



## CONFESSIONS

By Patrick Thomas McCarthy

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# *CONFESSIONS*

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***By Patrick Thomas McCarthy ptmc***

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## CASTING: 4 men 3 women

**Man One:** 40's/50's – plays Ed, Father Ed, Father of the Bride

**Man Two:** 20's/30's – plays Ted, Teddy, Best Man

**Man Three:** 20's/30's – plays Priest in Prologue, Gary, Father Gary, Deacon Gary, Wedding Priest

**Man Four:** 20's/30's – plays Michael, Groom, St. Joseph

**Woman One:** 40's/50's – plays Mrs. Lindstrom/Maggie, Sister Margaret Elaine, Mother of the Groom/Louella, Ted's Mother

**Woman Two:** 20's/30's – plays Ann, Annie, Bride

**Woman Three:** 20's/30's – plays Sharon, Sherry, St. Therese

## STAGING

*Sparse, several chairs to represent pews, a simple kneeler confessional, a table, a casket on a moveable lift, and a baptistery for the final scene. The stained glass windows referred to on the sides of the stage and the down center window [behind the audience] would be best suggested with lighting effects. A church itself might be the best venue, or a promenade production in a neutral space.*

## COSTUMING

*Priest should be in traditional Roman Catholic services garb, vestments and white cassock. Father Ed in black cassock or black suit with priest's white collar. Children's costuming can be suggested with costume pieces or Catholic grade school uniforms. Sister Margaret Elaine should be in 1960's/1970's nun attire. The wedding should be a full out affair. St Therese & St Joseph should have traditional garb in holy picture colors. The funeral should be in traditional dark tones.*

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## ACT ONE

***PRELUDE: St Joseph and St Therese [pronounced TER-EE-SA] assume their saintly positions in the blackout, or can be standing in place as the audience enters. A chanted KYRIE [In Festis Duplicibus or similar] fills the space as the lights fade up and a priest in full raiment enters. The priest carries a censor filled with burning incense and creates almost a fog on stage. As the KYRIE continues, the priest takes holy water and blesses the playing area. As he does so, the lyrics and music of KUMBAYA or some other more contemporary music slowly creeps into the KYRIE. The priest is perplexed, standing quite still, and tries to determine where the new sounds are coming from. He turns directly downstage as the music gets louder and stained glass window effects appear on the sides of the staging area. The light coming from downstage [behind the audience] is almost blinding, matching the intensity of the music. St Joseph is driven from the stage. The priest does not notice him leave or that St Therese covers her ears.***

***As the blinding light starts to fade so do the music and lyrics of contemporary music yielding to the traditional KYRIE. The priest looks at his watch and seems at ease again and faces upstage again. St Therese uncovers her ears. The priest returns to the burning incense. As he makes his way offstage, St Therese standing stock still, darts her eyes around the playing space, waits uncomfortably for the blackout and exits.***

### ***Scene One: The Christening***

***[The sound of a great wind blowing outside. Ann and Maggie enter. Ann carries a baby wrapped in white blankets. They are quite windblown & are recovering from their struggle to get into the church. They are here for a baptism]***

ANN: That wind. I thought it was going to blow me away.

MAGGIE: It's the Spirit bringing us new life.

ANN: Or maybe we should run for cover.

MAGGIE: Not today, nothing's going to spoil today. It's just the Spirit bringing you all back here. ***[Michael enters into the church with his camera]***

MICHAEL: Wow, I thought that wind was going to “blow me” away. ***[He kisses Ann]***

ANN: Michael, you’re in church.

MAGGIE: You can show signs of affection in church.

ANN: It’s not that. It’s him being him.

MICHAEL: ***[He sees the new windows]***Wow, look at these windows. ***[Ann is fussing with the baby]*** Ann, look at these windows.

MAGGIE: You haven’t seen them since the restoration?

MICHAEL: I haven’t seen them since I was in grade school.

