

FOR THE LOVE OF GOD

By Tim Westland

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FADE IN:

INT. CHURCH - NIGHT

BROTHER MIKE (21) sits in the dark, the suitcase at his feet his only companion. His face droops with sadness.

FATHER FLYNN (50) appears at the entrance to the church.

Deep in prayer, Mike doesn't notice.

Father Flynn approaches and places a gentle hand on Mike's shoulder.

FATHER FLYNN
God be with you, Mike.

BROTHER MIKE
(mumbling)
And with you, Father.

Flynn can't help but notice the luggage at Mike's side.

FATHER FLYNN
Something troubling you, Mike?

Tears well up in Mike's eyes, but he says nothing.

FATHER FLYNN
Whatever it is, best to treat it
like a Band-aid.

Mike looks up, his red rimmed eyes puzzled.

FATHER FLYNN
If you remove a Band-aid slowly, it
hurts more than the injury it's
helping to heal. But if you do it
quickly...

Flynn rips an imaginary Band-aid from his hand.

FATHER FLYNN
It's not nearly so bad. So -

Flynn repeats the ripping of the imaginary Band-aid

FATHER FLYNN
Go for it. Rip away!

Uncertain, Mike steels himself.

BROTHER MIKE
I've had a crisis of faith.

FATHER FLYNN
Is that all? I thought this was something serious.

BROTHER MIKE
It's very serious, Father. Serving God is my life.

Flynn smiles appreciatively at Mike.

FATHER FLYNN
Your dedication to the Lord is praiseworthy. When God finally calls me home, my flock will be well tended.

BROTHER MIKE
You don't understand. I have to leave the church, Father

Flynn's smile fades.

FATHER FLYNN
Slow down, son. Whatever troubles you, remember Corinthians 10:12. This too shall pass.

BROTHER MIKE
Quoting Bible verses isn't going to solve this problem, sir.

FATHER FLYNN
Come now, Mike. What could be so dire that you would sacrifice the commitment you made to serve God?

Mike wrings his hands, unsure what to say, then commits.

BROTHER MIKE
I'm gay.

Mike exhales in a deep shudder, hugely relieved.

BROTHER MIKE
You're right. I do feel better.

Flynn takes a seat next to Mike and contemplates.

FATHER FLYNN
The Corinthians always were a bunch of out of touch know it all's.

That gets a small nervous laugh out of Mike.

FATHER FLYNN
How long have you, uh, known?

BROTHER MIKE
Since I was 9 or 10, I think.

Flynn nods, searches for the right words.

FATHER FLYNN
Would you like to know what I've
always loved most about God?

Mike considers, nods.

FATHER FLYNN
He's always testing us. Challenging
us. Putting obstacles in our way
and daring us to overcome them.

Flynn walks over to the pulpit and removes a bible from his
robe.

FATHER FLYNN
A shame that so many of our flock
use this book as a tool by which
they can judge each other.

BROTHER MIKE
Church teachings are clear, Father.
Homosexuality is a sin. I must
accept that I am an abomination in
the eyes of the Lord.

Flynn slams the bible on the pulpit, narrows his eyes.

FATHER FLYNN
Do you realize how many things are
wrong with what you just said?

BROTHER MIKE
Father?

Flynn's brief anger is quickly replaced by calm. He gestures
towards the statue of Jesus on the cross.

FATHER FLYNN
What do you think Jesus would do if
he were here instead of me?

Mike shrugs.

FATHER FLYNN
Would he berate you? Judge you?
Kick you out of the church?

Mike considers for a moment.

BROTHER MIKE
You think he'd forgive me.

FATHER FLYNN
Nope. I think he'd love you. I
think he'd have compassion for the
pain you're experiencing.

Overcome with emotion, Mike shudders, cries quietly.

BROTHER MIKE
The Bible says -

FATHER FLYNN
The Bible is a guide, a map for us
to follow to find God during the
darkest times of our lives. But
it's a map for a world two thousand
years dead.

Mike's eyes widen in shock.

BROTHER MIKE
You don't believe the Bible?

Flynn chuckles.

FATHER FLYNN
I read it. I learn from it and seek
guidance from its teachings. But do
I believe in it? No. It's just a
book.

He places a friendly hand on Mike's shoulder.

FATHER FLYNN
What I believe in is God. A loving
God. A forgiving God. A God who
makes no mistakes, only decisions
we're not smart enough to
understand.

BROTHER MIKE
But -

FATHER FLYNN

We're all here because of God, son. Straight or gay or somewhere in between, I believe God created all of us in infinite diversity. He has a plan. You're part of it.

BROTHER MIKE

I get what you're saying, sir. But even if I believe that, once our parishioners find out...

FATHER FLYNN

Are you going to tell them?

Mike shakes his head slowly.

Flynn gestures again to Jesus on the cross.

FATHER FLYNN

Is *HE* going to tell them?

Mike smirks, shakes his head again.

FATHER FLYNN

Well I'm certainly not going to tell anyone.

Flynn motions for Mike to stand.

FATHER FLYNN

I'm very good at keeping secrets, Mike. In fact, there's one I've been keeping for a very long time.

He pauses for effect.

FATHER FLYNN

Since I was 9 or 10, I think.

It takes a moment, but Mike finally gets it and his face transforms from desolate to joyful in an instant.

BROTHER MIKE

I understand, Father. Your secret is safe with me.

FATHER FLYNN

The Lord needs good shepherds for his flock, Mike. I truly believe his only requirement for the job is a loving heart - regardless of who that heart loves.

Mike wipes his tear stained cheeks in relief.

BROTHER MIKE

Thank you, Father. You're the best.

Flynn laughs, then laughs harder.

FATHER FLYNN

I don't know if I'm the best, Mike,
but one thing I do know for sure -

Another pause for effect.

FATHER FLYNN

I'm *Fabulous!*

Flynn smiles at Mike, picks up his bag and walks with him out of the church.

FADE OUT: