

Scene 6. Father Sebastian's office. Same day, after Mass.

FATHER SEBASTIAN enters the room in a good mood, whistling or humming as he begins to take off his vestments and wind down from Mass. As he does this, he finds the sermon in his pocket again. He looks at it again, kisses it, and crosses to the desk to put it somewhere safe. He gets behind the desk and FATHER CASPAR knocks on the door.

FATHER SEBASTIAN

Entrée!!

FATHER CASPAR

Well, there he is: the man of the hour.

FATHER SEBASTIAN

Oh, come now. You'll make me blush.

FATHER CASPAR

No, really! That was quite the sermon, Father. 'Leave justice to Jesus'-that could be a bumper sticker.

FATHER SEBASTIAN

It was nothing, really. Say, you hungry? Let's hit Grady's Café. They have a great waffle there.

FATHER CASPAR

That's it? We're just going to go to brunch without discussing this? Where did that sermon come from?

FATHER SEBASTIAN

What do you mean?

FATHER CASPAR

I mean just what I said. Where did it come from?

FATHER SEBASTIAN

Where did it come from? What do you mean where did it come from? I delivered it, so I guess it came from me.

FATHER CASPAR

You didn't write it, though, did you?

FATHER SEBASTIAN

You assume I didn't write it?

FATHER CASPAR

Well, did you?

FATHER SEBASTIAN
I'm going to brunch. Are you going to join me?

FATHER CASPAR
Why are you avoiding the subject? Did you write the sermon or didn't you?

FATHER SEBASTIAN
What difference does it make who wrote it? Are you attacking me? Accusing me?

FATHER CASPAR
I'm not trying to do either.

FATHER SEBASTIAN
Well, just be happy for me and for the congregation and come on. Grady's gets crowded about now.

FATHER CASPAR
I am happy for you and for the parishioners. It was really, really good.

FATHER SEBASTIAN
Well, thank you, young Caspar. And although your face doesn't reflect it, I will take you on your word that you are happy for me.

KAREN knocks and enters.

KAREN
Oh, sorry, Fathers. I didn't know you were in the middle of something.

FATHER SEBASTIAN
We're not, really. What do you need, Karen?

KAREN
A phone call for you, Father. Louise Larsen.

FATHER CASPAR
We were just heading to brunch, Karen.

FATHER SEBASTIAN
Oh, don't be silly, Caspar! I can spare a moment for dear Louise. Transfer the call, Karen.

KAREN
Yes, Father. Oh, and before I forget to tell you; that was a wonderful sermon today. 'Leave justice to Jesus.' I think I'm going to put that on our stationery. What did you think, Father Caspar?

FATHER CASPAR

Certainly inspiring.

KAREN

I agree! Truth be told, I was starting to worry about you, Father, but after today...well...I'll transfer the call.

FATHER SEBASTIAN

Thank you, Karen.

KAREN exits and SEBASTIAN sits
behind his desk.

FATHER CASPAR

You want me to leave?

FATHER SEBASTIAN

Not necessary, my young apprentice. I'm quite sure this isn't private. (the phone rings) Hello, Louise? Well, good morning, dear. It was wonderful to see you at Mass this morning after your spell in the hospital. Well, I sincerely apologize for not making it down there to see you. My calendar has been multiplying more than the loaves and fishes! You know you're first on my list. You got the eucharist delivered, didn't you? Good, good. What can I do for you this morning, Louise? Oh, well, thank you so very much, dear. I can't take credit, though. The Holy Spirit worked through me this morning. I'm just glad it touched you so. Yes, dear. Absolutely. What's that? Keep up the good work? If the good Lord's willing, Louise. Thy will be done. Thank you for your call. You stay healthy, now! God bless. Okay, goodbye.

FATHER CASPAR

Louise Larsen? Calling you to praise you?

FATHER SEBASTIAN

And they say there are no modern miracles.

FATHER CASPAR

They appear to be popping up all over the place around here this morning.

FATHER SEBASTIAN

Are we back on the interrogation?

FATHER CASPAR

I'm just a very curious person. Indulge me.

FATHER SEBASTIAN

(hesitates)

Well. Okay. (He checks the door to make sure no one is listening) Okay. Listen. You want to know where that sermon came from? You really want to know?

FATHER CASPAR

Of course!

FATHER SEBASTIAN

I don't know. I don't know where it came from.

FATHER CASPAR

You don't know?

FATHER SEBASTIAN

I don't know! I went up to the pulpit, and I was just going to talk about the gospel off the top of my head. Hadn't prepared a thing. I reached over to my pocket...and there it was. An inspiring, charismatic, eloquent sermon. Just...there. As though it were sent here to me. From above.

FATHER CASPAR

Sent to you from above, huh?

FATHER SEBASTIAN

I know. I know there must be another explanation. But I'd love to think the Holy Spirit just put it there for me! I mean, why not?

FATHER CASPAR

Why not? You can't just rely on the Holy Spirit to put words in your mouth every Sunday.

FATHER SEBASTIAN

Isn't that exactly what we are supposed to do?

FATHER CASPAR

Don't twist my words, Father! You know what I mean!

FATHER SEBASTIAN

You talk as though this is a bad thing, as though it were a problem that needed to be solved.

FATHER CASPAR

Well, isn't it? Don't you want to know where it came from?

FATHER SEBASTIAN

I guess I'm not as naturally curious as you are.

FATHER CASPAR

Okay. If you're not willing to investigate this, I am.

FATHER SEBASTIAN

Don't get ahead of yourself, young Caspar. You're here to learn from me. And I say drop it.

