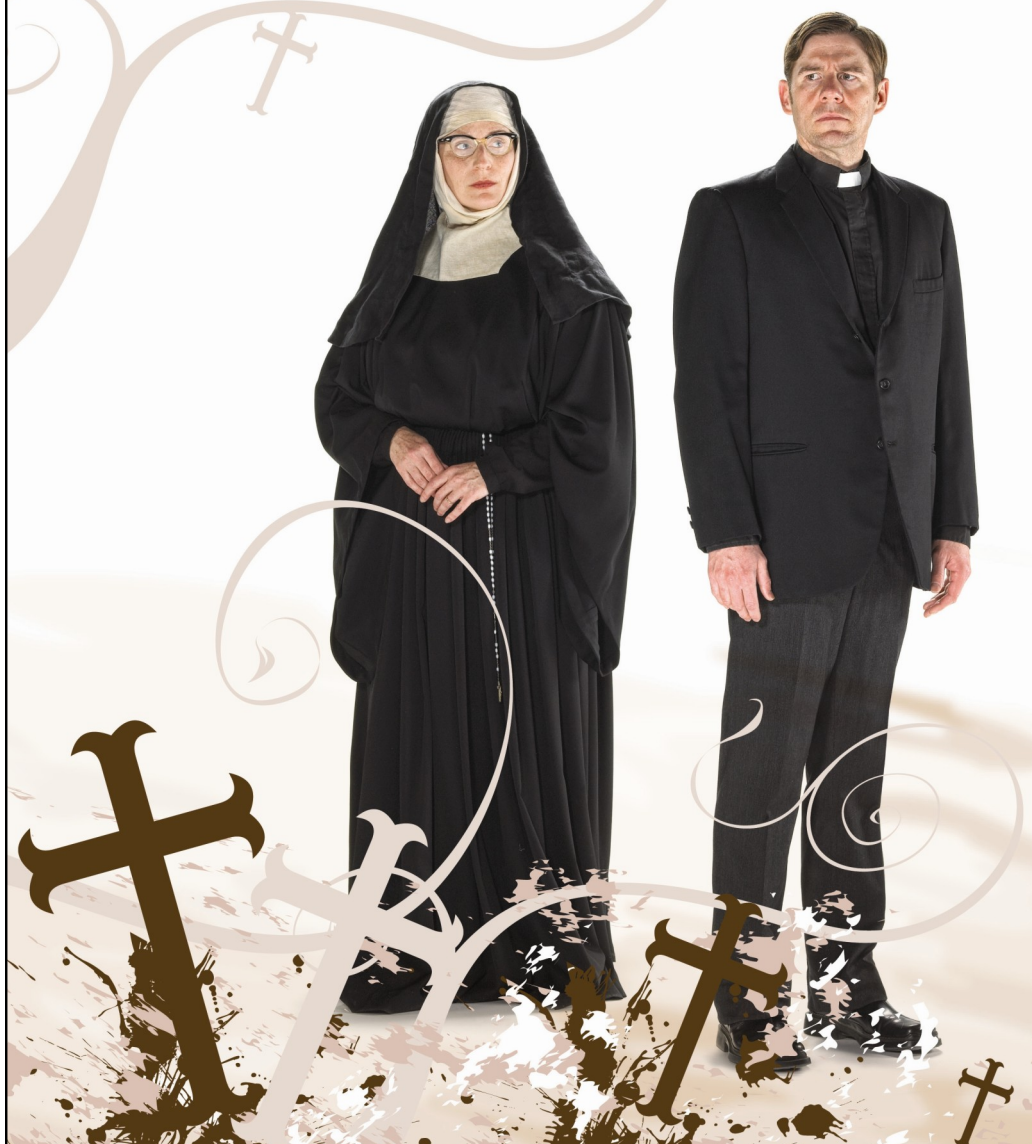


DOUBT



A study guide for students and educators

Researched and designed by the Education Department at Milwaukee Repertory Theater, this study guide is intended to prepare you for your visit. It contains biographical and historical information that will deepen your understanding of and appreciation for the production. We've also included questions and activities for you to explore before and after our performance of

DOUBT

If you would like to schedule a classroom workshop, or if we can help in any other way, please contact:

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SYNOPSIS

Doubt is set in the Bronx area of New York City, at a Catholic school called St. Nicholas. It is 1964. The play opens with a sermon by Father Flynn on the nature of doubt. He advises people to take comfort in the fact that doubt is a universal experience: "When you are lost, you are not alone."

