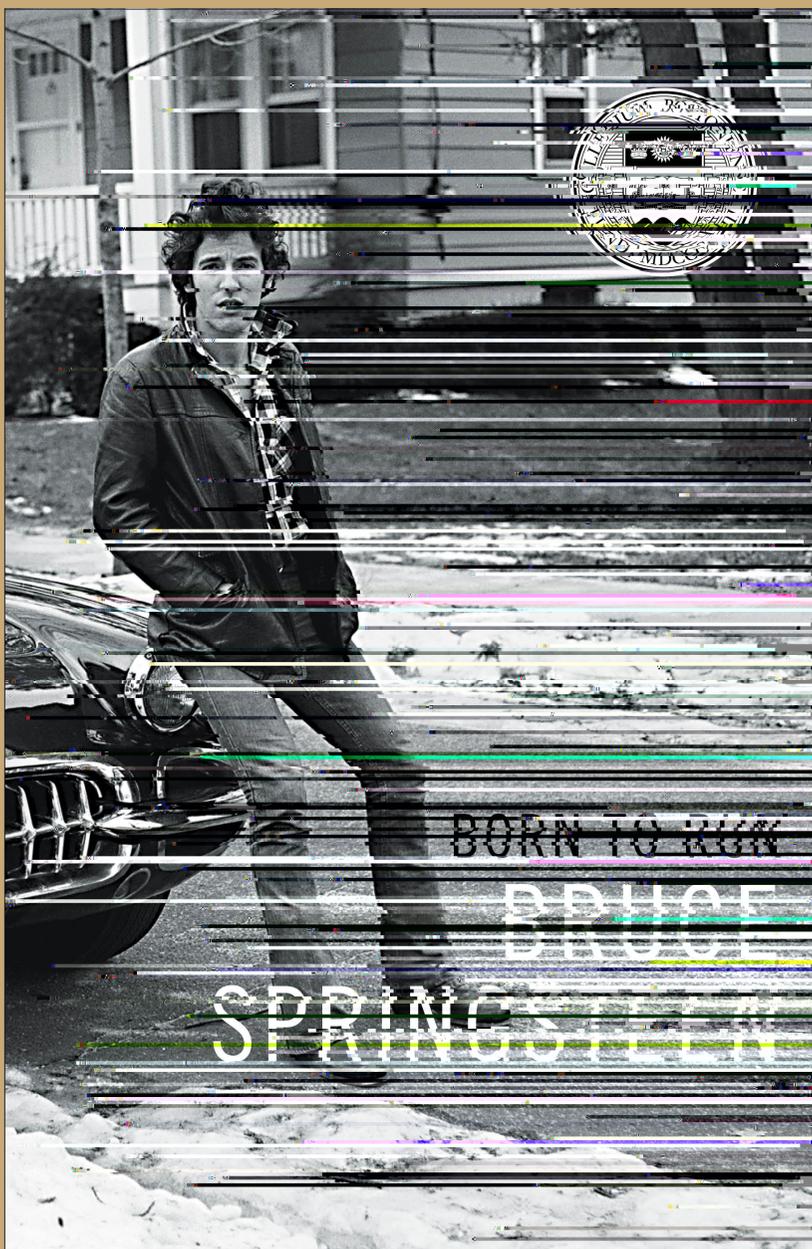


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AB E F C E

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“But a book has two advantages over a tweet. First, the person who wrote it thought about it a lot more carefully. The book is the result of his solitude, his attempt to think for himself.

Second, most books are old. This is not a disadvantage: this is precisely what makes them valuable. They stand against the conventional wisdom of today simply because they’re not from today. Even if they merely reflect the conventional wisdom of their own day, they say something different from what you hear all the time. But the great books, the ones you find on a syllabus, the ones people have continued to read, don’t reflect the conventional wisdom of their day. They say things that have the permanent power to disrupt our habits of thought.” [2]

Cultivating habits of thought. That’s what coming to BC is offering you. Some habits can and should be digital, connected, and even multi-tasked. But sometimes we all need the habit of opening a good book, diving in, and leaving the din of our contemporary moment, temporarily, behind.

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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 *T C I T : A C*
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A A A AC E E

Jesuit theologian and author Walter J. Burghardt, S.J. describes contemplation as a long, loving look at the real. In *B R*, Bruce Springsteen shares how over his lifetime he has taken a long, loving look at the real things in his life – his family, his faith, his work, his relationships, his music – and how that reflection has influenced the way he has continued to engage in the world around him. Through his candor about the lessons learned on his journey, Springsteen encourages his readers to develop the same principles of contemplation and action.

As you enter into this Jesuit, Catholic University, 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 2024, your conversation will include this book which invites you to consider the importance of reflection on your experiences and your story and how that reflection informs how you engage with the world around you.

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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.

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As part of this formation, St. Ignatius and his companions established guiding principles to cultivate a reflective practice among their students which is integrated with the way we live in the world. These same reflective principles of contemplation and action provide the framework for today's Boston College experience.

As you read *B* *R*

In reflecting back on his life's journey, Springsteen talks about his search for his identity – from his experience of family, faith, work, relationships – and how he discovered much of his identity through his music, “When the world is at its best, when we are at our best, when life feels fullest” (p. 236). He writes that his music became

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 early June, 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 will take against racism – both personal and systemic.

In a recent interview in *The Atlantic* with David Brooks (whose book *The Road to Character* was the focal point of *Conversations in the First Year* in 2015 and who addressed the Class of 2019 that Fall), Springsteen talks about how his experiences compelled him to take a deeper look at the issue of racism, to find a more loving response to the world around him: “...as I started on this record, *Darkness on the Edge of Town*, I said, I want to turn the car around. I want to go back to my neighborhood, and I want to understand the structural issues, personal issues, social issues that are pressing down hard on the people I’m writing about and

Throughout the book, Springsteen shares examples of difficult



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The goal of Jesuit education is to produce men and women for whom discernment is a habit.

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 115, 117)

The reflective practice of the Examen is one that Rev. Anthony Penna, Boston College's Associate Vice President for Mission and Ministry and Director of Campus Ministry, prayed that a recent graduating class would take with them from Boston College into the world.

Just before Commencement he offered these words to them:

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We renew his prayer for the Class of 2024 as you begin your time here at Boston College.

As you enter Boston College, you must consider how we live in the

