

LOST SOULS

by

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EXT. ST. MALACHY'S CHURCH - CHICAGO - 1930'S

VITO KENDRICK splashes through puddles. Behind him, sirens get louder. So do the dogs barking as they close in on their prey. Kendrick spins around and desperately looks for any means of escape. A dim light illuminates the entrance to a small, white church.

Kendrick heads straight for it. Bullets fly as the police cry for him to stop. His back and shoulder sting but he keeps going. Kendrick tosses the gate aside, stumbles up the path, and shoves the doors. They are locked. Cops run up and draw their guns.

KENDRICK
Sanctuary! Please sanctuary!

A police officer runs up, gun drawn.

COP
Vito Kendrick! You are under
arrest!

Kendrick pulls the gun from his holster.

He shoots and the cops return fire. Bullets tear into his body. Kendrick's gun falls from his hands and he tumbles down the stairs. He lies dead and lifeless at the foot of the House of God.

EXT. ST. MALACHY'S CHURCH - PRESENT DAY

Hid if among a street of tall three-floor apartment buildings on a tree-lined street. A high black fence cuts it off from the rest of the block. Before the church is an unkempt yard. The church itself is a two floor wood and stone structure that looks as if it hadn't been painted in years.

INSERT - SIGN

St. Malachy's Church. 'All are welcome here'.

BACK TO FATHER JOHN

A young priest, FATHER JOHN WALTERS, looks between the bars of the fence. He looks at a small piece of paper, and pulls a key from his pocket. There are weeds everywhere. A large, overgrown tree shades the front steps up to the door.

FATHER JOHN
Some reward. Anyway. All it needs
is some good Christian love and
attention.

The key drops from his hand. As he bends over to pick it up, the door to the church opens. The young priest straightens up. His eyes strain to pierce the darkness. He slips the key back into his pocket. Puzzled he enters.

INT. ST. MALACHY'S CHURCH

His eyes soon become adjusted to the dark. Putting his suitcase down just inside the door, Father John walks into the Sanctuary. It is a small church with maybe thirty rows of pews in the nave. As he walks toward the altar, a cold wind brushes past him making him shiver. He looks over the top of the altar. For a disused church, he notices that the chalice and wafer plate are polished and shiny and that there doesn't seem to be any dust anywhere.

FATHER JOHN
Hello. Is anyone here?

MARIE (V.O.)
Yes, Father, I'm here.

It is a female voice, sounding aged and worn, but with a strong Irish brogue. The priest strains to see against the meager light being let in by the stained glass windows, but he can't see anyone.

FATHER JOHN
Hello? Who's there?

Suddenly the large altar candle by his right hand catches light. Father John jumps back.

MARIE (V.O.)
Sorry to frighten you, Father.
Thought you could use more light.

The priest steps around the altar and notices above is a hanging figure of Jesus impaled on the Cross. The priest feels the cool breeze again.

Frightened, he runs back to the door for his suitcase. It's gone. He looks around frantically.

Father John sees his bags fly toward a hallway off the sanctuary.

INT. HALLWAY

Running after it, he enters a hallway with many doors. The suitcase is nowhere to be seen. Suddenly he hears a tinkling

noise from the room on his right. He opens the first door to his right and enters. He flicks the switch.

INT. SACRISTY

It is a small plainly painted room sparsely furnished except for a table, chair, and the Sacristy's standing closet. His suitcase sits open on a chair nearby. Father John walks over to the closet. Inside, all of his religious vestments have been neatly hung up. Father John notices the scent of perfume.

FATHER JOHN

It's sweet. Hello?

MARIE

Hello, Father. My name is Marie.

She appears off to his right. Father John blinks his eyes and starts to back away. MARIE is an Irish woman in her fifties. Her hair is pulled back in a bun and she is wearing a long dress that covers her ankles.

MARIE

I'd like to welcome you here. You have nothing to be afraid of.

FATHER JOHN

Thank you, uh, ma'am.

MARIE

Bless your heart. I'd never hurt anyone.

She walks over and closes the closet doors.

MARIE

I just keep the church up and going because I love it so. If you need anything, all you have to do is ask. Oh, heavens. I can't stand here yakking all day. Too much cleaning to do. If I don't do it, no one will. Bye, Father.

FATHER JOHN

Thank you, Marie.

MARIE

You're welcome, Father. Hope you're happy here. Call on me if you need anything.

And with that she disappears. Father John takes a couple of steps back and swallows.

FATHER JOHN
Well, I guess, good help is hard to find.

INT. CHURCH SANCTUARY

Father John stumbles back into the Sanctuary looking around and turns and stumbles into BISHOP FLANAGAN, Bishop for the Archdiocese of Chicago.

FATHER JOHN
(BOWING)
Sorry, Bishop. Your eminence. Your grace.

*

FLANAGAN
Get up. Calm down, John. Everything going alright?

FATHER JOHN
Yes. Um. Yes Sir.

Father John grabs a prayerbook from a pew. Bishop Flanagan grabs his arm.

INT. CHURCH OFFICE

Bishop Flanagan shows Father John to his office and sits him behind. Bishop Flanagan takes Father John's briefcase and puts it on the desk.

FATHER JOHN
I would like to thank you for the pot luck dinner. The money for the church. I promise to do my best to revive--

FLANAGAN
Don't worry, my son, you will, you will.

Bishop Flanagan turns to leave. As he opens the door to the office, he turns back.

FLANAGAN
If you need anything or see anything strange, you will let me know, John, won't you?

Bishop Flanagan leaves closing the door behind himself.

INT. CHURCH SANCTUARY

THE CHURCH ORGANIST sits down at the church organ and begins to play. As she plays as the buttons and settings reset themselves. She resets them. As she puts her hands on the keys, a different pedal goes down. She hits another pedal. No sound. The keyboard begins to play without her touching. Frustrated, she stands up.

ORGANIST

Damn. Not again, George! I am trying to rehearse!

The activity of the organ ceases. She takes her seat again and stretches out her hands to play and the organ starts by itself again. The organist rises and stomps off.

INT. CHURCH OFFICE

As Father John starts to straighten the desk and add his on things to the top of it, the Organist swings the door open. Stopping to pull herself up to her full height, she walks over to the desk.

FATHER JOHN

Hello. I am Father John Walters.

ORGANIST

I quit.

FATHER JOHN

Excuse me.

ORGANIST

I quit. You're going to need a new organist. Better yet, let him do it.

FATHER JOHN

Let who do it?

ORGANIST

George can't seem to let we'll enough alone. Sorry. Good luck, Father.

She leaves.

He removes his Bible and two full notebooks. The office is plainly set with an old wooden desk and chairs.

On the wall behind the desk is a fading large framed photograph of Pope Pius XII. Father Jon takes the picture down and replaces it with a smaller picture from his bag of Pope Benedict XVI.

On opening a drawer to put his things away, he discovers it is filled with someone else's belongings. An old desk plaque reads "From The Desk of Monsignor Angus O'Flaherty."

Next, he takes out a Bible and opens it. It's inscribed, "To Monsignor O'Flaherty for many years of service. From the Sisterhood of St. Malachy's."

However, before he can turn a page, the Bible is yanked out of his hands. He looks up and the figure of an old priest materializes with the Bible in his extended right hand while slamming his old banged-up wooden cane on the desk with his right.

MONSIGNOR O'FLAHERTY

Who said you could touch my things?

FATHER JOHN

I'm...I'm not afraid of you.

MONSIGNOR O'FLAHERTY

They could have given an older man my post. Especially after the last one. But I suppose all the old ones know about this place.

FATHER JOHN

Be...Be..Besides. This is my office now.

MONSIGNOR O'FLAHERTY

So it is. Sorry, Father. Keep forgetting I'm dead. Monsignor Angus O'Flaherty. This used to my parish. But that changed when that drunk driver killed George and I.

FATHER JOHN

George Who?

INT. CAR ON AN INTERSTATE - MEMORY HIT

George Christos and Monsignor O'Flaherty argue. George is behind the wheel and driving through a blinding snowstorm.

MONSIGNOR O'FLAHERTY

Can't you drive any faster? We'll miss Christmas mass.

GEORGE

You're the head priest. They can't start it with out you.

MONSIGNOR O'FLAHERTY

What the hell is that?

GEORGE

Idiot driver going too fast in this weather.

A car swerves over the median. They scream as the side of the car crashes into them head on.

BACK TO SCENE

MONSIGNOR O'FLAHERTY

The church organist. She's right. He never knows to leave that organ alone.

Monsignor O'Flaherty hands the bible back to Father John. He hesitantly takes it back.

MONSIGNOR O'FLAHERTY

So who are you?

FATHER JOHN

Father...John Walters.

MONSIGNOR O'FLAHERTY

An Englishman! Not in my church!

FATHER JOHN

Look are you going to be nice about this? And please remove you cane from my desk.

MONSIGNOR O'FLAHERTY

Why should I?

FATHER JOHN

Because I could use some help with my first homily.

MONSIGNOR O'FLAHERTY

God helps those who help themselves.

FATHER JOHN

Thanks for the advice, your grace.

Father John opens his top drawer. As takes out a load of papers, the drawer slams shut. He looks up. Monsignor O'Flaherty sits on the desk next to him.

MONSIGNOR O'FLAHERTY
I told you not to do that.

FATHER JOHN
No disrespect but this is my office.

MONSIGNOR O'FLAHERTY
It will be my office again as soon as you leave.

Father John pushes his chair back, stands up, and stares him straight in the eye.

FATHER JOHN
I'm not leaving. Face it. You're stuck with me.

MONSIGNOR O'FLAHERTY
The Irish never surrendered to the English. Besides, I know all about your Bishop. Knew him when he used to wet the bed at Bible Camp.

FATHER JOHN
Are you done?

MONSIGNOR O'FLAHERTY
Yes, your grace. Have a good time delivering a sermon in front of nobody.

Monsignor O'Flaherty vanishes. Father John's backbone sags and he sits back into the chair. The phone rings.

FATHER JOHN
Hello.

FLANAGAN
Is there something wrong, my boy?

FATHER JOHN
Sorry, Bishop. You were right about this place being a little weird but I think I can make a go of it.

FLANAGAN
Good boy. That's what I wanted to hear.

FATHER JOHN

Bishop, I would like to have a meeting with you tomorrow to discuss an idea. I'd like to run an Open House to better get people back to the parish.

FLANAGAN

No reason to have a meeting, John. I trust your judgement.

As Father John hangs up the phone, he hears a child laughing. He looks up to see a little boy's face peeking in the door. The boy, MICHAEL BROWN, has a large grin showing off his cracked teeth. Father John tries to say "hello" and gets up extends his hand, but the little boy only grins and slowly fades away.

INT. ARCHDIOCESE OFFICES

The Bishop hangs up the phone. A church SECRETARY, jots down a note, hangs up her phone, and walks over to him taking \$10 out of a hand bag.

SECRETARY

Put me down for 72 hours.

The Bishop makes a note in his little pad.

MEMORY HIT - IMAGE FROM ST. MALACHY'S PAST

Bishop Flanagan picks up the phone. It is a PRIEST FROM ST. MALACHY'S.

FLANAGAN

Hello, my son.

PRIEST (O.S.)

Bishop? Please. I...I can't take it anymore. Please move me. God preserve us. You don't know what it's like here,

FLANAGAN

Now calm down, Steven. Come to my office. We'll talk about a new assignment.

PRIEST

God bless you, Bishop.