The scene then shifts to the office of Sister Aloysius, the principal of St. Nicholas. She meets with Sister James, a new teacher, and questions the young nun's methods of teaching and discipline. Sister Aloysius advises Sister James to be less trusting of her students and to keep an eye out for anything suspicious in the school.

A few weeks later, Sister James reports to Sister Aloysius again. They discuss the progress of Donald Muller, the school's first and only black student, and Sister James says that he is being watched over by Father Flynn, who has "taken an interest" in the boy. She describes a recent incident where Donald came to class looking uncomfortable and smelling of alcohol after a meeting with Father Flynn. Sister Aloysius suspects that there might be something inappropriate in the relationship between the boy and the priest.

Shortly thereafter, Sister Aloysius confronts Father Flynn about the matter, with Sister James present as a witness. Flynn explains that he caught the boy drinking altar wine, but chose not to tell anyone about the matter to keep Donald from losing his position as an altar boy.

Sister Aloysius does not believe him and meets with Donald Muller's mother to discuss the matter. Mrs. Muller listens to the nun's suspicions, and replies that whatever relationship Father Flynn has with her son, she is glad he is watching out for the boy. After she leaves, Flynn storms in, furious at Sister Aloysius for attempting to destroy his reputation. Flynn insists that he's innocent and Sister Aloysius says that she is just as certain he is guilty. She exits, and Flynn places a call to the bishop.

In the final scene, Sister Aloysius is speaking to Sister James in the school's garden. Flynn is gone, having requested a transfer to a different parish. Aloysius admits that she never had any proof of Flynn's guilt. As the play ends, Sister Aloysius reveals her own uncertainty about the rightness of her actions.

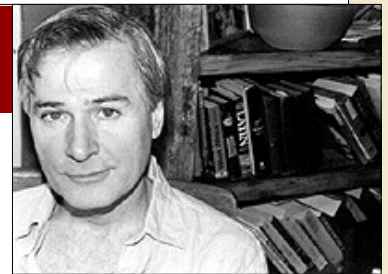
ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT:
JOHN PATRICK SHANLEY

John Patrick Shanley was born in 1959, in the Bronx Area of New York City. He was raised Catholic, and many of the themes and ideas of *Doubt* were born from Shanley's own education at the hands of Sisters of Charity. "There was a quality of *certainly* being exercised around me," he reports, "that something in me was answering with something that felt very powerful called 'doubt'."

"I was born a writer," Shanley says, and he experimented with many forms of writing growing up. He composed an award-winning essay at the age of twelve, then became a poet through his teens and early twenties. He took every writing class available at New York University, eventually enrolling in a playwriting course because "it was the only one left." This course

marked the beginning of a long and successful career. "As soon as I finished the play, the student organization offered to give it a full production in a 300-seat house, going into rehearsal like three weeks later. And that excited me."

Shanley has since written 23 plays, including *Danny and the Deep Blue Sea* (1983), *The Big Funk* (1990) and *Cellini* (2001). None of his plays ran on Broadway until *Doubt* in 2004, which won four Tony awards and earned Shanley a Pulitzer Prize. He has also written several screenplays, including *Moonstruck* (1987) which won him an Oscar for Best Writing.



ORGANIZATION OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

Church hierarchy can be confusing if you are unfamiliar with the terms. Think of the rankings within the Church as you would think of the rankings within a government: The **Pope** is the top authority, like a president or King, to whom everybody answers. He chooses **Cardinals** to assist him in specific areas, like the President appoints a Secretary of Education and a Secretary of Defense.

Just like our country is divided into states which are run by governors, the Church is divided into **dioceses** which are controlled by **bishops**. Dioceses come in many different sizes; a single diocese may consist of several counties or an entire state. An especially large diocese is called an **archdiocese**, and is run by an **archbishop**.

Each diocese is then divided up into **parishes**, which cover several neighborhoods. Each parish has a **parish church** and a **pastor**, who is appointed by the bishop. Confused? Here's a visual example.



POPE BENEDICT XVI

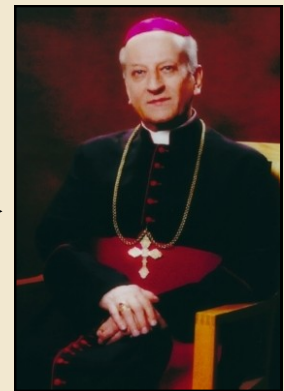
THE POPE
Supreme Head of the Catholic Church.

