

Considering  
by  
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THE PRIEST'S OFFICE IN A CHURCH

A woman, DIANE, attractive, 38 is talking to a handsome Catholic PRIEST, 27.

There are a couple of crucifixes on the wall.

PRIEST

It *is* a commitment, Diane. It happens over time.

DIANE

Yes. And I do have reservations. I have a lot of gay friends.

PRIEST

Yes.

DIANE

And I don't believe God would not love them, for any reason.

PRIEST

We have gay parishioners. We love them.

DIANE

Or that they were sinners. I don't know if I could deal with the sin thing.

PRIEST

Everything is forgiven.

DIANE

And I *like* that, I - I certainly have done some terrible things...

(she stops for a moment)

but do you need forgiveness for just being *who you are*, or a woman. And the whole abortion thing, I mean, it's the unfairness- the man kind of escapes the whole deal...

PRIEST

No one escapes from the Father.

DIANE

I just mean practically speaking. And then there's just the whole power and corruption thing, and, you know, the inquisition, and Bloody Mary, Galileo...

PRIEST

Yes.

DIANE

And then, there's the molesters.

The Priest bows his head.  
I'm sorry! I just need to get it all out there if I'm going to enter into this.

PRIEST

I understand.

DIANE

I don't mean to be blunt. The truth will set you free.

PRIEST

The church is the body of the people, and people make mistakes. Who the people are is what the church is. As soon as you become part of it, it changes.

DIANE

Well, but not that much.

The priest acknowledges with a nod.

PRIEST

What makes you think you want this, then?

DIANE

I don't know, - I guess it's, well it's --the *size*--the ritual and the historicity, it's old, and therefore, authentic in its oldness? and, and *bigger* than me? and mystical, I suppose, open to - it's *complicated* and that appeals to me.. And, well there are a *lot* of different kinds of Catholics, and I know some are really progressive...the most radically progressive of all...the nuns in, in...

PRIEST

Guatemala.

DIANE

Guatemala, yes.

PRIEST

Do you want to know God?

DIANE

I guess I see this as my last best hope. I guess I just feel I *should* - and there's a lot I *do* like.

PRIEST

It's a big commitment.

DIANE

What about you?

PRIEST

The complicated-ness you speak of, I share that with you.  
The appreciation of the risks of the nuns in Guatemala.

Over the following, the priest adjusts his chair, slightly, ostensibly to get out of the ray of sunlight in his eyes, but he's moving closer to Diane.

DIANE

Yes, and farmworkers,  
(rapturously)  
the whole world and writing and history! and the Irish!

PRIEST

(close to her)  
Are you Irish?

DIANE

I think so. Um, on my father's side - we don't know that much; kind of sharecroppers in Virginia and so forth. And St. Patrick's Day, Italy...and New Orleans, Saints. Saints. I really love saints because they're so...

PRIEST

Human.

DIANE

(he gets it)  
Yes.

PRIEST

Except their bodies smell sweet after they are dead.

DIANE

(increasingly passionate)  
There is a *saga* quality to the whole thing! A *saga* of trials and joys, that seems deep and essential, and I watch it all but I am never in it, never a part of it - I long for it!

He takes Diane's hand momentarily, then releases it. She is surprised.

PRIEST

Forgive me. Your hand looked cold.

DIANE

(catching her breath)  
A little cold.

She extends her hand for him to warm it again. He does. She takes it back, again, slowly, changed.

The priest gets up to walk around, to shake off his attraction. He goes to adjust the thermostat.

PRIEST  
It's so cold in here! Do you have a favorite saint?

DIANE  
Um, well, St. Francis, of course.

PRIEST  
Animals.

DIANE  
I love animals.

PRIEST  
I love animals, too!  
(putting it together)  
So, you have collected a pretty -- but heavy -- ornate, infinite *treasure chest*, that you bring in here, of **reason**, and mistrust, and curiosities, secrets, and then places, people, icons, images; Ireland, Italy, New Orleans...

Diane gets up to follow him.

DIANE  
Saints,

PRIEST  
Saints, suffering, grace, etcetera, and, it draws us in, and...and..I get it. I get. All. That. - but - I don't think it's what you -

DIANE  
(putting it together)  
It's like we are either wondering or believing, and sometimes the **wonder** feels like belief and the belief feels like **wonder**, and then something even **stronger than all that** blows through you and you had better not mistake it for a random impulse you should suppress, because **that's it**. It's the flying buttress of your righteousness!

They all but kiss.

PRIEST  
Forgive me...Diane, I never, - I can refer you to...a better priest. If that's what you want. It's a...big commitment.

DIANE  
(overlapping, quickly)  
It's a big commitment.

She kisses him. He kisses her back.

They kiss some more. As they stand there, the walls crumble, and trees and gardens grow up around them and planets whiz by.

The end.