Bishop Flanagan hangs up and check his book.

FLANAGAN
Only one week this time. How
profitable.

BACK TO SCENE

Flanagan looks at his little book.

FLANAGAN
Yes. How profitable.

INT. CHURCH SANCTUARY

Father John enters the sanctuary and notices that one of the
door on a confessional is closed. Sighing, Father John enters
the other side and draws the curtain.

INT. CONFESSIONAL

Father John slides the inner door back.

MRS. THOMAS
Forgive me, Father, for I have
sinned. It has been a week since my
last confession.

FATHER JOHN
Which of God's children are you, my
dear?

MRS. THOMAS
Mrs. Marguerite Thomas. Widow these
30 years since the Lord called my
Henry to his bosom.

FATHER JOHN
So you are flesh and blood?

MRS. THOMAS
Yes, are you? You don't sound like
his grace.

FATHER JOHN
I am Father John Walters. Very
human.

MRS. THOMAS
Good. For a minute I thought I was
losing my mind. Monsignor
O'Flaherty usually hears --

FATHER JOHN
O'Flaherty? But he's --

MRS. THOMAS
Yes, Father. He's dead. A ghost.
But I don't hold that against him.
He has been my pastor for odd on 30
years now. One gets used to things
staying the same.

Father John shivers as a cold chill passes through him.

FATHER JOHN
I do not know how to contact him.
Would like me to hear your
confession?

MRS. THOMAS
Yes, father. I do like Monsignor
O'Flaherty, but he can be rather
severe and cynical at times. But he
is unlike the other ghosts...well,
it is like my dear Irish mama would
say, be nice to others and they'll
be nice to you.

FATHER JOHN
Is that how I should handle the
ghosts?

MRS. THOMAS
Have they done anything for you not
to do that? Father, I have used
some bad words this week and taken
the Lord's name in vain twice when
I have tripped and once when I
stubbed my foot good and hard. For
these sins, I ask forgiveness.

FATHER JOHN
For these grave sins...I ask
penance.

MRS. THOMAS
Yes, father.

FATHER JOHN
Do you bake?

MRS. THOMAS
Father? Yes, father, but very few
of my children come around anymore.
They used to love my chocolate chip
cookies.

FATHER JOHN

Fine. I am having an Open House in three weeks to reintroduce the church to the community.

MRS. THOMAS

That's wonderful, Father. How may I serve my penance?

FATHER JOHN

You will ask God to forgive you...

MRS. THOMAS

Yes, Father.

FATHER JOHN

While baking a few dozen chocolate chip cookies for the Open House and helping out during the event.

MRS. THOMAS

Yes, Father.

FATHER JOHN

And say your rosary three times, before going to bed.

MRS. THOMAS

Yes, Father.

Both emerge from the confessional.

FATHER JOHN

Hope you will be on Sunday when I give my first sermon, ma'am.

MRS. THOMAS

Mrs. Thomas, please, Father. Noon on Sunday?

FATHER JOHN

Yes.

MRS. THOMAS

Until then, Father.

She turns back.

MRS. THOMAS

Remember. If you are nice to them, they will be nice to you.

Father John watches as Mrs. Thomas leaves the sanctuary.

MONSIGNOR O'FLAHERTY
Old biddy. I am never too severe.

Father John turns to see the materialized Monsignor O'Flaherty.

FATHER JOHN
You were listening weren't you,
Father?

MONSIGNOR O'FLAHERTY
This is my parish. You call that
sacred? Who ever heard of a penance
in chocolate chip cookies? And why
didn't you tell me about the Open
House?

FATHER JOHN
For what? So you can belittle that
like you've done everything else
since I got here?

MONSIGNOR O'FLAHERTY
You want to replace the ghosts with
live humans.

FATHER JOHN
Not replace. But can you blame for
wanting to add people to a church?
Can you tithe, Father? Do you earn
anything to keep this church going?

With a flash and a blast of cold wind, Monsignor O'Flaherty vanishes almost knocking Father John backwards into a pew.

The organ begins to play by itself again. Strains of "Amazing Grace". Father John rushes up to the organ.

FATHER JOHN
Oh, no. I don't need problems with
that just now.

When he gets to the organ, GEORGE CHRISTOS, the late church organist, materializes and breaks into a chorus of "The Toreador Song" from the opera, "Carmen".

GEORGE
Hello, Father. I have full
confidence in you.

FATHER JOHN
Gee, thanks and you are?

GEORGE

The reason your organist quit on you. I'm George Christos. I was organist when Angus was a living pain in the patoot. Sorry. That's Monsignor O'Flaherty. He likes the old ways. Me? I do my best to keep up with the times when I can.

He starts to play a modern song.

GEORGE

The Open House is a great idea. You should do it.

FATHER JOHN

Thanks.

GEORGE

Don't forget to ask Marie to help. What that woman can do to cake and pies. She makes an Angel Food cake make you want to slap your sister or is it a sister, I forget.

George jump up and breaks into a course of "Great Gosh Almighty", kicking the organ bench so it skids back on its wheels.

FATHER JOHN

Whoa. Whoa. Hold it, George. I need some music for Sunday. Do you think you can come with some more...you know..liturgical.

George pulls the bench back.

GEORGE

Okay, but I get to have a good time at the Open House. You can tell the humans, you have a player organ.

FATHER JOHN

Deal and please no Jerry Lee Lewis antics in church.

GEORGE

Oh, OK Father. Please to meet you, your grace.

And with a chuckle, he vanishes.

INT. RECTORY

Father John is asleep in his small cell room. Above his head, a picture of the Virgin Mary looks down upon him as if to keep an eye on him as he sleeps.

Gunshots. Screams. Father John wakes with a start and jumps out of bed. He throws his bathrobe on and rushes downstairs into the sanctuary.

EXT. CHURCH

Kendrick lays dying at the foot of the stairs. Father John runs over to him. The police's lights blind Father John. Kendrick reaches for his robe.

KENDRICK

Help me, Father. I have sinned.
Sanctuary.

With Kendrick's last word, all the ghostly scene fades away leaving Father John in the street alone.

EXT. STREETS OF WRIGLEYVILLE

Father John jogs through the Wrigleyville neighborhood. He wishes folks 'good morning' and invites them to the church on Sunday.

INT. CHURCH SANCTUARY

Father John enters the church and starts slow jogging and "cooling down". Marie's voice asks him what he wants for breakfast. This stops Father John cold.

FATHER JOHN

Um. Pancakes?

MARIE

I'll bring it to your office.

FATHER JOHN

Thanks.

He kneels in one of the pews and begins to pray.

INT. CHURCH KITCHEN

Eggs and butter fly out of the refrigerator. A box of pancake mix flies out of the pantry.

All land lightly on a counter next to the stove. A frying pan flies off a hook and lands in the materialized hand of Marie. She places the pan on the stove and turns on the gas. She looks up and starts. O'Flaherty is leaning over her.

MONSIGNOR O'FLAHERTY

Who's that for?

MARIE

The young father. He needs food to keep his strength up.

MONSIGNOR O'FLAHERTY

So send him to Burger King.

MARIE

No doin'! Why I still have strength in my hands --

MONSIGNOR O'FLAHERTY

You mean while you can still move earthly objects.

MARIE

All due respect, but why do you always have to be like this?

MONSIGNOR O'FLAHERTY

Like what?

MARIE

Like an old stick in the mud. He's younger than you are and more importantly, he's a living human. That might help bring people back to the church. Souls to the son of God.

MONSIGNOR O'FLAHERTY

I can be less a stick in the mud when he goes.

MARIE

And what if we don't want him to go?

MONSIGNOR O'FLAHERTY

We who?

MARIE

Me and George and Michael.

MONSIGNOR O'FLAHERTY
 Michael? That silly child wouldn't
 even be a ghost if he didn't fall
 out of the choir loft.

MARIE
 Still say the sweet boy was pushed.

MONSIGNOR O'FLAHERTY
 It was monkey business. Those boys
 were always monkeying around up
 there. And as for George --

George materializes in a chair.

GEORGE
 No, Michael can be a nuisance, but
 this Father John -- I like him. I
 hope he succeeds and further I am
 going to help him, Angus.

MONSIGNOR O'FLAHERTY
 You are both cracked. You'll see as
 soon as he gets the humans in,
 we'll be out.

INT. CHURCH OFFICE

Father John sits at his desk working on his sermon when a
 tray of pancakes and a pot of coffee floats in the door and
 sits itself on the desk. Father John carefully moves his
 stuff over and pulls the tray in front of himself. He places
 the napkin on his lap.

FATHER JOHN
 For the bounty we are about to
 receive may we be truly grateful.
 AMEN.

Father John picks up a fork and smells the delicious odors.

FATHER JOHN
 And thank you, Marie.

Marie's face appears in the door way, she watches him eat,
 smiles, and fades away.

INT. HALLWAY IN FRONT OF CHURCH OFFICE

Footsteps. Jangle of metal. More footsteps.

INT. CHURCH OFFICE

Father John looks up from his breakfast. Quiet. He continues eating and working on his sermon.

INT. HALLWAY IN FRONT OF CHURCH OFFICE

The shadow of a large hand raises an even larger looking wrench is seen on the wall. Cautious steps. A hand reaches for the door knob. The door to the office creaks as it slowly opens. Wielding the wrench in his upstretched hand, CHRIS, springs in the room.

INT. CHURCH OFFICE

Chris wields the wrench as high as he can.

CHRIS

We need no more spectres here. Who are you?

Father John pushes himself away from the desk rolling back in his chair.

FATHER JOHN

Okay now. Put that thing down. My name is Father John Walters. And I'm real. I'm the new parish priest. Please put down the wrench. Now I know we can handle this calmly and like adults.

Chris lowers the wrench, calmly walks back to the hall and drags his toolbox back into the office. He tosses the wrench inside.

CHRIS

I'm really sorry, Father. This place gets on your nerves after awhile.

He extends his hand.

CHRIS

My Christian name is Christopher but they call me Chris. I do small jobs around here for the Diocese. Try to keep the place from falling in on itself.

FATHER JOHN
Thank you Chris and God bless you.

CHRIS
All in my duty, Father.

FATHER JOHN
How long have you served here?

CHRIS
Since the days of Monsignor
O'Flaherty. His lordship was a good
man but could be a pain in the ass
if you know what I mean.

FATHER JOHN
I think I can relate. Chris, I
need some help with this Open House
I am planning to get the church
back on its feet.

CHRIS
Anything you need, Father.

FATHER JOHN
Good. Come by later and we will
discuss details.

Chris says and he will, grabs his tool box, bids Father John
farewell and leaves. O'Flaherty materializes.

MONSIGNOR O'FLAHERTY
Pain in the ass am I?

FATHER JOHN
Is there a private conversation of
mine you won't listen to?

MONSIGNOR O'FLAHERTY
No. This is my church and as you
for you --

FATHER JOHN
Yes.

MONSIGNOR O'FLAHERTY
I don't remember approving you
doing an Open House here.

FATHER JOHN
I don't need your approval.

MONSIGNOR O'FLAHERTY

And what are we supposed to do while complete strangers tramp about messing up the place? Marie is a ghost not a work horse.

FATHER JOHN

Excuse me, your grace, but this church was built so humans, not spirits, could find salvation before going to the great beyond or have you forgotten that? I want to bring people back to the church. This is a way to do that.

MONSIGNOR O'FLAHERTY

No. You want to take our home from us. If you were a parishioner looking for a new parish, would you choose on that's haunted? You think other humans are going to want us here?