CARDINALS
Report to the pope. responsible for electing new popes, serving on various councils, and overseeing bishops and dioceses.

BISHOPS
Appointed by the Pope to run a diocese.

PASTORS/PRIESTS
Appointed by a Bishop. A pastor is simply a priest who works in a parish and oversees day-to-day activities of the parish church, including hearing confessions, leading prayers, and performing marriages.

LAITY
All non-**ordained** members of the church.



CARDINAL FRANC RODE

MONSIGNORS

A priest who has performed exemplary service to the church may be awarded the title of Monsignor by the pope. This does not give the priest extra authority or salary - it is simply an honorary title.



NUNS

Women who devote themselves to the service of the Church. Report to the Mother Superior of their order. Since nuns are not ordained, they count as members of the laity.

ORDAINED: GIVEN THE AUTHORITY TO PERFORM CERTAIN RELIGIOUS CEREMONIES, LIKE WEDDINGS AND BAPTISMS.

CAST OF CHARACTERS



Sister Aloysius

WHO SHE IS: The principal of St. Nicholas, the Catholic church and school that serves as the setting for *Doubt*. She is a Catholic nun in the order of the Sisters of Charity. She is strict, grim, and believes in the value of hard work and discipline. “Every easy choice today will have its consequence tomorrow,” she states. “Mark my words.”

THOUGHTS ON TEACHING: Sister Aloysius believes in the value of authority. To her, it is better to be feared than loved. She believes that a teacher should be a guardian, not a friend, and that children need to be protected even from themselves.

THOUGHTS ON THE CHURCH: Sister Aloysius’ attitude towards the Church mirrors her thoughts on teaching: the Church should be seen as an authoritative body. Any softening of the Church, or any attempt to make it more friendly, decreases that authority. Naturally, she is opposed to the ideas of Vatican II (see page 6) that Father Flynn supports.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: Do you believe Sister Aloysius is justified in her actions? In her situation, what would you have done differently?

What, if anything, does Sister Aloysius have doubts about? By creating the character of Sister Aloysius, what is the author trying to say about the nature of doubt (or the danger of certainty)?



Sister James

WHO SHE IS: A young nun in the Sisters of Charity, who teaches eighth grade at St. Nicholas. She spends much of the play trying to convince Sister Aloysius to give up her crusade against Father Flynn, saying that she is convinced of the priest’s innocence. “You’re not,” Sister Aloysius responds, “You just want things to be resolved so you can have simplicity back.”

THOUGHTS ON TEACHING: In the first scene featuring Sister James we learn that she is inexperienced, but believes herself capable of handling her students. She does not send students down to Sister Aloysius for discipline, preferring to “handle things herself.” Sister James disagrees with Sister Aloysius about a teacher’s role in the classroom: “I want my students to feel like they can talk to me,” she says. She thinks that the best way to get students excited about learning is to be enthusiastic about the subjects you teach.

POST-SHOW DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: What makes a good teacher? Compare the teaching and disciplinary strategies of Sister Aloysius and Sister James. What are the advantages and disadvantages of each woman’s philosophy?

What does Sister James have doubts about? By creating the character of Sister James, what is the author trying to say about doubt?

The Sisters of Charity of New York

The Sisters of Charity are an order of nuns who focus their efforts on education, healthcare and child care. Established in 1846, the order built and ran hospitals, orphanages and schools all over the city. The Sisters made up a major part of New York’s Catholic school system: they founded and ran almost every **parochial** school in the city during the 19th and 20th centuries. There are currently 5,000 Sisters in the order, working all over the United States.

CAST OF CHARACTERS



Father Flynn

WHO HE IS: A priest at St. Nicholas church, who also teaches religion and physical education.

