

Agnus Dei

A Short Play

by
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Agnus Dei

(Lights up.

Tim, an attractive young man, can be seen kneeling on a church kneeler. Lighting and set should suggest that he is in a confessional.)

TIM

Do I have to say the magic words?

Okay... calm down...

(Crossing himself:) Bless me father for I have sinned...

Last time? I come every week.

My last confession was Friday. To you – Father Tony.

Well... I've been bad. Very bad. I've done things... unspeakable things...

Worse than last week even. I'm not sure I can tell you... they're... so... bad...

What do *you* think I did?

No. That was last week.

Well, you made me promise I wouldn't do it again. So I haven't. Your fault. Try again.

Nope.

Because I can't even pretend to be that limber anymore.

Absolutely not. It'll come out stupid.

I know I saw the movie, but I can't pull off the cowboy thing.

Okay. I admit it. I didn't prepare anything this week

Why? Because... You know what?...This isn't working for me. Every week you're getting more demanding and frankly I can't keep up.

What do I mean? Since last year... Since I started preparing my "confession" by taking notes in my journal, I've been fucked by more than 800 men... mostly uncut and Slavic... remember your Russian gymnast phase after the last Olympics? Sex in every way you can image. 800. It's a little unrealistic. Even for a gay man. I can't keep up with the fantasies. Can we just skip it and talk? Like we used to?

No... I didn't bring any along this time. The batteries in my camera are dead. So don't expect any surprises slipped under the curtain. Can you just listen. I've got a confession...a real one.

Something... maybe... horrible... It's kind of complicated.

Well...Remember when I was in high school? When I told you about... that guy in algebra ... his place... homework... and we... you know... I was so scared. But when I confessed, you forgave me and said I was okay... And then when I was a freshman and came home for Christmas break and ended up having to go to that... clinic... You were there ... I mean... *here*... for me. I could talk to you about anything. And I didn't feel ashamed.

Well, I'm not feeling that way anymore.

After graduation when I moved back home.

Yeah. When you told me to come later... wait for everyone to leave ... say fifteen Hail Mary's then come into the booth. Call me dense. But for a few months I thought you were just tapping your foot.

Okay. I admit it. At first it was kind of fun. ... like a writing exercise... But all those prying questions... demands for more detail. You've become insatiable. It's like preparing for a mid-term every week. And the stories... You know maybe if you actually touched a guy once in a while you wouldn't be such a kinky pig... I mean God!

No... let's talk about this.

The only time I lie is in this confessional. It's really fucked up. Do you realize I haven't had sex with a man in over six months? I was a normal, healthy red-blooded American male. It's like I'm turning into a priest or something. And it's all your fault.

I don't come here because I'm some kind of forgiveness junky or suicidal or depressed. I don't have some kinky father fetish. Like those girls who line up at the end of mass just to shake your hand. (young girl voice:) *Oh, Father Tony... what a waste.* And I don't come here for a quick yank. Because, believe me, I could get the real thing any time I want.

Why do I come here?

Because It's the only way you'll let me talk to you. Because I notice things. Like when you wore those red socks under your Cossack after I told you it was my favorite color. The way you always look right at me before the benediction. The way you circle Barnes & Noble when I'm working. The time you came up to the door, then stopped. I can see you through the window, you know.

Even though you've never kissed me, or held me, or even touched me... I've known for a long time. I can feel it when you preach... I can sense it right now as you sit there behind the screen, alone in the dark, clutching your rosary to your chest. It's me you want to clutch. I want you to admit it. Right now. Your feelings. Like last night at the Christmas vigil when you gave me communion...

No, we're going to talk about this! You said it. You did... you can't deny it. When you gave me communion... you did... instead of saying "Body of Christ" you said "I love you."

I love you.

I heard it. So did the altar boy. He nearly dropped his paten. Say it again. Say it. Come down off your cross, Father. Be honest for once. Come on, Tony... It's your turn... Confess.

That wasn't so bad, was it? Doesn't it feel better?

Now for my confession... I've done something... In a way it's my Christmas present to you. (He takes a deep breath.) This morning I took my journal and all those pictures and a description of my rather unorthodox relationship with you... and mailed them to the bishop.

Are you okay?

I know it's not going to be easy. What with all these new regulations... I don't like this new Pope. Do you? Things might be pretty rough for awhile.

I did mail them. Swear on a stack of Bibles.

I want you to be happy. Don't worry about your stuff, I have an extra closet that I've cleared out. I know it's not as grand as the rectory, but you did take a vow of poverty after all.

Shhh.... Don't yell. I'm not trying to blackmail you.

I did this for us. So that we can both walk out of this confessional with spotlessly clean souls. That's how you always made me feel. No more fear or shame or guilt... no hiding in the dark. You can finally be the man you really are. It's my gift to you. Because I love you.

Don't cry... We'll be fine... Come home with me. Let me hold you... kiss you... No more fantasies. The real thing. It's okay... I can go slow.

Stop crying. You're upsetting me. Oh... God. This isn't how this was supposed to go. It all made sense this morning. I'm not trying to ruin your life. Shit!

Okay... I'm going to step out of the confessional and say one act of contrition. If by the time I'm done, you haven't come out, I'll leave. I'll know that all of this was just a little miscalculation. I'll recant everything I've written. Tell the Bishop it was all just the ramblings of a feeble mind and you'll never see me again.

But if you come out... Step out of this confessional by the time I'm done. I'll know you weren't lying last night. That you're ready to be honest. Okay? It's your choice.

(Tim stands. He takes a few steps stage left. He closes his eyes and begins to pray.)

O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended Thee, and I detest all my sins, for the loss of heaven, and the pains of hell; but most of all because they offend Thee, my God...

(Tim opens his eyes. He turns and smiles broadly, as though he can see Father Tony in front of him.)

Merry Christmas, Father.

(Lights out. End of play.)