ANN: Michael.

MICHAEL: We don’t go to church very often. ***[He snaps pictures of the windows]***

MAGGIE: They did a wonderful job restoring them. Some people wanted to replace them completely but we fought them every inch of the way, and we won. Each window cost a great deal to restore, and there are ten of them. We had bake sales, and dinners, and individual pledges. Ed and I gave more than we should have, but we came up with it. If you think something is important enough, you’ll make the sacrifice for it.

MICHAEL: ***[Still snapping]***What about the window over the choir loft in back? Why didn’t they restore that?

MAGGIE: No one wanted to restore that one because you can’t see it very well.

MICHAEL: So, you wouldn’t be able to read the donor plates.

ANN: Michael!

MICHAEL: I remember looking at that window for hours wondering when it was going to fall out.

MAGGIE: You turned around in church instead of paying attention to Mass?

ANN: Well.....

MICHAEL: I was a kid. I went to Mass everyday. My mind wandered. ***[He continues snapping pictures]***

ANN: You didn't bring the diaper bag.

MICHAEL: No, Ed's bringing it.

ANN: ***[She hands him the baby, takes the camera from him]*** Here, hold him for a minute.

MAGGIE: Watch the head.

MICHAEL: I will.

ANN: I want you to see what this is like. And I'll take the pictures. When Ed gets here, I'll take a picture of you two with the baby.

***[Ed comes puffing in with the diaper bag]***

MAGGIE: Don't run. You'll give yourself a stroke.

ED: I didn't want to miss anything. ***[Gives Maggie a kiss]***

MICHAEL: You haven't missed anything.

MAGGIE: ***[Takes diaper bag from Ed and takes out a burping towel as Ed leans on a pew, winded from his entry]*** Here Michael, let's put this on your jacket so Christopher doesn't make a mess. ***[She places towel on his shoulder and Michael raises baby to his shoulder]***

MICHAEL: Maggie, I think he looks like you.

MAGGIE: Oh, I hope not.

ED: I think he looks like a chimpanzee. Darwin was right.

MAGGIE: Now stop that.

ANN: Ed you hold the baby, and Maggie next to you and I'll get a picture.

MICHAEL: What about me?

ANN: What about you? Go ahead, play the proud godfather. ***[He gets into the picture behind the family]***

ED: Just like Marlon Brando. ***[Michael hugs Ed and the baby, then Maggie]***

ANN: Okay enough with the displays of affection. I'm trying to get a picture here. ***[She snaps the picture and Michael goes back to Ann and takes the camera]***

MICHAEL: We got this camera in London on our last trip there. It's expensive.

MAGGIE: You've been all over the world. We didn't think you've have time to come back. ***[She has taken the baby back and stands next to Ed]***

ANN: We made the time.

MICHAEL: When you think something is important.... ***[He continues snapping pictures]***

ED: Well, we want to thank you kids for coming back.

ANN: You're our favorite people. We wanted to be here.

MAGGIE: Ed and I talked about it and decided you were the only people we wanted as the godparents of our child.

MICHAEL: Like having what you thought would be your only kids be godparents to your real kid.

ANN: Michael. ***[Awkward silence as Maggie and Ed fuss over the baby]***  
Weren't you a little frightened having a child at your time in life?

ED: We trusted he would healthy and strong, and he is.

ANN: But weren't you afraid for yourself?

MAGGIE: No. I had faith. I did everything the doctor told me and I was just fine. If you want something strongly enough...

ED: You'll make the sacrifice for it.

ANN: You're finishing each other's sentences....

MICHAEL: You sound like an old married couple...

ANN: Michael.

MICHAEL: ...already. Are you sure you weren't married in another life? ***[He is still taking pictures]***

ED: I'm sure. I would have remembered, and had second thoughts about tying the knot again.

MAGGIE: I didn't have second thoughts.