THOUGHTS ON THE CHURCH: Father Flynn supports the ideas of the Second Ecumenical Council (see page 6). He believes in a welcoming church, where **parishioners** see the **clergy** as part of their own family. He attempts to make the church friendlier and more accepting, suggesting that they add **secular** songs to the Christmas pageant and take the students out for ice cream and camping trips.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: The question that drives the action of the play is whether or not Father Flynn is guilty of sexually abusing one of his students. In the 1990s, a number of court cases were brought against members of the clergy by former students accusing them of sexual misconduct. In 2004 the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops published the John Jay Report, detailing an estimated 4,300 such accusations against priests in the United States. The media attention paid to these cases fueled widespread debate about the priesthood and Church practices, especially after it was revealed that some bishops within the Church had been transferring offending priests from parish to parish to keep the matter from becoming public. Members of the Church responded that the media were focusing unfairly on the actions of a very small portion of the population. The matter is still under investigation both inside and outside the Church.

POST-SHOW DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: Why don't we ever find out for sure whether Father Flynn is guilty or not? What is the purpose of leaving the ending ambiguous? When you saw the play, who did you like better, Father Flynn or Sister Aloysius? How does this affect how you view Flynn's innocence or guilt?



Mrs. Muller

WHO SHE IS: The mother of Donald Muller, St. Nicholas' only black student.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: The Civil Rights Act of 1964 was passed just months before the events of the play. Prior to 1964, all public schools were **segregated**. The Act outlawed discrimination in public facilities, government and employment. Despite the laws protecting them, black students still faced ridicule and threats for years after school integration took place.

Some Catholic schools had outlawed segregation as early as 1940, but it was up to the Bishop of each diocese to decide whether or not to integrate the schools under his control. In the play, Sister Aloysius states that Donald is the first black student ever to attend her school.

POST-SHOW DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: Consider Mrs. Muller's reaction to the news that her son may have been molested. Do you think her attitude is justified? What, if anything, would you do differently in her situation?

Why "Father"?

Catholic priests take vows of celibacy (meaning they agree never to marry) in order to fully serve the needs of the Church. To put it simply, the priest is thought of as married to the Church; and since the Church is referred to as the spiritual mother of all Catholics, that makes the priest their spiritual Father.

PARISHIONER: A MEMBER OF A PARISH. A CHURCHGOER.

CLERGY: ORDAINED MEMBERS OF A RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATION.

SECULAR: NOT PERTAINING TO RELIGION.

SEGREGATED: SEPARATED FROM THE MAIN BODY OF SOCIETY; IN THIS CASE, THE SEPARATION OF BLACK AND WHITE STUDENTS.

VATICAN II

Doubt is set in 1964, in the middle of a period of great change in the Catholic Church. In 1962, Pope John XXIII created something called the “Second Ecumenical Council”, also known as Vatican II, in order to bring the church up to date. He felt that religion had become a “fortress” and the church was failing to address the needs of society. As he put it, “I want to throw open the windows of the Church so that we can see out and the people can see in.” Gathering all the world’s bishops in Rome, as well as many religious experts and consultants, Pope John began a series of meetings to reform the Church for the modern age.

Vatican II was a huge undertaking. Over 2500 religious leaders spent four years discussing and writing reforms for a 2,000-year-old institution. The idea of the Council was not to rewrite the documents that the Church was based on, but to figure out how to present those documents in a new way. The changes made during Vatican II are too many to even summarize, but here is a general overview of the face of the church before and after the Council.

BEFORE VATICAN II...	AFTER VATICAN II...
Mass is conducted exclusively in Latin.	Mass is read in local language, and everyone in the church may participate in the prayer.
Emphasis on the separation between the Church and the secular world: the idea is that the Church is a pure, perfect institution and the secular world does not live up to its standards.	Emphasis on community. Church services are intended to be less formal and intimidating, and a greater emphasis is placed on neighborhood outreach: picnics, softball leagues, and so on.
Women have a very limited role within the Church. They can be nuns, but they cannot be ordained. Priests and Bishops make all decisions regarding the parish.	Parish councils are formed to give laypeople of both genders input on the running of the Church: spending, outreach, education, and so on. Women still cannot be ordained, however.
Laypeople are expected to “pray, pay, and obey” - and are not allowed to do much else.	Laypeople make up parish councils (see above) and are allowed to aid in church ceremonies that were previously performed only by the clergy.
Religious services are seen as a time for quiet reflection. They are not social occasions. Anything that was “less than serious” worked against the idea of the church.	Religious services were given a more social atmosphere. A pastor might bring in a guitar or tell jokes during his sermons.
Little attempt was made to reach out to other religious groups. The Catholic Church is seen as the only true Church.	Dialogue committees are formed to find common ground with other Christian churches and figure out ways to work together. Catholic groups begin to work alongside Jewish groups to combat anti-Semitism.

