hearts get drowsy (185). Around what ideas, issues, actions, or people, has your heart become drowsy? How do you help others to wake up?
8. What could we do together with the church, “if we weren’t afraid or offended by anything” (187)? What would you prioritize for action, for belonging?
9. Boyle promotes "staying defiantly" (188) in a church that we both love and can frustrate us as individuals regarding "fossilization," priorities, or the pace of change. How can you balance frustration with hope and advocacy, while maintaining our unity as one community?

For Further Reflection:

As you read The Gospel of [Matthew story of Mary and Mary Magdalene](#) at the tomb of the risen Jesus, consider what can be gained- in spirit, in energy, and in action- when we act fearlessly. Where can you choose to act fearlessly?

Mathew also reminds us of our interconnectedness. Consider meditating on family, your faith community family, and our wider community interconnectedness as you read this [Gospel passage](#).

Finally, [Luke](#) underscores the understanding that staying is abiding, which Jesus’ parables amplify starkly. How can we stay and abide in our lives?

Chapter 9: *The Fastest Route*

Reflection Questions

1. Boyle opens the chapter with a powerful image of a heavily tattooed homie in a graduation gown, taking a selfie and weeping in front of a mausoleum (194). Everyone watching the scene play out felt the singular loneliness of the moment, which both increased their empathy and deepened their understanding of interconnection. Can you recall a moment when you felt a sudden connection to someone, even someone you don't know, or a moment that poignantly highlighted our interconnectedness? What did that moment teach you? How can we embody "that unifying cloak of God, and us, us and each other," moving forward?
2. Where do you go to find community, cherishing, belonging, the "heartbeat of God" (197)? Where can you nurture a culture of encounter (199)? What does that space look or feel like? What spaces offer you this opportunity that you haven't yet entered? What spaces can you help to develop to create this godly belonging, and even foster a 'frequency of tenderness' yourself (199)?
3. Boyle revisits wounds and fear, which trap us into self-absorption and disconnection. He notes, "We don't have enemies, we have injuries... We don't have hate, we have wounds. And really, we don't have fear. We only have the shared ruin of our common, human brokenness" (198). We've thought about this a lot in this text. If you had to pick an injury or wound to prioritize healing, which do you bring forth as most important to address?
4. Boyle opens and closes the chapter with an Arundhati Roy quote: "Another world is not only possible; she is on her way. On a quiet day, I can hear her breathing" (210). In the quiet moments of your soul, what world do you see coming? For what do you hope?

For Further Reflection:

As you read John's interpretation of the [First Disciples of Jesus](#) (Jn 1:35-51) consider how the movement began. How were disciples summoned? How did they respond? What were their expectations? Was there joy? What do their responses to the call signal as paths for our conversion and discipleship? To where, what, or whom are you feeling called?