FATHER JOHN

Mrs. Thomas --

MONSIGNOR O'FLAHERTY

Mrs. Thomas is an old biddy who's too lazy to go somewhere else.

FATHER JOHN

I am holding the Open House. You can help or stay out of the way.

MONSIGNOR O'FLAHERTY

See you are ashamed of us.

FATHER JOHN

No. Not ashamed. George is helping me. Marie is going to bake --

MONSIGNOR O'FLAHERTY

And what about me?

FATHER JOHN

You don't want me to do it. You'll probably skulk about in the shadows hoping I'll fail. You'll have a good time.

MONSIGNOR O'FLAHERTY

I'll behave. But we will see. We will see.

INT. CHURCH SANCTUARY - THAT NIGHT

Gunshots and screams. Father John runs and stumbles barely dressed toward the front doors as if a powerful force is pulling him forward. He falls into the front doors and bursts them open practically flying forth onto the steps.

EXT. CHURCH

Kendrick runs forward from the cops in hot pursuit. Father John picks himself off the ground kneeling over and brushing himself off and looking for blood on his leg. Kendrick firing back at the cops trips back over the priest.

KENDRICK

What the--

Behind him the door to the church is open. He tries to shoot over the priest's head. Father John hits the dirt and covers his head. Kendrick gets onto his feet and runs into the church door. The priest looks up.

KENDRICK

Sanctuary, Father. Sanctuary.

Bullets whizz by Father John and into the sanctuary. The cop calls the others to stand down. Father John jumps up surprised by what he has just done.

FATHER JOHN

No.

COP

What the hell are you doing?

KENDRICK

Go away, coppers. I got my sanctuary. I'm not dying again tonight or any other night.

The cops get back into their ghost cars.

COP

We'll be waiting, Kendrick.

Kendrick steps back into the church.

COP

Hope you can live with what you've done, Padre. But if you need us we'll be waiting. Anytime... C'mon on fellas.

The cops cars disappear into the fog of the night.

KENDRICK
 (laughing)
 Run you pigs. Run.

INT. CHURCH SANCTUARY

KENDRICK
 Gee thanks, Padre. Couldn't have
 done it without you. It's been a
 real drag getting bumped off every
 night.

Kendrick struts down the aisle toward the pulpit. Father John
 stumbles into the sanctuary dazed and very confused.

FATHER JOHN
 What happened?

KENDRICK
 I pulled you down to save me. You
 did so much better than I thought
 you would. This is great!

FATHER JOHN
 But you can't stay...

KENDRICK
 What, Padre?

FATHER JOHN
 You can stay here?

KENDRICK
 What do you mean I can't stay here.

(SCREAMS)
 Sanctuary!

His voice echoes through the church.

FATHER JOHN
 But I am having an Open House.
 Bringing congregates back to the
 church.

KENDRICK
 What's that Padre?

FATHER JOHN
 Stop calling me, Padre. I'm
 Father...Father John Walters.

KENDRICK

Sorry Padre, I mean, Father. Been dying every night. Long time since I used the manners my mama gave me.

FATHER JOHN

Please...please I can't deal with this now. Please just stay out of sight.

KENDRICK

I'm free. For the first time in a long time. I'm free.

MONSIGNOR O'FLAHERTY

It's not bad enough that dumb lummox gets killed every night. No. You had to let Satan's little helper go free.

O'Flaherty appears just behind Father John's shoulder.

FATHER JOHN

You don't understand. You can't stay here. You have to go.

KENDRICK

The minute I step out that door the pigs got me. No doin'!

MONSIGNOR O'FLAHERTY

What he is trying to say--

FATHER JOHN

I know what I am trying to say! Look, um --

KENDRICK

Kendrick. Vito Kendrick.

FATHER JOHN

Kendrick. Smendrick. Right now I don't care if your Al Capone or Bugsy Malone. You can stay or you can you go. But I am telling you. No I am telling both of you. I'm having this open house. The Bishop sent me here to make this church live again and I'm going to do it. If either of you tries to ruin it, I'll...I'll...I'll exorcise you blasphemous creatures to Kingdom Come.

KENDRICK

I am not a blasphemouse or any other
kind of mouse. And I'm staying.
Sanctuary!

Everything in the church shakes as Kendrick vanishes.
O'Flaherty scowls and fades slowly away and Father John
stalks back into the rectory.

EXT. CHURCH

The front of the church is decorated with many balloons,
ribbons, and bows. On the grass in front sits a placard. It
reads: "St. Malachy's Open House. Everybody Welcome!"

INT. CHURCH SANCTUARY

FIVE NUNS and two former classmates of Father John, FATHER
EDDIE MICHAELS and FATHER ANTHONY SARBONI rush about making
the final preparations. Chris helps Father John bring out the
last of the baked goods. Mrs. Thomas is standing next to the
buffet table make sure everything has flowers around it, is
beautiful and well organized. Father John calls them all
together.

FATHER JOHN

God bless you all. Thank you my
friends for coming together on this
glorious day when we rededicate
this church to learning of Jesus
and the love of men and women for
one another.

He glances at his watch.

FATHER JOHN

It is 11 o'clock. Everything ready.
So here we go.

Father John goes to the front door of and flings them open
with a loud "Welcome". No one's there. He turns back to the
small group.

FATHER JOHN

OK It is going to be a little slow
at first.

O'Flaherty appears just inside the door.

MONSIGNOR O'FLAHERTY

What did you expect? Adoring
throngs banging down the doors.
(MORE)

MONSIGNOR O'FLAHERTY (cont'd)
 This is a church, not Graceland. Or
 is a blasphemouse like me not
 supposed to speak to you o great
 Cardinal Walters.

FATHER JOHN
 Don't be silly, Father.

MONSIGNOR O'FLAHERTY
 Oh it's Father now. Don't worry
 about me. My best revenge will be
 watching you fall on your fat face.

Father John heads back to the group, and O'Flaherty follows.

MONSIGNOR O'FLAHERTY
 Are those your little seminary
 chums? How sweet. What are the nuns
 for? A production of "Carmina
 Burana"?

FATHER JOHN
 (mumbles)
 No. "The Sound of Music".

One of the nuns, SISTER MARY ADELAIDE, looks up.

SISTER ADELAIDE
 Did you say something, Father?

FATHER JOHN
 No, Sister. Just a muscle spasm.
 Forced speech. I've had it since my
 class stayed the weekend at a
 monastery. (To O'Flaherty) You're
 only here to frighten away people

MONSIGNOR O'FLAHERTY
 What people?

Sister Adelaide heads over to Mrs. Thomas. Bishop Flanagan
 walks into the church and greets Father John. He introduces
 himself to Monsignor O'Flaherty.

MONSIGNOR O'FLAHERTY
 You can see me?

FATHER JOHN
 Bishop, there's something about him
 you don't know.

MONSIGNOR O'FLAHERTY
 So you're his boss. Well thank you
 for sending him here.

O' Flaherty vanishes in front of the Bishop's eyes. Bishop Flanagan stumbles a few steps backward and Father John grabs him from falling.

FLANAGAN

He's a --

FATHER JOHN

The former pastor here. A long time ago. Still serving God and that's all that matters.

FLANAGAN

But --

FATHER JOHN

The ghosts are fine. One even baked cakes for this event. If we are nice to them, they will be nice to us. This isn't "The Amityville Horror". You're perfectly safe. Besides if your really good maybe I can talk the nuns into doing some "Sound of Music". Let me get you a cookie. I stole one earlier. They are delicious.

Father John leaves the Bishop and walks over to the table. Father Sarboni walks over and tells Father John the chocolate chips cookies are gone.

FATHER JOHN

I think I know where they went.

As Father John approaches the pulpit, he hears low crunching noises. He looks under the pulpit and sees the plate's Saran Wrap cover on the ground, the plate hovering, and one cookie after another disappearing. Michael Brown materializes. He looks at Father John with puppy eyes and chocolate stains on his mouth.

FATHER JOHN

Michael...who said you could steal all the cookies?

MICHAEL

No one.

FATHER JOHN

Do you want me to tell Marie and Mrs. Thomas? Those cookies are for the new parishioners.

MICHAEL

You stole one. I saw you. I see you do a lot of things.

Father John sits next to Michael underneath the pulpit.

FATHER JOHN

Okay. You got me. I sinned. I stole a cookie. I will confess that sin. But I didn't take the whole plate of cookies for myself and not share them.

MICHAEL

Sorry. Marie doesn't bake much anymore and they smelled so good.

FATHER JOHN

Look you can have two more cookies, but I have to have the rest back. Alright?

Michael smiles and nods.

FATHER JOHN

Why don't you go see if Marie needs help in the kitchen?

MICHAEL

Father John?

FATHER JOHN

Yes.

MICHAEL

Can I have a pet? Monsignor O'Flaherty won't let me have one.

FATHER JOHN

We'll discuss that later.

Michael takes his cookies and runs off to Marie dematerializing as he goes. Father John walks back to the entrance to welcome people with the remaining cookies and a pad of paper he took from on top of the altar. One of the nuns, SISTER MARY AGNES pulls him aside.

SISTER MARY AGNES

Father, I really need to talk to you.

FATHER JOHN

Yes Sister.

SISTER MARY AGNES
 God has given me a gift of I guess
 kind of religious clairvoyance.

FATHER JOHN
 Really?

SISTER MARY AGNES
 I don't know how else to say it but
 there is more than Jesus here. I
 feel presences.

FATHER JOHN
 Sure you are just imagining...

SISTER MARY AGNES
 No, Father. Some are very nice. One
 is very grumpy. He is very
 negative, but doesn't worry me. But
 one, Father, one means great harm
 and mischief.

FATHER JOHN
 Everything is fine, Sister. It's
 all nerves. I'm nervous. Really. I
 am. Go attend to the people and
 Jesus will attend to all his flock
 and keep them safe.

SISTER MARY AGNES
 I will, Father. Just be careful.

FATHER JOHN
 God bless you, Sister.

Father John sighs as she leaves.

FATHER JOHN
 (stage whisper)
 Kendrick. Kendrick don't you dare
 do anything to spoil this.

A low voice whispers in his ear.

KENDRICK
 Apologize for calling me a
 blasphemouse.

FATHER JOHN
 I didn't call you... I was saying
 that...

KENDRICK
 All bets are off, padre.

At the front of the church, the two priests discuss seminary hi-jinx.

FATHER EDDIE MICHAELS

Do you remember the time we
switched the normal sacrificial
wine for Manischewitz?

Father John indicates the pad.

FATHER JOHN

If anyone would like information on
St. Malachy's, please leave you
name and information here.

He whispers up to the nuns so he makes sure they knew. They nod.

Spotting Father John, the priests ask him where the music is. Father John snaps his fingers and yells, "Music please." The organ comes to life of its own volition with the chords of the opening strains of "Phantom of the Opera". The whole crowd turns toward the organ. The two priests stand silent.

FATHER JOHN

Oh sorry. It recognizes my voice.

The two priests stand silent.

FATHER JOHN

What's wrong? Haven't you see a
player organ before? It works by
voice command. Amazing things we
can do in church these days.

Father John walks up to a bunch of people with pamphlets and works the crowd.

SISTER MARY AGNES

Does it always play things so, you
know, modern?

The tune ends and the organ begins to play Nirvana's "Smells Like Teen Spirit".