MASS: A CATHOLIC CEREMONY OF WORSHIP, PERFORMED EVERY SUNDAY.

LAYPEOPLE: MEMBERS OF THE LAITY. NON-ORDAINED MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH.

A BRIEF MOMENT WITH LAURA GORDON

Laura Gordon has been a member of Milwaukee Repertory Theater's Resident Acting Company since 1993. She plays Sister Aloysius in the upcoming production of Doubt.

How did you go about preparing to play Sister Aloysius? Is there anything you've been able to draw upon from your own experience to help you play this role?

The process of preparing this role has been a bit different for me. Ordinarily I feel some sort of intuitive understanding of the character right off the bat, and I build from there...working from the inside, out. Almost as if I were a sculptor working in clay...starting small and building outward. With Sister Aloysius I didn't get that intuitive jump start. I understood the character intellectually, but couldn't identify the truth at her core. So this process has felt a bit like I'm chiseling a character out of a block of marble...chipping away at who she is, from the outside in. As a result, I wanted to work with costume pieces right away...I needed her glasses and shoes. Finding her voice and movement were very important to me. And the more I chip away, the more I realize that there is plenty that I can draw on from my own experience. There are certainly issues that I feel passionately about. They may not be the same issues that drive Sister Aloysius, but the passion is the same.

Why is *Doubt* important? Why was the play written? What is it about?

As John Patrick Shanley describes in the preface of this play, doubt was once considered an admirable characteristic, rather than a sign of weakness. Doubt is the first step towards change. I think he was responding to a culture that he sees as being incapable of true debate. You see it on all the panel news programs, in all the presidential debates...people holding firm to their particular agenda and not budging an inch. While the play takes place in 1964 in the Catholic Church, it resonates in a very contemporary way.

On paper, Sister Aloysius isn't very likable. She's stern almost to the point of caricature, doesn't like sugar or Frosty the Snow-

man, and seems satisfied to hear that the students in her school are terrified of her. How is it possible to make the audience sympathetic to this character?

You have to ask yourself the question, "why does she do the things she does?" That stern quality is a response to something. Something is driving her in a very passionate way throughout the play. Once you begin to understand the psychology...and the depth of character, you can move away from caricature. She's described as a "block of ice." But really she is quite warm underneath an incredibly tough exterior.

What is enjoyable about playing this character? What is difficult?

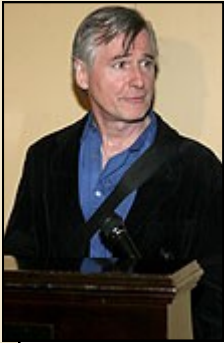
It's enjoyable to play any character that has such strong convictions...such complexity. It's difficult to play a complex character...but that's what makes it enjoyable.

The question that drives the plot of the play is whether or not Father Flynn is actually guilty of any wrongdoing. The audience is meant to remain in doubt, even after the end of the play. Have you, as an actor, made up your mind either way? Do you think it's necessary to the performance of your role?

I've made up my mind. I have to be in the moment with the character...she certainly has an opinion which I must share. But one of the great strengths of the play is the discussion that can happen among audience members on their way home. There will be differences of opinion.



QUOTES FOR DISCUSSION



"We are living in an age of extreme advocacy, of confrontation, of judgment and verdict. Discussion has given way to debate. Communication has become a contest of wills. Public talking has become obnoxious and insincere. Why? It's because, deep

down under the chatter, we have come to a place where we don't know anything. But nobody's willing to say that." *John Patrick Shanley*

Shanley makes several bold assertions here. Consider the following statements. Do you agree or disagree? Provide examples of people, organizations, or programs in modern society which you think illustrate or refute each statement.

- 1) Discussion has given way to debate.
- 2) Communication has become a contest of wills.
- 3) Public talking has become obnoxious and insincere.

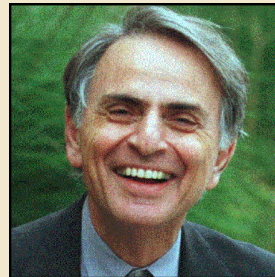
"Can you get comfortable with not knowing, with not being certain?" - *John Patrick Shanley*

Name three things in your life that you are certain about. Why are you so certain about these things? What do you base your certainty on?

"The beginning of wisdom is found in doubting; by doubting we come to the question, and by seeking we may come upon the truth."