FATHER CASPAR

But, Father...

FATHER SEBASTIAN
I'm hungry and Grady's waits for no one.

FATHER CASPAR
I...

FATHER SEBASTIAN
You don't have to come with me. But I'm going.

MARTHA enters.

MARTHA
Oh, Father! We almost knocked heads there. Everything's cleaned up, just stopped by to see if you needed anything else.

FATHER SEBASTIAN
Oh, God bless you, Martha. No, I think I'm ready to head out to Grady's to celebrate a wonderful Mass.

MARTHA
Well, you certainly deserve it.

FATHER CASPAR
Yes, he does, Martha. Wasn't that sermon something amazing? What did you think of the sermon, Martha?

MARTHA
The sermon?

FATHER CASPAR
Yes, today's homily. 'Leave justice to Jesus.' What did you think of it?

MARTHA
What did I think of it?

FATHER CASPAR
Am I not being clear with my questions?

FATHER SEBASTIAN
Caspar...

FATHER CASPAR
(gathers himself)
I'm just asking one of our very influential parishioners what she thought of the sermon today. You do have an opinion, don't you?

MARTHA
Of course I have an opinion! It did seem to move the crowd...didn't it?

FATHER SEBASTIAN

Yes, Martha, it did. I already got a phone call this morning praising the Holy Spirit's words.

MARTHA

Did you? Praise God.

FATHER CASPAR

Yes. Praise God. I wonder where such inspired words may have come from?

MARTHA

Well, when the Holy Spirit is involved, how can one help but be inspired?

FATHER SEBASTIAN

Well said, Martha.

FATHER CASPAR

You think those words came from the Holy Spirit?

MARTHA

Well...I'm sure I don't know. Only Father Sebastian would know the inspiration for his message. Isn't that right?

FATHER SEBASTIAN

Yes, well, my stomach is inspiring me to eat a Grady's waffle. Father Caspar, why don't you go on ahead and get the car? I'll finish up here with Martha and I'll be with you shortly.

FATHER SEBASTIAN tosses the
car keys to CASPAR, who
reluctantly takes the keys and
heads for the exit.

MARTHA

Have a blessed day, Father Caspar.

FATHER CASPAR

Yes, thank you, Martha. Same to you.

FATHER CASPAR exits.

FATHER SEBASTIAN

Well, Martha? That was very discreet of you.

MARTHA

Discreet?

FATHER SEBASTIAN

Do we need to move to the confessional, dear Martha? I think we both know where that sermon came from.

MARTHA and FATHER have a moment where they are just locking eyes. Finally, MARTHA breaks.

MARTHA
I had to do something. I just had to.

FATHER SEBASTIAN
Martha, I'm not upset.

MARTHA
You're not?

KAREN walks in but neither of the other notices her there.

FATHER SEBASTIAN
Of course not! I'm grateful. Writing that inspired sermon was a loving, caring, beautiful thing to do. You're quite a writer. The Holy Spirit lives in you, my dear.

MARTHA
Oh, thank you, Father. That's quite a relief.

FATHER SEBASTIAN
You wouldn't...you wouldn't consider...maybe you could...

KAREN
You wrote that sermon?

MARTHA
Karen, I didn't see you there!

KAREN
You wrote today's sermon? You wrote those inspiring words?

MARTHA
Yes. I had to do something. To help Father.

FATHER SEBASTIAN
I needed something, Karen. We all know I needed some kind of spark...and truth be told here, I'm asking her to write more.

KAREN
She can't do that!

MARTHA
You want me to write more?

FATHER SEBASTIAN
Why not, Karen? What harm is there in it?

KAREN

The harm is that it's dishonest! The congregation thinks those are your words! You can't have a ghost writer for your sermons!

MARTHA

Maybe she's right...

FATHER SEBASTIAN

She's not right! Priests get material for their sermons other places all the time! What does it matter where it comes from? The congregation will be inspired, just as they need to be.

MARTHA

I guess it might be just what you need to save your job...

FATHER SEBASTIAN

Save my job? Was my job...

KAREN

Oh, Martha, you're so over-dramatic. Don't be silly. Everything's fine, Father. Just a few phone calls, that's all.

FATHER SEBASTIAN

If I'm in danger of being ousted here, I think...

KAREN

There is no danger! You're fine!

MARTHA

Karen...

CASPAR comes in and hears the next line.

KAREN

It's just the squeakies getting their dander up. There is no big conspiracy or anything!

FATHER SEBASTIAN

No one said anything about a conspiracy.

KAREN

No, I know...I just...Martha can't keep writing your sermon.

FATHER CASPAR

Martha wrote it?

FATHER SEBASTIAN

What are you doing back here?

FATHER CASPAR

I forgot my wallet—is there a confession in the room?

MARTHA

I wrote it! I wrote it.

FATHER CASPAR

I knew it.

MARTHA

Yes, now you know. And it seemed to work wonders!

MARTHA subtly gets a pink pill
from her purse and puts it
under her tongue.

FATHER CASPAR

Well, be that as it may—the sermon situation may improve,
but the rest of it all...

FATHER SEBASTIAN

The rest of what all...what are you saying?

KAREN

He isn't saying anything.

FATHER SEBASTIAN

Are you really here to learn from me, Caspar? Why were you
sent here?

FATHER CASPAR

I left the car running...

FATHER SEBASTIAN

Tell me. I welcomed you in here like a son, Caspar. You
owe me that.

FATHER CASPAR

I am here to learn, Father.

FATHER SEBASTIAN

To learn what?

FATHER CASPAR

I think we should go to brunch. Grady's won't wait forever.