ED: No, I'm sure you didn't. ***[He kisses her again, the three are a picture of family bliss, Ann stops Michael taking pictures, moves him toward the family, awkward silence, Ann pokes Michael, he comes up with.....]***

MICHAEL: Who's officiating today?

ANN: It's not a football game.

ED: Father Harter.

MICHAEL: Gary Harter?

MAGGIE: He flew in too.

MICHAEL: We haven't seen him in years.

ED: We haven't either. He was like a son to us, just like you two, well not you Ann, you were like a daughter... ***[Both Ed and Maggie are cooing over the baby]***

MAGGIE: So, when are you two going to start a family?

ANN: We've talked about it.

ED: Talking doesn't do it.

MICHAEL: And with our jobs right now and the uncertainty over whether we'll get transferred again....

ANN: And our condo is very small, so right now isn't a very good time.

MAGGIE: Just don't wait as long as we did....

ED: Are you having problems having a child?

MICHAEL: Um, no... I don't think so...are we?.... we're not.

ANN: We do plan on having a child, just not right now.

MAGGIE: Well just don't wait as long as we did.

ANN: No, we won't... we couldn't, I mean we wouldn't.

MAGGIE: Don't wait as long as we're waiting for Father Gary to get here. Ed, did you talk to Gary at the hotel last night?

ED: Yes, I told him to be here at noon today.

MAGGIE: Noon? You said you arranged for the baptism at eleven o'clock, and it's only 10:30 now.

ED: No, I told you it was noon.

MAGGIE: Then what are we doing here at 10:30?

ANN: Why don't we go over the rectory and wait.

MAGGIE: **[Too quickly]** No, we won't go there.

ANN: All right, but it's so drafty here, the baby might catch cold.

MAGGIE: We'll go home and come back in an hour. I guess Ed needs a personal secretary to keep his appointments straight.

MICHAEL: I've got a personal secretary and I still forget things.

MAGGIE: **[Starts out of the church with the baby]** Ed, bring the diaper bag. I think we have things to attend to here.

MICHAEL: I can't get over these windows.

ED: Maggie and I pledged a lot to restore the Immaculate Conception over there, and she needed it. But if you think something is important enough ...

MAGGIE: **[Has already almost left]** ...I already told them that.

ED: Well, I can tell them again. **[He hurries to catch up to Maggie]**

MAGGIE: **[Trailing off]** ...just don't repeat yourself so much.

ANN: Michael does that already.

MICHAEL: That's the Immaculate Contraption? **[He is snapping more pictures, trips]**

ANN: Watch where you're going... **[They have all left the church]**

**Scene 2: Altar Breads – First Communion**

***[Maggie, Mrs. Maggie Lindstrom, enters with a small rolling table with bread making supplies, and is making altar breads in the school kitchen. She is waiting for the arrival of two seven year olds, soon to make their first communion, to help her in the preparation. Sharon makes a running entry]***

MAGGIE: Slow down Miss Sharon. You'll upset the applecart.

SHARON: There's no apple cart here, Mrs. Lindstrom.

MAGGIE: Where's Annie? The two of you were supposed to help me today.

SHARON: Annie can't come until noon when her word fast is over.

MAGGIE: She's not talking again?

SHARON: She's practicing for her first communion. She thinks if she can go without talking for one hour, she can go without eating for one hour.

MAGGIE: I'm sure it's harder for her not to talk for an hour that it is for her not to eat for an hour. When I was little, we had to fast from midnight to go to communion.

SHARON: Didn't you die of starvation Mrs. Lindstrom?

MAGGIE: I'm still here aren't I?

SHARON: But what if you went to 4:30 mass?

MAGGIE: We didn't have 4:30 mass then.

SHARON: But what if you would've?

MAGGIE: We went to mass in the morning.

SHARON: But what if you would've had mass in the afternoon?

MAGGIE: We wouldn't have starved to death.

SHARON: But all day?

MAGGIE: Many people living right now, don't have food all day.