Pierre Abelard

Think about some positive outcomes of uncertainty. What are some examples of social or scientific advances which were brought about by challenging an established "fact"?



"If you are only skeptical, then no new ideas make it through to you. You become a crotchety old person convinced that nonsense is ruling the world. (There is, of course, much data to support you.) But every now and then, a

new idea turns out to be on the mark, valid and wonderful. If you are too much in the habit of being skeptical about everything, you are going to miss or resent it, and either way you will be standing in the way of understanding and progress."

- *Carl Sagan*

What is scientific skepticism? What is the role of doubt in scientific inquiry? In your opinion, do doubt and skepticism help or hinder the advancement of knowledge?

"Sister James, my dear, you must try to imagine a very different kind of person than yourself. A man who would do this has already denied a great deal. If I tell the monsignor and he is satisfied with Father Flynn's rebuttal, the matter is suppressed." *Sister Aloysius*

"In the pursuit of wrongdoing, one steps away from God. Of course there's a price." *Sister Aloysius*

Sister Aloysius oversteps her authority because she fears a cover-up. What does the play tell you about the motivation behind her actions? Considering the disciplinary structure of the Catholic Church (see page 3), what, if anything, could she have done differently?

MORAL DILEMMAS

A moral dilemma is a situation where no solution seems morally correct. Sister Aloysius struggles with such a situation in *Doubt*: should she risk ruining her own career and Father Flynn's reputation to pursue her suspicions (which may be unfounded), or let a potential child molester go unpunished?

What moral dilemmas do we face in modern society?

Below are two examples of moral dilemmas, taken from the book *Moral Reasoning* by Victor Grassian. Discuss each one with a partner or as a group.

THE OVERCROWDED LIFEBOAT

In 1842, a ship struck an iceberg and more than 30 survivors were crowded into a lifeboat intended to hold 7. As a storm threatened, it became obvious that the lifeboat would have to be lightened if anyone were to survive. The captain reasoned that the right thing to do in this situation was to force some individuals to go over the side and drown. Such an action, he reasoned, was not unjust to those thrown overboard, for



they would have drowned anyway. If he did nothing, however, he would be responsible for the deaths of those whom he could have saved. Some people opposed the captain's decision. They claimed that if nothing were done and everyone died as a result, no one would be responsible for these deaths. On the other hand, if the captain attempted to save some, he could do so only by killing others and their deaths would be his responsibility. The captain rejected this reasoning. Since the only possibility for rescue required great efforts of rowing, the captain decided that the weakest would have to be sacrificed. In this situation it would be absurd, he thought, to decide by drawing lots who should be thrown overboard. As it turned out, after days of hard rowing, the survivors were rescued and the captain was tried for his action. If you had been on the jury, how would you have decided?

LES MISERABLES

In Victor Hugo's *Les Miserables*, the hero, Jean Valjean, is an ex-convict, living illegally under an assumed name and wanted for a robbery he committed many years ago. Although he will be returned to prison - probably for life - if he is caught, he is a good man who does not deserve to be punished. He has established himself in a town, becoming mayor and a public benefactor. One day, Jean learns that another man, a vagabond, has been arrested for a minor crime and identified as Jean Valjean. Jean is first tempted to remain quiet, reasoning to himself that since he had nothing to do with the false identification of the vagabond, he has no obligation to save him. Upon reflection, however, Jean judges such reasoning "monstrous," and decides that he cannot allow another man to be punished in his place. But if he confesses and is sent to prison, the hundreds of workers who look to Jean for their livelihood will all suffer. The right thing to do, he now claims to himself, is to remain quiet, to continue making money and using it to help others. The vagabond, he comforts himself, is not a worthy person, anyway. Still unconvinced and tormented by the need to decide, Jean goes to the trial and confesses. Did he do the right thing?



SOURCES AND SUGGESTED READING

Catholicism for Dummies, by Rev. John Triglio Jr. and Rev. Kenneth Brighenti. Indiana: Wiley Publishing, 2003.

Catholics in America: A History, by Patrick W. Carey. Connecticut: Greenwood, 2004.

The Catholic School: its Roots, Identity, and Future, by Harold A. Buetow. New York: Crossroad, 1988

The Parables of Jesus, by Abigail Willis. New York: Penguin Books, 1998.