FATHER JOHN

Sister, we must always strive to
embrace the modern along with the
ancient and liturgical. It is part
of my strategy to rebuild this
congregation.

The Open House seems to be a success. More and more people arrive. Father John, the priest and the nuns greet people.

Marie keeps bring baked goods to the counter and Chris and Mrs. Thomas bring them to the waiting crowd. Father John shakes hands and schmoozes with the people. The pages of the membership pad start to fill up.

Monsignor O' Flaherty skulks into the shadows unseen to the humans. Marie appears behind him.

MARIE

Please be proud of him, Angus. It is a wonderful party. The food is delicious, if I do say so myself, and lots of people are signing up. Even George is having a good time.

Marie waves at George. George waves back at them only seen by them and not the humans while ripping off an old Motown tune on the pipe organ.

MONSIGNOR O'FLAHERTY

I wanted him to fall flat on his face.

MARIE

I know. And you know that's not right.

MONSIGNOR O'FLAHERTY

"I know that thou wilt bring me to death and to the house appointed for all the living.

MARIE

What Monsignor?

MONSIGNOR O'FLAHERTY

Quoting Job. Chapter 30. Verse 23. After this no one's going to want to give confession from me.

MARIE

Monsignor. Angus. Listen to me. Priest do more than hear confessions and preach sermons. You could help him. Maybe you would ascend to heaven if he fulfills your place here on earth. Teach him all you know. How to present himself.

MONSIGNOR O'FLAHERTY

Marie, I --

MARIE

If you were actually nice to him, maybe you could even mentor him. Help him not only with working with the congregation but with those big shots at the Archdiocese. You know as well as I do that Flanagan thinks he's clever and he's not. Got sick of changing his bed at Bible camp too I can tell you.

MONSIGNOR O'FLAHERTY

Sure he thought the boy would run screaming once he saw this place was haunted. Knowing him he's always takes bets on how long the lad will last.

MARIE

Well, Angus we can make him lose those bets.

MONSIGNOR O'FLAHERTY

I need to think.

CONFESSIONALS

A confessional's door creaks open and slams suddenly shut. The next confessional door does the same and so does the third. Father John excuses it as the wind. The doors open and close at random. Father John walks over. As he closes one, another opens. He locks the doors and starts to walk away. The doors shake like someone is inside trying to get out. Father John walks back to the confessional.

FATHER JOHN

(whispering)

Kendrick, Michael, whoever this is. Stop fooling around.

The shaking stops. Father John walks back to the crowd.

FATHER JOHN

Just a cold draft, folk. A cold draft that your generous contributions can fix.

Mrs. Thomas touches his arm.

MRS. THOMAS

Which ghost was it?

A breeze blows through the sanctuary. ONE WOMAN complains about it suddenly being cold. OTHERS join in on the complaint. The wind blows stronger.

Loud wrappings reverberate throughout the church

Papers and small items roll across the room.

The wicks on the ceremonial candles blow out one at a time.

The wind builds.

Nobody notices but the hanging statue of Jesus on the cross begins to glow.

FATHER JOHN

No one panic. It is probably the church's air conditioning. I'll go shut it off.

The food table starts to shake.

In four of the pies writing appears, one letter at a time spelling "Fear".

A cake explodes up like a volcano spewing lava. Then several other cakes do the same.

The chocolate chip cookies rise up off the plates and spin like Samurai stars after people in the crowd.

The crowd begins to panic.

One end of the table flips and the punch bowl and the pies go flying. Everything else comes crashing to the ground.

The bowl floats through the air and hovers over the head of Father Sarboni who is trying to keep everybody calm. It dumps on his head.

Pies fly through the air. Chris runs and gets hit on the side of the head.

Bishop O'Flaherty grabs at Mrs, Thomas and throws her behind himself but he looks back and gets hit square in the face with a pie.

Father John turns away from the front of the sanctuary and starts to walk away when he hears screams. He runs back into the sanctuary.

Women faint.

Many including the priests and nuns sink to their knees.

YELLING WOMAN
It's a miracle!

The figure glows brighter.

Father John grabs Father Tony.

FATHER ANTHONY MICHAELS
It spoke. Unintelligibly, but it spoke.

Father John looks up at the figure of Jesus. It speaks again.

KENDRICK (AS JESUS)
Go away. Get out of here. I mean...go yonder and spread the word my...uh...my children.

Father John points at the figure and commands "Jesus" (Kendrick) to "cease this blasphemy". The eyes of the statue open and his hands come off of the cross and down to the crowd.

FATHER JOHN
This must stop!

People are offended and shocked. Some start to accuse Father John of being a blasphemer and daring to deny the word and actions of the Lord. Father John runs up to the pulpit and grabs the microphone.

FATHER JOHN
Please. Please. Everyone stay calm. This is not what it seems. This is not a miracle or an act of God...(Looking up at the crucifix)
I command you to stop this evil. To cease this activity or I...or I shall exorcise you.

The crowd minus Mrs. Thomas become an angry mob and starts to advance toward the pulpit.

FATHER JOHN
Kendrick! Kendrick! Appear. I dare you to face me like a man!

The mike goes dead. The wire goes limp. Father John pulls it up to find the wire has been torn apart. He throws it aside. A loud crashing sound echoes through the church.

KENDRICK (AS JESUS)
 I sayeth on to you, what do I say,
 oh go yonder and do not bring on to
 me your own but stay away and
 bringeth them onto yourselves.

The wind blows stronger.

The latches fly up and the confessional doors slam open and shut.

Lights flicker on and off. People start to run from the church.

Father John runs in front of the podium and looks up at the figure. He grabs a crucifix off a nearby wall and thrusts it up toward the statue.

FATHER JOHN
 I order you to cease this
 blasphemy!

The crucifix flies from his hand.

Water spews from the baptismal font.

The eyes of the statue open and his mouth opens.

FATHER JOHN
 This must stop!

KENDRICK (AS JESUS)
 This one dare to question my word!

People are shocked. Some scream at Father John.

PERSON IN CROWD
 You dare to challenge the Son of
 God?

Father John grabs the microphone off the pulpit.

FATHER JOHN
 Please! Please! Everyone stay calm.
 (to Kendrick) Kendrick! Kendrick!
 Appear. I dare you to face me like
 a man!

Marie and O'Flaherty appear behind Father John.

MARIE
 (to O'Flaherty)
 Aren't you going to help the young
 boy?

She pushes him up to Father John.

Mrs. Thomas holds onto the Bishop. People rush past Sister Mary Agnes and Mrs, Thomas in an effort to escape from the church.

SISTER MARY AGNES
Father! What is going on?

O'Flaherty tells Father John to lip-synch to his voice.

MONSIGNOR O'FLAHERTY
(as Father John)
I command you to the very depths of fiery hell where you will be tortured for all eternity. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me...

FATHER JOHN
(whispering)
Have you ever done this before?

MONSIGNOR O'FLAHERTY
Always a first time.

KENDRICK (AS JESUS)
You're no fun anymore. Remember me for I am the one who commanded thee.

The wind and the noise slowly die down. Father Eddie and Father Tony walk hesitantly back into the church. Mrs. Thomas picks her head up from The Bishop's shoulder. Father John walks up to them.

SISTER MARY AGNES
Is it over?

FATHER JOHN
Yes. For now.

FATHER EDDIE MICHAELS
What was that? Jesus. I mean...was that Jesus?

FATHER JOHN
No. It was not. Someone rather something was being very foolish and it would be foolish of him to ever do it again. It was a ghost. You could say that this place is sort of haunted,

SISTER MARY AGNES

I knew it.

Father John looks back. O'Flaherty is gone.

FATHER JOHN

Ummm. Has anyone seen the other nuns?

FATHER EDDIE MICHAELS

They made like Sally Field and flew away.

The church is a mess. Food, papers, plates, and folding chairs are everywhere.

FATHER JOHN

I think it is over for now. I would greatly appreciate if everyone would help me...help me clean this up.

The Bishop walks up.

FLANAGAN

I thought you said you had this under control.

FATHER JOHN

I promise, Bishop, your grace, I will get to the bottom of this and do something about it.

FLANAGAN

You better or I will get someone else to handle this.

Picking up a piece of the table leg from the remains of the broken serving table and crockery, Father John looks around.

FATHER JOHN

Has anyone see the handyman? Chris?

They search. Chris is laying face down between two rows of seats. Chris terrified looks up at Father John and then runs from the sanctuary screaming.

INT. CHURCH OFFICE

Father John sifts through the ruffled papers left from the Open House. He calls one of the numbers.

FATHER JOHN

Hello. You left your name and number. My name is Father John Walters and I am the pastor of St. Malachy's...uh..hello? Hello?

The phone on the line goes dead and there's a dial tone. Father John puts down the receiver discouraged. Monsignor O'Flaherty appears by the door.

FATHER JOHN

Go ahead. You got what you wanted.

MONSIGNOR O'FLAHERTY

That wasn't what I wanted. I wanted you and your little friends to be left all alone. Not what Satan's Little Helper did.

FATHER JOHN

Well it worked. That was my last phone call. No one wants to be a parishioner here.

MONSIGNOR O'FLAHERTY

You shouldn't let Kendrick do what he wants.

FATHER JOHN

I don't let him. I was hoping he wouldn't do anything. Maybe I wasn't thinking.

MONSIGNOR O'FLAHERTY

That's your problem. You didn't think.

FATHER JOHN

Well it worked didn't it. That was my last call. No one wants to be a parishioner here.

MONSIGNOR O'FLAHERTY

I'm sorry.

FATHER JOHN

Really?

MONSIGNOR O'FLAHERTY

I didn't want it to happen this way.

FATHER JOHN

I don't know what to do.

INT. KITCHEN - NEXT DAY

Marie starts Father John's lunch while Michael plays with a toy truck nearby. Kendrick appears in a kitchen chair.

MARIE

What is it you want?

KENDRICK

Is that any way to talk to me?

MARIE

I prefer not to speak to you at all.

KENDRICK

Aw come on, Marie --

MARIE

Don't you call me by my name. In fact, get out of my kitchen. Why do you even have to be here?

KENDRICK

Because I was granted Sanctuary. God wanted me to be here.

MARIE

Maybe I should go find the police and ask them what they think.

She starts to take her apron off.

KENDRICK

Stay where you are, old woman!

MARIE

Or you'll do what? I'm already dead.

KENDRICK

Look I've already killed someone living. A bootlegger cutting into my business. It would be nothing for me to kill someone already dead.

MARIE

Michael, dear, go play in the Sanctuary.

KENDRICK

No, Michael, dear. Okay right there. (To Marie) I'm going.

MARIE
Out of the church?

KENDRICK
Oh, no. You ain't getting rid of me
so easily.

MARIE
You are a disgrace.

KENDRICK
You will pay for those words.

MARIE
What are you going to do? Throw
pies at me?

A large gust of wind comes up, blows around the kitchen knocking things over and making Marie's hair blow around. Kendrick vanishes in a flash and the chair he was sitting in falls to the floor, spins, and slides into the fall wall and splinters.

Marie wipes her hair out of her face and starts to pick things up.

MARIE
Blow hard.

EXT. WRIGLEYVILLE -- LATER

Father John wanders through the neighborhood flyers in his hand. He tries to solicit people on the street to listen to him about the merits of coming to St. Malachy's as parishioners.

MAN ON THE STREET
I heard about that place. No
thanks, buddy. If I want that, I'll
rent "Ghostbusters".

