

words

Words to Live By

words

“What does God want me to do with my life?”

Conversations by Jim Scholl

I am celebrating a five-year anniversary in May. No, it is not the celebration of a wedding or marriage proposal. It's the anniversary of when I began working and living in first-year residence halls at Jesuit universities. “Why consider celebrating five years of being in a residence hall? All that noise, all those adolescents running around— isn't it crazy?” Yes, it is crazy. But, look deeper and you will find something truly special. You will find “God at work in all things.” Perhaps the best way to describe this is an encounter I had with a student in January. He came to me with concerns about his housing placement for the fall 2009 semester. About 30 minutes into our conversation, he shared his experiences about his Jesuit high school, how much he loved the Jesuits he had encountered, and how he was forever changed by his Jesuit education.

“Where am I supposed to be?” another student asked me in a conversation concerning his struggle with fitting in. “What does God want me to do with my life?” Listening to questions like these and being in conversations with college freshmen, I have also found myself looking deeper into who I am and where God is in my life. These conversations are that powerful. They are the moments where I find myself fully alive and most in sync with God.

Six years is a long time to be in college. During my time at two Jesuit colleges I have learned a lot. But, perhaps it was in these conversations with students where I learned



Some of the Boston College Fitzpatrick Hall first-floor residents (taken in September 2008) who recently began their college experience as members of the class of 2012. Jim is in the front row, on the left.

the most. Conversations are special. We need to embrace them, treasure them, and know that in them God is present and listening. St. Ignatius writes “... give me only Your love and Your grace, and I am rich enough and ask for nothing more.” I cannot ask for anything more from my Jesuit education. The students I have encountered have taught me so much. They have educated me far beyond what any traditional college classroom experience can.

At the end of this year, having completed my master's degree, I will leave the residence halls and the students I have come to know so well. In leaving, I know that the conversations will always continue. And with it, countless others will be able to experience the power of a simple conversation where they too can “find God in all things.”

Jim Scholl was a resident assistant at Fairfield University and is currently a peer minister at Boston College where he is completing his master's degree in higher education administration in the Lynch School of Education. He credits the Jesuits and lay staff of the Fairfield University and Boston College campus ministry and residential life programs for their inspiration to be a continuing pastoral presence to first-year college students. Jim is a member of the Jesuit Connection leadership council, the young adult group sponsored by the New England Province.