People stare at him. He soon gets discouraged.

EXT. COFFEEHOUSE -- LATER

Father John is seen through the plate glass window, sipping his coffee. As he sits quietly, tears slowly run down his cheeks. People sit next to him, give me a look, and then move away.

EXT. CHURCH -- LATER

Chris sits on the top of the steps, a screwdriver in his hands turning it over and over and pretending to balance it like a top. His tool kit is open at his side. Father John finds him there.

CHRIS
I'm sorry, father.

Father Jon climbs the stairs and sits next to him.

FATHER JOHN
For what? You did nothing, Chris.

CHRIS
Exactly. I should have helped you.
Instead I ran like a rat into it's
hole.

FATHER JOHN
You were scared. So was I.

CHRIS
But you stood and fought. You're a
lot braver than I am, Father. I'll
help you next time. I promise.

FATHER JOHN
It was Kendrick.

CHRIS
You mean the guy who gets killed
every night?

FATHER JOHN
I accidentally freed him and this
is how he thanked me for his
Sanctuary.

CHRIS
Next time we'll get him.

FATHER JOHN
There's not going to be a next
time. I'm going to call the Bishop
and get reassigned.

CHRIS
You're quitting? You can't quit.
OK, call the Bishop, but don't
quit. Maybe he can help.

FATHER JOHN
He's betting on me to lose.

CHRIS
So ignore that. He's gotta help
you. I'm going to make sure he
does.

Father John enters the church patting Chris on the back on
the way in.

EXT. CITY PARK - LATER

Bishop Flanagan sits on a bench. He has on a trench coat with
the collar pulled up so his white priest collar and pudgy
face peak out only slightly.

He sits reading "Christianity Today" trying to look
inconspicuous which makes him look even more conspicuous to
the people passing by.

Father John walks up to the bench. His priest garb is on full
display.

FATHER JOHN
May I sit down, my son?
(Whispering) Bishop?

FLANAGAN
Shhhhh.

Looking around he slips Father John a large brown envelope.

FLANAGAN
Take this to the public library, a
restaurant, somewhere else other
than the church. Don't let them
know what you are doing.

Conspicuous as he can, Bishop Flanagan sneaks off.

INT. RESTAURANT - LATER

Father John sits in a distant corner booth with the envelope
next to him on the table. The WAITRESS Takes his order.

WAITRESS
Dessert? We have Devil's Food.

FATHER JOHN
And a glass of milk.

Father John puts the envelope in front of him and removes its contents. It is a book with a yellow and black cover, "Exorcism for Dummies".

FATHER JOHN
With a forward by William Peter
Blatty and Linda Blair? Linda
Blair?

He shrugs and begins to read.

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

As Father John walks down the street, the envelope securely underneath his arm, he starts to notice a long line of people. As he gets closer to the rectory, the crowds get thicker until he realizes that the crowd is waiting and demanding entrance into the locked church.

INT. RECTORY

Father John sneaks into his room, shoves the book underneath his mattress, and pulls a comb through his hair.

INT. OFFICE

He grabs a yellow pad and pens from his desk and rushes excitedly to greet the crowd.

INT. SANCTUARY

Father John throws the doors to the church open. Bulbs flash.

FATHER JOHN
Welcome to St. Malachy's! Please
enter our humble --

The crowd rushes past him.

More bulbs flash.

INSIDE

People file into the pews and begin to pray.

Many gather in front of the church and gaze up to the statue of the crucifix.

Father John grabs the microphone. Looking to see it has been repaired, he switches it on.

FATHER JOHN

I am truly gladdened to see that
people are interested in this
church and what it has to offer.

A male VOICE from the crowd yells up at him.

VOICE 1

Can it heal me?

FATHER JOHN

Can what heal you, my son?

VOICE 1

The statue. The statue of the
Christ.

WOMAN

Heal me, oh savior. Speak to me and
let me be healed.

The WOMAN Falls prostrate on the altar. Father John goes into
the crowd and people ask questions about the "miracle".

WOMAN 2

How do you contact the spirit of
Jesus so it will appear?

WOMAN 3

Heal me, Father!

OUTSIDE THE CHURCH

News vans arrive. Reporters and cameramen set up outside,
blocking the sidewalk and the small side street.

Vendors walk up and down the street hawking T-shirts that say
things like "Jesus was here" and "What would you say to
Jesus?" A Good Humor truck is selling ice cream next to a
WOMAN VENDOR selling Papal and Christian stuff.

WOMAN VENDOR

Pope Benedict squirt guns. Only a
few limited edition ones left!

INSIDE

Mrs. Thomas around in the ever moving and changing crowd. A
woman grabs her.

GRABBING WOMAN

Were you here when the miracle
happened?

MRS. THOMAS
What? What miracle?

She finally finds Father John in the middle of a mob of people. A WOMAN grabs him.

A WOMAN
Make it happen again, Father.

Father John brushes her off. He struggles to get to Mrs. Thomas.

FATHER JOHN
Ahhh. Mrs. Thomas. Here for your weekly confession? Can't be very long today, Ma'am.

Mrs. Thomas and Father John struggle to the confessionals only to find a FEMALE REPORTER and a CAMERAMAN doing a live feed.

FEMALE REPORTER
It was here at this small out of the way church that the miracle occurred. According to sources, the crucifix over the altar began to glow and then it spoke. In response, the parish priest spoke in a voice that was not his own.

Father John turns to Mrs. Thomas.

FATHER JOHN
It was Kendrick. I didn't...I wouldn't have argued if that has actually been Jesus.

MRS. THOMAS
I know, Father.

The reporter looks beyond the cameraman and spots Father John.

FEMALE REPORTER
Excuse me. Excuse me. Are you the parish priest?

The light from the cameraman blinds Father John and he has to hold up his arm.

FATHER JOHN
What is all this?

FEMALE REPORTER

Can you tell us about what happened here yesterday? How did the miracle start?

FATHER JOHN

What miracle?

FEMALE REPORTER

The glow of the Christ figure. The speaking of Jesus to the crowd.

He turns his back on her. They keep following him and she keeps trying to ask him questions.

FEMALE REPORTER

What's the truth? What are you covering, up, Father?

PODIUM

Father John grabs up the microphone, The crowd screams questions.

The reporters more and more converge into the Sanctuary mixing with all the other folks.

Children run in and out of the crowd.

He takes in a deep breath and lets it out.

FATHER JOHN

Welcome to St. Malachy's.

Bulbs flash and all attention is fixed onto him. He tried to be heard over the din.

FATHER JOHN

The voice heard was not that of our Lord, Jesus Christ. Jesus was never noted for atmospheric changes or causing damage. What did happen is being fully investigated by the church. I can personally promise that what happened last night will never happen again.

A TRIO OF REPORTERS stand up.

ANOTHER REPORTER

Jerry Simpson from Christianity Today. If it wasn't Jesus, was it Satan?

FATHER JOHN

Not at all. It was a quirk of nature and a building that needs to know the love of the people for it and the Savior it celebrates.

REPORTER 2

Tim Haskell from The Weekly World News. Is this is a sign of alien visitation? Was it Elvis?

FATHER JOHN

If you are interested in the parish, please sign up. If not, there are no miracles here. Please make your way toward the exits.

Reporters bombard him with lights and microphones.

FATHER JOHN

God works in strange ways. I'm sure it wasn't him but it was his way of attracting attention to a small church. Please, in the name of our Lord, respect this holy place.

Father John leaves the podium and is pursued to the office door by a pack of reporters screaming questions.

INT. CHURCH OFFICE

Father John runs into the office to call for help. Inside is Marie, O'Flaherty, and Kendrick. Kendrick is tied to a chair.

FATHER JOHN

What is this all about?

MONSIGNOR O'FLAHERTY

We are keeping an eye on Satan's Little Helper.

Marie hugs Father John.

FATHER JOHN

I felt that. Thank you.

MARIE

I can if I want to. What a zoo it is out there. Dear boy. This must so difficult for you.

KENDRICK

They're here to see me! You heard 'em. I'm a miracle!

MARIE

You are a terrible, evil man.

MONSIGNOR O'FLAHERTY

You've got them thinking Jesus appeared here.

KENDRICK

See. I'm God and I didn't know it. Hey, it was better than pretending I was Jesus and only appearing on a peanut butter and jelly sandwich or on the side of a train station.

MARIE

We wouldn't have to listen to them.

MONSIGNOR O'FLAHERTY

If I could vanquish you--

KENDRICK

You and what army, Padre?

FATHER JOHN

Please everyone stop. I need help. What do I do? I got it. I'll call the Bishop.

MONSIGNOR O'FLAHERTY

And he'll do what? Call the cops. You need crowd control.

INTERCUT

Mrs. Thomas winds through the crowd. She picks up prayer books and stray papers as she goes. She gets jostled and almost knocked down.

Righting an overturned vase, she looks up from putting the flowers back into it to watch women and men weep while reaching up from their kneeling underneath the crucifix figure. The figure remains silent and still.

BACK TO SCENE

O'Flaherty picks up the receiver.

KENDRICK

The police better not come here.

MONSIGNOR O'FLAHERTY
 These are live police. They are not
 interested in a dead dumb ghost
 crook.

KENDRICK
 I am not a crook and I ain't dumb.
 I'm a businessman. The cops just
 didn't like how I did my business.

George materializes.

GEORGE
 You better get out there, Father.
 They are tearing this place apart.

MARIE
 Oh, no. My beautiful Sanctuary.

MONSIGNOR O'FLAHERTY
 Go out there, Father. I'll call
 them.

KENDRICK
 Well I think--

GEORGE
 No one cares what you think.

MARIE
 George, where's Michael?

GEORGE
 I left him playing in the choir
 loft.

INT. CHURCH SANCTUARY

Michael peers out of the bars of the choir loft at the chaos
 going on below. His eyes open wide when he spots kids.

He floats down the stairs.

Standing at the bottom, he peers into the crowd. Michael see
 some keys hanging from a man's side and starts to follow him
 around trying to swat at them and make them move without him
 noticing. The key ring clatters and the man, totally
 oblivious, doesn't notice.

From the corner of his eye, he sees a LITTLE GIRL sitting
 bored on the end of a pew. He walks over to her, when a lady
 exhales smoke over his head.

He tries to touch it as it vanishes. She puts the pack of cigarettes and her lighter on the pew next to her. She talks to a man on her right.

Michael takes a cigarette out of the pack and tries to light it. He has trouble with the lighter and drops it. The flame from the lighter ignites the bottom of the lady's dress. It takes her a couple of seconds to realize she's on fire.

Michael throws the cigarette to the ground while she leaps out of her seat. The man she was talking with looks around, grabs one of the vases of flowers, and dumps its contents on her.

She gets up, straightens what's left of her wet dress, slaps him and walks off.

Michael approaches the little girl.

MICHAEL

Do you want to play?

LITTLE GIRL

Sure. But I can't go too far. My granny will worry. What do you want to do?

MICHAEL

I don't know.

INT. CHURCH OFFICE

MARIE

You left Michael by himself?

GEORGE

He'll be fine.

O'Flaherty hangs up the phone.

MONSIGNOR O'FLAHERTY

That's it. The police are on their way. I told them I was you. They wouldn't have come if I had said I was me.

GEORGE

Hello, Police. I'm a dead pastor. Come at once.

FATHER JOHN

Thank you, Father.

Father John leaves.

KENDRICK

Marie is right. What can those cops
do to me?

MONSIGNOR O'FLAHERTY

Maybe I should throw you ass out of
the front door and whistle.

INT. CHURCH SANCTUARY

People kneel praying fervently.

Some wander around like tourists snapping pictures here and
there.

A long grey bearded SPIRITUALIST speaks to the television
cameras.

SPIRITUALIST

Ghostly manifestations are
interruptions in the ether of
existence between here and heaven.

A TEENAGER yells a question at him.

TEENAGER

Is that like disturbances in the
force, Obi Wan?

As soon as Father John reemerges, the REPORTERS continue
their barrage.

REPORTER 4

Did you call someone? Bishop
Flanagan? Rome? Geraldo Rivera?

REPORTER 5

Will there be an exorcism or was
that really Jesus?

REPORTER 4

If that was Jesus, did he see "The
Passion of the Christ"? Was does he
think of Mel Gibson? Would he give
it two thumbs up?

Silently, Father John approaches the front of the church
wringing his hands.

BAPTISMAL FONT

Michael climbs up as does the Little Girl.

LITTLE GIRL

This is like the bird bath my
granny has in her back yard, but
she won't let me play in it.

MICHAEL

I don't to play in it either.

Michael smiles. He splashes the little girl. She splashes back. He splashes harder. She splashes back. He splashes a little harder and so does she. He gets her wet with his next splash. She yells and splashes him back. They get into a gigantic water fight splashing each other and now throwing water back and forth.

A CAMERAMAN notices the fight and then on second glance notices she getting splashed back by nothing. He turns around pulling his reporter by the cord.

FEMALE REPORTER

Chad, what the --

CAMERAMAN

How is she doing that?

FEMALE REPORTER

What?

He shows her. The reporter is amazed.

The GRANDMOTHER looks around and see that her granddaughter is gone. She panics.

The rest of the press notices what is going on.

BAPTISMAL FONT

The Little Girl looks up. He splashes her in the face.

LITTLE GIRL

Ow. There's something in it. It
burns.

Michael licks his fingers.

MICHAEL

Tastes salty.

Father John rushes to the font. The grandmother is behind him.

FATHER JOHN
Michael, why did you have to do
this now?

MICHAEL
Because I wanted to play. There are
no other kids to play with.

FATHER JOHN
Michael, get down and go to the
office. Marie will get you changed.

Michael climbs down and disappears in the crowd. The little
girl looks at Father John with big eyes and a finger in her
mouth.

FATHER JOHN
Are you OK?

LITTLE GIRL
Can we play some more? He's fun.

FATHER JOHN
I'm sure your mommy is looking for
you.

Her grandmother reaches the child.

GRANDMOTHER
What were you doing?

LITTLE GIRL
Playing with the little boy?

GRANDMOTHER
What little boy?

The grandmother grabs her by the hand and starts to lead her
out of the church, but the reporters catch up. They shine the
lights and cameras in their eyes. She puts her little hand
up.

REPORTERS
What was that? Were you playing
with Jesus?

The girl cries.

GRANDMOTHER
Can't you see you're frightening
the child? Leave us alone!

Grandmother and the little girl flee the church. The
reporters turn on Father John.

FATHER JOHN
Children have vivid imaginations.

The police arrive and the POLICE CHIEF starts to send them around the church inside and out.

POLICE CHIEF
If you are not hear to pray, move along. Nothing to see here. Officers spread out.

Some officers start to push the wanderers toward the doors. Others send the people in the front of the church on their way.

POLICE CHIEF
Don't worry, Father, we have this under control. The reporters will be away from the church shortly.

FATHER JOHN
Bless you, my son.

Reporters lag behind, but the cops motion them to the doors. They try to talk to Father John.

REPORTER
What was that? Is this place haunted?

REPORTER 2
What is happening here?

Father John walks away shaking his head.

The police push out the last of the reporters and head out themselves.

POLICEMAN
Call us tomorrow, Father. If you need to. Might have to watch out for these people. It's all over the TV.

The few left are praying thoughtfully.

EXT. CHURCH

The news vans are still out front but the crowd slowly makes its way down the street.

INT. CHURCH SANCTUARY

Father John closes the doors.

He walks over and looks at he pad of paper. It is several pages full. He smiles and carried it into the office.

INT. CHURCH OFFICE

Father John walks in on O'Flaherty, Marie, and George. Michael sits in a corner with his face turned to the wall.

FATHER JOHN
Is that really necessary?

MARIE
He needs to learn to behave his ghostly self when we have parishioners in the sanctuary.

Michael wipes his tears with his hand.

MICHAEL
(crying)
But it was her idea.

Marie motions and Michael looks back at the wall.

MARIE
Father, we have some bad news.

MONSIGNOR O'FLAHERTY
Yeah. She let Satan's little helper escape.

MARIE
I si nothing of that sort.

FATHER JOHN
What do you mean escape?

MONSIGNOR O'FLAHERTY
How many people are in the church?

FATHER JOHN
Not many. A few praying. The press and gawkers were pushed out. They've gone home thank God.

MARIE
If there's practically no one in the church, what can he do?

INT. CHURCH SANCTUARY

Rushing back in, Father John walks around wearily. He grabs a small garbage pail and walks around picking up trash. Low knocking rings out, but no one including Father John pays attention. The knocking gets louder.

FATHER JOHN

Kendrick. Stop! There's no one left for your antics and I am not in the mood.

The knocking gets louder. A low evil laugh reverberates throughout the Sanctuary,

FATHER JOHN

I said stop!

KENDRICK (O.S.)

But, Padre. These few people may have come to see me.

FATHER JOHN

(stage whispering)

They just want to pray. Please?

Sister Mary Agnes pokes her head into the church and sneaks into the Sanctuary. Hiding behind the baptismal font and then behind one wall and another.

SISTER MARY AGNES

I'm going to get to the bottom of this. Wait until Bishop Flanagan finds out. Imagine. Staging a miracle.

INT. CHURCH OFFICE

MONSIGNOR O'FLAHERTY

While there is still people in the church, I don't trust him. I'm going back into the sanctuary.

MARIE

Fine. If it will make you happy, your eminence...

MONSIGNOR O'FLAHERTY

(to George)

And this time see that Michael doesn't get into trouble.

MARIE

Don't worry. I'll be here.

INT. CHURCH SANCTUARY

A bubble forms in the base slowly floats to the top of the baptismal font and bursts. Bubbles form and burst toward the top and the water and the font bubbles furiously.

Sister Mary Agnes approaches. Peeking down, she watches the bubbling of the water increase like water boiling for tea. She puts her hand in the water, pulls it out, and starts to blow on it.

SISTER MARY AGNES

Hot water?

She looks all around the font for a reason why the holy water would be boiled.

PEWS

Parishioners get up and yell. Rows of pews rock and lurch forward in back of the church crashing forward like a row of dominoes.

Sister Mary Agnes, holding her scalded hand, comes running into the room.

SISTER MARY AGNES

Ah ha!

Father John rushes over. O'Flaherty comes into the room and runs up to Father John invisible to all but him. They start to put the pews up right.

SISTER MARY AGNES

Father!

Father John turns to see Sister Mary Agnes. The pew he had started to lift rights itself.

SISTER MARY AGNES

Father, the font is boiling and now these pews are falling over!

FATHER JOHN

Didn't say correcting the problems of this church would be easy, Sister.

The next pew rights itself and then another one after that.

SISTER MARY AGNES
And now the pews are picking
themselves up?

FATHER JOHN
Of course not.

He walks over to the next pew and picks it back up.

FATHER JOHN
See . Don't be silly. Pews don't
drop themselves and pick themselves
back up.

While he is talking, the next pew rights itself.

SISTER MARY AGNES
Then what was that?

The next last pew rights itself.

SISTER MARY AGNES
Well...

FATHER JOHN
It's the little people.

SISTER MARY AGNES
The little people?

FATHER JOHN
Yes, the little people. This church
is infested with leprechauns.

O'Flaherty drifts over to his shoulder unseen to Sister Mary
Agnes.

MONSIGNOR O'FLAHERTY
The little people? And what would
an Englishman like you know about
the little people?

FATHER JOHN
Shhh.

SISTER MARY AGNES
Don't you tell me to, shhh!

FATHER JOHN
I didn't. I mean---

SISTER MARY AGNES
The little people. The little
people were noisy.

FATHER JOHN

Yes.

SISTER MARY AGNES

You know what I think?

Kendrick appears over her shoulder.

KENDRICK

Think? Do you know how to think,
girlie? Haven't hear you shut yet.

SISTER MARY AGNES

Excuse me, Father? Did you call me
'girlie'?

FATHER JOHN

I didn't.

She spins around.

SISTER MARY AGNES

Oh my God. Now I hear them. He had
a raspy voice. He called me girlie
and told me to shut up. Was that
one of your little people?

Father John nods.

KENDRICK

Little am I? Watch this.

MONSIGNOR O'FLAHERTY

No! Kendrick!

Monsignor O'Flaherty reaches as if to stop Kendrick but all
too late.

Kendrick appears in a puff of swirling green smoke and
reaches out with his arms.

Slowly all the candles in the church light and then with a
brief rush of cold wind they are all snuffed out.

The doors of the church open and slam as do the doors on the
confessionals.

Small lights appear at the nave and slowly approach forward
swirling throughout the sides of the Sanctuary and then
through the church.

Father John and Sister Mary Agnes want to move, but don't
know where to go.

SISTER MARY AGNES
Did I offend it?

FATHER JOHN
I think you may have.

A single crow hops inside the church and then takes flight soaring among the various lights.

Father John and Sister Mary Agnes want to move, but don't know where to go.

SISTER MARY AGNES
Did I offend it?

FATHER JOHN
I think you may have.

A single crow hops inside the church and then takes flight soaring among the various lights.

Father John runs for the door and tries to close it but it's stuck.

FATHER JOHN
Kendrick, stop!

Sister Mary Agnes runs up to Father John.

Another bird flies into the church and then another and another.

The birds swoop and sail.

The chirping and squawking build in volume as more and more birds arrive.

Sister Mary Agnes pulls on the door from the inside as Father John pushes it closed from the outside.

Birds perch on any surface they can find.

The few people left flee from the birdy onslaught.

EXT. CHURCH

The last news van is about to leave with the LAST REPORTER looks back at the church and see Father John trying to push the door closed.

INT. CHURCH SANCTUARY

The reporter and cameraman, camera on his shoulder and rolling enter with Father John running behind them yelling.

FATHER JOHN

Stop! You can't go in there!

Kendrick rises like a great spectre from the floor of the church rising large, white, translucent, and horrific with open jaws and spread arms draped in a large cloth.

He flies into the air among the birds and swoops down onto Father John.

The cameraman bends backwards as he does his best to capture what is supposed to be a terrifying image.

KENDRICK

I gather up on to me all the little
birdies, sayeth me!

O'Flaherty materializes. Sister Mary Agnes doesn't know where to turn and gasps at the materializing O'Flaherty.

Vases of flowers explode showering Father John's group with water and vegetation.

MONSIGNOR O'FLAHERTY

He gathered all the little children
on to him, you idiot!

SISTER MARY AGNES

Who the hell is that?

FATHER JOHN

That's Monsignor O'Flaherty. He's
the old pastor here and as for
that...

KENDRICK

Bow to me! For I am your God!

Monsignor O'Flaherty stumbles forward shaking his fist.

MONSIGNOR O'FLAHERTY

You are an idiot with delusions of
grandeur.

Kendrick swoops down over the group again while wailing a piercing scream.

FATHER JOHN

Kendrick! Stop this instant!

MONSIGNOR O'FLAHERTY
 You had to start with the little
 people, didn't you?

More birds enter the church as the airspace in the Sanctuary
 becomes covered in a black blanket of flying birds with
 Kendrick roaring and rolling in between them.

KENDRICK
 You got what you wanted, Padre.
 I've filled the church.

SISTER MARY AGNES
 (to Father John)
 Make this evil stop!

MONSIGNOR O'FLAHERTY
 (to Father John)
 What are you learning in that book
 of yours?

FATHER JOHN
 How do you know? Okay. Everyone
 form a circle. Hold hands.

O'Flaherty grabs Sister Mary Agnes' hand.

SISTER MARY AGNES
 You're hands are freezing.

MONSIGNOR O'FLAHERTY
 I'm dead, remember. I can
 dematerialize if you want.

SISTER MARY AGNES
 (crying)
 I want this all to end.

FATHER JOHN
 No bickering. Ummm. Pay attention.
 'And I will visit upon the world
 their evil, and upon the wicked
 their iniquity. And I will cause
 the arrogance of the proud to
 cease, and will lay low the
 haughtiness of the tyrants.'

KENDRICK
 What? Come on, Padre. Is that all
 you've got?

FATHER JOHN

OK. No Isaiah. 'Be gracious unto me, O God. For in thee hath my soul taken refuge.'

Kendrick swoops and swirls.

Music blares from the organ. It is the opening strains of Tchaikovsky's 1812 Overture.

Father John's voice rises with the music.

The birds fly more furiously.

FATHER JOHN

'Yea in the shadow of thy wings will I take refuge, until calamities be overpast. I will cry unto God Most High. He will send the heavens and save me.'

The birds begin to fly out of the church doors.

KENDRICK

Here birdie. Birdies. Where are you all going?

FATHER JOHN

'When he that would swallow me up taunteth. God shall send forth His mercy and His truth.'

Kendrick lands and runs to the door trying to stop the birds from leaving.

FATHER JOHN

'Be thou exalted, O God, among the heavens. The glory be above all the earth.'

The birds have almost all left and Kendrick takes off and swoops down at the circle.

KENDRICK

Stop! Stop or I shall--

FATHER JOHN

'They have prepared a net for my steps. My soul is bowed down. They have prepared a pit before me. They have fallen into the midst of there of themselves.'

Kendrick screams and it reverberates.

KENDRICK

I shall have my way. Eventually, I shall have my way!

Kendrick disappears in a puff of smoke and all movement in the room stops. George plays 'A Haircut and Two Bits', bows and vanishes.

MONSIGNOR O'FLAHERTY

You can't allow this to continue!

CAMERAMAN

What was that?

Sister Mary Agnes is frazzled and whirls around. She falls backwards into a pew.

REPORTER

One helluva scoop.

The reporter and cameraman run out of the church.

Sister Mary Agnes rolls out of a pew and pulls herself back up to her feet too frightened to speak and not knowing where to look. She settles on Father John, points, croaks a noise, and faints.

INT. RECTORY - NIGHT

Father John lies asleep. His blanket is violently pulled off. The pillows are yanked from under his head. He wakes with a thump to find Kendrick sitting on the edge of his bed.

FATHER JOHN

What the --

KENDRICK

You've got to stop antagonizing me. I'm grateful for you saving me. Padre, but this is getting really old.

FATHER JOHN

What?

KENDRICK

Take today. You call me a little person. Now do you really think my ego can take a hit like that?

FATHER JOHN

Your ego? Did you see the film of you and the birds on the news?

(MORE)

FATHER JOHN (cont'd)

Do you know how much trouble we are in now because of you? Do you have any idea what your stunts are doing to this church?

KENDRICK

Thought they got my bad side, I'm not doing bad. I'm presoiving the church for the ghosts. It is now my home too.

FATHER JOHN

Presoiving?

KENDRICK

Yeah. Presoiving.

George materializes.

GEORGE

Speaking for the ghosts, we don't need you to presolve this for any of us.

KENDRICK

Oh, I see. This is the thanks I get.

Marie materializes just inside the door.

MARIE

You are an evil man and I don't need you to do any favors for me. Father, you look tired. You really should get some rest.

FATHER JOHN

I was sleeping ---

O' Flaherty materializes.

MONSIGNOR O'FLAHERTY

Kendrick, what are you doing now?

KENDRICK

Just telling hi, Padre, he's got to be nicer to me.

FATHER JOHN

Kendrick, can we talk about this in the morning.

KENDRICK

OK Padre. I am not unreasonable.

FATHER JOHN
Please, everyone, I need my rest!

They vanish. Father John pulls the For Dummies book out from under his bed and starts reading.

INT. RESTAURANT - DAY

Father John nods. He pulls out the book and starts to read making notes in a white tablet. Waitress walks up.

WAITRESS
More devil's food?

INT. CHURCH OFFICE - LATER

Father John answers the phone.

INTERCUT

INT. OFFICES OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO

Bishop Flanagan is on the line.

FLANAGAN
What the hell is going on there?
Father Walters, did you see this
report from Sister Mary Agnes?

FATHER JOHN
I am doing my best to contain the
situation.

FLANAGAN
Contain the situation? Have you
seen the nightly news? You've got
half this town believing that Jesus
has appeared and another part
believing the Antichrist has
arrived by the way how are you
going to clean that historic
sanctuary from all the bird crap?

Monsignor O'Flaherty materializes and grabs the phone.

MONSIGNOR O'FLAHERTY
Hello. Bishop Flanagan. This is
Monsignor O'Flaherty. He will
straighten it out and I will help
him.

FLANAGAN
Let me tell you --

MONSIGNOR O'FLAHERTY
Oh are you going to argue with me?
Have you ever been told not to
argue with your elders especially
when their dead. Goodbye, Piggy.

O'Flaherty slams down the phone.

MONSIGNOR O'FLAHERTY
Now if you are going to have a
chance to run this place, get your
book and the Bible from your
drawer, and let's get down to work.

FATHER JOHN
You know about the book?

MONSIGNOR O'FLAHERTY
I'm not a dummy. But I'm sure
neither are you. Let's go.

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

Bishop Flanagan and Father John stand looking up at the
facade.

FLANAGAN
Are you sure you are ready to do
this, son?

FATHER JOHN
Yes.

FLANAGAN
And the ghosts?

FATHER JOHN
They know what to do.

Stragglers walk inside.

FATHER JOHN
I'm going to miss them.

FLANAGAN
And Kendrick?

FATHER JOHN
C'mon on Piggy.

FLANAGAN
That's Bishop Piggy...Flanagan...
Bishop Flanagan.

Father John walks into the church followed by Bishop Flanagan.

INT. CHURCH

Before Father John enters the Sanctuary, he stops and looks around at the half crowded church. He clutches his bible at his side like a gunslinger making sure the safety is off on his six gun. Marie whispers in his ear.

MARIE (O.S.)
Good luck, Father. We are all here
when you need us. Your player organ
is also ready when you need him.

George waves from the organ and disappears again.

Father John breaths deep, steps into the Sanctuary and back rigid, heads up to the altar. He turns to the pulpit and speaks into the microphone.

FATHER JOHN
All rise.

Bishop Flanagan grabs a seat at the back of the church.

Father John motions for everyone to sit.

FATHER JOHN
I know you've heard a lot of things
about this church. If anything
happens today to keep us from
praising our Lord and his son, it
will be the last. Now please open
your hymnals to number 186.

Father John claps and the organ begins to play. The congregation begins to sign along with the hymn.

Behind Father John in the shadows stands Monsignor O'Flaherty and Marie. Michael clutches to her skirt.

Chris and Mrs. Thomas sit among the congregates. Sister Mary Agnes sits in the pew next to the confessionals.

MARIE
Even Kendrick isn't stupid enough
to try again.

MONSIGNOR O'FLAHERTY
Sure he is.

MICHAEL
Marie, can I really hit Kendrick?

MONSIGNOR O'FLAHERTY
Be a good boy. Do your worst to
that son of a --

MICHAEL
Language, Father!

The hymn ends.

FATHER JOHN
Please turn to Psalm 57. 'Be
gracious unto me, O God, for thou
in thee hath my soul takes refuge.
Yea, in the shadow of thy wings
will I take refuge, until
calamities be over past. I will cry
on God most high. He will send from
heaven, and save me, when he that
would swallow me up taunteth. God
shall send forth His mercy and His
truth.'

A low wind starts to blow through the Sanctuary.

FATHER JOHN
My soul is among lions, I do lie
down among them that are aflame.
Even the sons of men, whose teeth
are spears and arrows and their
tongue a sharp sword.

The wind blows harder. Kendrick mistily appears in a back
corner.

FATHER JOHN
Be thou exalted, O God, above the
heavens.

MONSIGNOR O'FLAHERTY
(to Marie)
Here we go.

Marie strokes Michael's head.

Bishop Flanagan gets up and makes sure the doors are shut.

The chalice and plate slide on the pulpit in front of Father
John. He speaks louder.

FATHER JOHN

Thy glory be above all the earth.
They have prepared a net for my
steps. My soul is bowed down. They
have dug a pit before me. They are
fallen into the midst of
themselves.

The doors of the confessions slam open and close by
themselves.

The congregates start to stir. A few grab their coats.

FATHER JOHN

No reason to be alarmed, folks.

The chalice and plat begin to rattle.

Books and hymnals pop-up like popcorn.

People start to get up, but Re blown back into their seats.
Father John motions them to remain seated.

FATHER JOHN

People be seated everyone. Be calm.
Be patient. You are protected by
the supreme force of God. Genesis.
'This is non other but the house of
God and this is the gate of
Heaven.'

The wind blows even harder. Father John has to scream to be
heard.

Candles light all around the church and burn with fierce
flames blown around by the wind. Wax drips in sheets.

FATHER JOHN

Wise King Solomon said, 'For the
hope of the ungodly is like dust
that is blown away from the wind.'

The chalice and plate flies off the pulpit and just misses
Father John's head. He grabs the Bible as it begins to do
the same and thrusts into a lower shelf of the pulpit.

FATHER JOHN

'Blessings are upon the head of the
just, but violence covereth the
mouth of the wicked. The memory of
the just is blessed, but the name
of the wicked shall rot.'

The statue of the Christ on the Crucifix glows.

CONGREGANT
It's happening again!

The crowd whispers about 'a miracle'.

FATHER JOHN
People...everyone...concentrate on
the power and love of the Lord.
This is not a miracle. Please join
hands and pray with me!

The crucifix glows brighter.

FATHER JOHN
The scripture says 'Worship the
Lord your God and serve only him!'
This you are seeing is not the work
of God or his Savior Jesus Christ
but an entity very much formerly of
this world who is not able through
his evil deeds not able to ascend
to the Kingdom of God.

Father John picks up the Bible and walks into the Sanctuary
and looks up at the statue of Christ.

Marie nudges O'Flaherty.

MARIE
Help him.

MONSIGNOR O'FLAHERTY
When I'm needed. Let's see if he
can handle this on his own. He's
never going to learn unless he
tries.

MARIE
He's a boy.

MONSIGNOR O'FLAHERTY
He's a priest and becoming a good
one. He needs to make this church
well his own.

Marie is shocked.

MARIE
Took you long enough.

FATHER JOHN
'The Lord is my shepherd. I shall
not want. He maketh me to lie down
in green pastures.
(MORE)

FATHER JOHN (cont'd)

He leadeth me beside still waters.
Yea though I walk through the
valley of the shadow of death. I
fear no evil. For though art with
me.'

The statue rumbles. Father John holds the book in one handle and, after taking, a large crucifix off his neck, he holds it high at the statue.

FATHER JOHN

'Accuse my accusers, God. Attack my
attackers. Grip, shield and
buckler, up and help me!'

Several statues fall over and smash into pieces. The crucifix above the altar open its' eyes and mouth and speaks.

KENDRICK (AS JESUS)

Silence! No one denounces me. Or
brings...um...idols before me.

FATHER JOHN

Mine are the words of the Lord. You
are a faker.

KENDRICK (AS JESUS)

I am the Lord! I speak from within
this statue.

FATHER JOHN

And those statues were men far more
saintly than you will ever be. You
are a false god. 'Keep thy tongue
from evil and thy lips from
speaking guile.'

KENDRICK (AS JESUS)

Silence!

The congregates are beginning to panic and stand as the statue glows brighter and brighter. Father John turns to the crowd.

FATHER JOHN

My friends. This is a misguided
spirit whom with your fervent
prayers we can send into the depths
of fiery--

KENDRICK (AS JESUS)

I ain't going nowhere!

FATHER JOHN

Who isn't going? I thought you said you were Jesus Christ.

KENDRICK (AS JESUS)

I am what I am and I ain't what I ain't. But I command you.

FATHER JOHN

No. In the name of the Lord, I command you to stop and desist this minute.

An explosive noise rings through the church.

KENDRICK (AS JESUS)

No! I shall force you all to bow down to me.

FATHER JOHN

'Ye have plowed wickedness. Ye have reaped inquiry. Ye have eaten the first of lies.'

KENDRICK (AS JESUS)

If you don't stop. I'll bring the birds here again.

FATHER JOHN

See. He is no savior. The statue is inhabited by an evil spirit who plays with innocent animals and inanimate objects instead of being man enough to do his work himself. This phony is not a miracle. Bot a savior, but a coward hiding being his ghostly tricks!

KENDRICK

A coward?

FATHER JOHN

'O God, unconquered might, who keepeth all are that against thee, who by his death has destroyed death and overcome the prince of death, beat down this Satan and cause this evil force to depart and never more hold tyranny over, the souls present within this church and give this place back to Christ.'

The baptismal bubbles more violently and overflows its sides sending streams of water down the aisles.

KENDRICK
Stop this at once!

Father John pulls a container of holy water from his waist and starts to sprinkle it up at the statue.

FATHER JOHN
'I cleanse thee of the evil that inhabits this holy statue.'

Monsignor O'Flaherty materializes in front of everyone twirling a large incense burner. The crowd points at the spirit.

FATHER JOHN
Don't be afraid. Here is a man who is true representative of Christ here on earth, but the statue above is a coward and a fool who will not fight on his two feet.

CONGREGANT 2
But he is a ghost!

FATHER JOHN
He is the former pastor of this place.

KENDRICK (AS JESUS)
I am the Lord!

FATHER JOHN
You are a blasphemer!

KENDRICK
I told you to stop that. I am not a mouse.

O'Flaherty dematerializes by the incense burner continues to fly through the air filling the Sanctuary with incense and smoke.

FATHER JOHN
Yes, you are a mouse. A rat. A large rat. One who will not come down here and fight like the coward you are.

One hand of the statue pulls away from the cross and then the other. Jesus leans forward.

KENDRICK

Don't make me come down there.

FATHER JOHN

Do you think in mere ceramic and
wood you could defeat me?

The Christ figure's feet come free and it jumps down to the ground.

KENDRICK (AS JESUS)

I'm a mouse? So face your savior
and fight.

The Christ comes closer to the priest swinging its arms.

KENDRICK (AS JESUS)

You're lucky I don't have a gun,
Padre. You'd be with the angels.

FATHER JOHN

I die for your sins?

Michael Brown comes running up and grabs the leg of the Christ.

KENDRICK (AS JESUS)

Get this brat off me.

FATHER JOHN

Get him off yourself.

The Christ figure keeps coming at him as Father John keeps backing up.

KENDRICK (AS JESUS)

You want me to fight. Here I am.

FATHER JOHN

Not as a piece of concrete and rat,
The only one who hides in that is a
rat. That's it. You're a rat.

KENDRICK (AS JESUS)

Stop it.

FATHER JOHN

A mouse.

KENDRICK (AS JESUS)

I said stop!

MICHAEL

A big ugly mouse.

KENDRICK (AS JESUS)
Shut up, kid.

Marie, George, and Monsignor O'Flaherty appear behind Father John. Chris grabs Mrs, Thomas by the hand and the rush to the doors and Bishop Flanagan. The three humans shove the doors open.

MARIE
Leave that kid alone!

KENDRICK (AS JESUS)
Get him off of me.

The crowd starts toward the exit but some stay behind glued to their seats.

Michael bites him. The Christ falls away and Kendrick materializes into a large spirit of himself.

KENDRICK
Here I am, Padre.

FATHER JOHN
Come on and get me.

MONSIGNOR O'FLAHERTY
You think you are such a big man.
Takes us all on.

KENDRICK
I never hit a woman.

MARIE
That's too bad. God forgive me.

Marie smacks him across the face.

Kendrick rears up and screams loudly. The remaining congregates struggle to get up on their feet and look around.

FATHER JOHN
Don't break your hands and
concentrate, my friends.

GEORGE
Come on, Dumbbrick. Come and get
us.

KENDRICK
You will give me respect.

FATHER JOHN

As you destroy my church? Keep this place from the love of God and the savior. No deal.

George, Mrs. Thomas, and Chris fling the doors open. Father John throws Holy Water at Kendrick.

FATHER JOHN

I purify you in the name of the father, the son, and the holy spirit.

Kendrick lurches at him. Father John ducks and Kendrick flies over.

Father John sprinkles at him again and heads toward the door. Kendrick dives for him again. Prayer books pop out of the pews and fly at Father John's head.

Father John stands in the doorway.

FATHER JOHN

Come on, Dumbbrick. You dirty rat!

Father John sprinkles more holy water and turns and runs. Kendrick follows Father John out of the doors of the church. Michael is still hanging on Kendrick's leg.

EXT. CHURCH

Father John lets out a piercing whistle.

KENDRICK

What are you doing? Trying to hail a taxi?

The tree in the front of the church starts to move and sway. The branches come down and try to strike Father John.

KENDRICK

You've failed, Padre. We could have been friends, but you didn't know when it stop, did ya?

A bolt of lightning strikes the tree as the branches fall away.

From down the street, ghost cop cars come from a low flying cloud.

KENDRICK

Son of a bitch. The cops!

Father John slams the door to the church close.

FATHER JOHN
No Sanctuary! Not any more!

COP
Stop right there!

Michael lets go and Kendrick us whirled around by ghost cops who arrest him.

KENDRICK
Sanctuary!

FATHER JOHN
Not on your life! You are going to a higher court and they are sending you to where you belong.

Kendrick breaks away and starts to run but the GHOST COPS close in and swarm around him. They take Kendrick down and shove him face first into the street. He's cuffed and pulled by his hair to his knees.

COP
Thank you, Padre.

KENDRICK
Police brutality!

ANOTHER COP
Not so holy now, huh? We work for the real God. In his eyes, it was justifiable force. Besides he's not going to be pleased. Murder is one thing. Impersonation of the Lord and His son--

COP 3
Oh boy, are you in for it.

Screaming and cursing, Kendrick is lead away in handcuffs and loaded into a cop car.

A FEMALE COP bends down to Michael.

FEMALE COP
And what is your name?

MICHAEL
Michael Brown.

The female cop gets on her radio.

FEMALE COP

We've found a small child named
Michael Brown.

She listens.

FEMALE COP

Your grandparents have been looking
for you. They'll be right here to
get you.

Marie walks up.

MICHAEL

Bye, Marie. Grandma and Grandpa are
looking for me.

Marie bends down and gives Michael a kiss on the forehead.
George comes to the door.

MARIE

Be a good boy.

MICHAEL

I will.

A pair of elderly GRANDPARENTS materialize. The female cop
leads Michael to them. The three hug. The female cop returns
to the other cops. Michael waves good bye and he and his
grandparents fade away.

GEORGE

And stay out of the baptismal
fonts!

The other ghosts cops get in their cars and they drive away,
float up into the sky and vanish among the clouds.

INT. CHURCH

Father John walks in and everyone in the Sanctuary breaks
into applause. Father John takes the pulpit again.

FATHER JOHN

Thank you. Thank you, my friends,
for your help. May God go with you.

CONGREGATES AND GHOSTS

And with you.

The remaining congregates start to leave the church. The
ghosts pull Father John aside.

MONSIGNOR O'FLAHERTY
If you will excuse me--

FATHER JOHN
To where?

MONSIGNOR O'FLAHERTY
You did a great job.

FATHER JOHN
Thank you, Father.

MONSIGNOR O'FLAHERTY
I think this church is finally in
good hands. Don't you think, Marie?
Marie?

MARIE
I'm going to miss this old place.

MONSIGNOR O'FLAHERTY
It is time for him to find humans
to run it. You've given you're
whole life and more. It is time to
rest.

MARIE
He's a good boy, but I don't want
to go.

FATHER JOHN
You don't have to go. Without
Kendrick here it should be a lot
more peaceful.

O'Flaherty hugs Father John.

MONSIGNOR O'FLAHERTY
No, my boy. You were right. This
holy place should belong to humans.
We need to find a life in the next
world. We have delayed going there
ourselves for all too long.

GEORGE
I shall miss playing the organ.

MONSIGNOR O'FLAHERTY
I'm sure old friend they have
organs in heaven.

FATHER JOHN
I don't know what to say. I can't
imagine this place without you all.

Mrs. Thomas and Chris walk up to Father John. She gives his arm a big squeeze.

CHRIS

We'll still be here to help you to every step of the way. Right, Missus?

MRS. THOMAS

Absolutely.

MONSIGNOR O'FLAHERTY

I know you will do well.

The three ghosts hug Father John in turn and walk out the door.

Father John hugs Chris and Mrs. Thomas.

FATHER JOHN

We have a lot of work in front of us.

OUTSIDE

MONSIGNOR O'FLAHERTY

Ready?

CLORIS

Not really.

Tears stream down Cloris' face.

GEORGE

Take my hand.

The ghosts hold hands and with each step walk further and further off the ground and into the streams of the sun until they disappear.

INSIDE

Bishop Flanagan clears his throat.

FLANAGAN

So you are not leaving?

FATHER JOHN

No time soon.

FLANAGAN

You did a good job, son. A good job. If you need me, you know where I am.

FATHER JOHN

Bye, Bishop.

FLANAGAN

Bye, John.

The Bishop walks to the doors of the church.

FATHER JOHN

Can I count on you for funds to help the church redecorate?

FLANAGAN

Anything, my boy. Anything.

Bishop Flanagan exits. He rips a few pages on a small black book, tears them, rumples them up and throws it in a garbage can as he leaves.

INSIDE

Father John looks around and grabs Chris' and Mrs. Thomas' hands.

FATHER JOHN

My friends. Thank you. Now the real work begins. Starting with all this mess.

The three of them look around. Chris and Father John start to pick things up as Mrs. Thomas grabs a broom from a closet.

THE END