PARABLES

The full title of this play is *Doubt: A Parable*. A parable is a brief story used to make a point or teach a lesson. It is similar to a fable, but more realistic: fables typically feature talking animals and magical events, whereas parables are stories about ordinary people in everyday situations.

Parables make complicated ideas easier to understand and discuss. They feature prominently in religious texts, since parables are ideal for illustrating the moral concepts behind religious teachings. In the Catholic Church, for example, a priest will often use a parable to introduce the subject of a sermon.

After you have seen *Doubt*, consider why Shanley labels it a parable. What is the message of the play? How does the story help to illustrate this message?

The following are examples of parables. What lesson is each story trying to illustrate?

THE DEBTOR AND THE KING

A Lord owed a large sum of money to the King. One day, the King summoned the Lord to his castle and ordered the man to pay off his debt.

“Great and mighty ruler,” the Lord said, “I do not have the money to pay my debt.”

“Then,” roared the King, “I will order my guards to seize your house and your cows and your dog and all your goods, and sell them to pay off your debt.”

“Have mercy!” cried the wretched Lord, “Give me three more days and I will have the money for you!”

And the King took pity on the Lord, and gave him three days to pay his debt. When the Lord left the palace, he met a peasant who owed him twenty pieces of gold.

“Peasant! Give me those twenty pieces of gold you

owe me,” he said, “for I have to pay off my debt to the King.”

“I don’t have twenty pieces of gold to spare right now, my Lord,” replied the peasant, “but I can get it for you

if you give me a few days.”

“Idiot!” the Lord bellowed, and he attacked the peasant and beat him until the peasant was forced to give up his gold.

The King heard of this, and immediately summoned the Lord before him again.

“Ungrateful wretch!” he said, “After I showed mercy to you, could you not show the same mercy to your fellow man?” And he ordered his guards to sell the Lord’s house and cows and dog, and the Lord was sent to prison until he had worked off the remainder of his debt.



THE FARMER'S DONKEY

One day a farmer's donkey fell down into a well. The animal cried piteously for hours as the farmer tried to figure out what to do. Finally he decided the animal was old, that the well needed to be covered anyway and that it just wasn't worth retrieving the donkey.

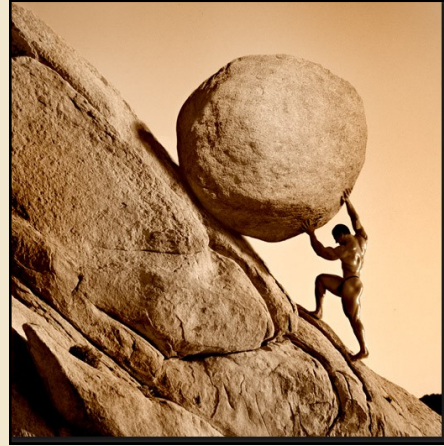
He invited all his neighbors to come over and help him. They all grabbed a shovel and began to shovel

dirt into the well. At first, the donkey realized what was happening and cried horribly. Then, to everyone's amazement, he quieted down.

A few shovel loads later, the farmer finally looked down the well and was astonished at what he saw. With every shovel of dirt that

hit his back, the donkey was doing something amazing. He would shake it off and take a step up.

The farmer's neighbors continued to shovel dirt on top of the animal, who continued to shake it off and step up. Pretty soon, the pile of dirt had grown so high that the donkey jumped out of the well and trotted off.



THE PEASANT AND THE BOULDER

The King had a boulder placed on a roadway. Then he hid himself and watched to see if anyone would remove the huge rock.

Some of the kingdom's wealthiest merchants and noblemen came by and simply walked around it. Many loudly blamed the king for not keeping the roads clear, but none did anything about getting the stone out of the way.

Then a peasant came along carrying a load of vegetables. Upon approaching the boulder, the peasant laid down his burden and tried to move the stone to the side of the road. After much pushing and straining, he finally succeeded.

After the peasant picked up his load of vegetables, he noticed a purse lying in the road where the boulder had been. The purse contained many gold coins and a note from the king indicating that the gold was for the person who removed the boulder from the roadway.

WRITE YOUR OWN

After you have studied the stories above, try writing your own parable. Take a lesson you learned growing up, and write a story that illustrates that lesson. For example, the moral of "The Boy Who Cried Wolf" could be summarized as "Lying is bad, and will make people stop trusting you."

If you're stuck, start with a common saying like "Haste makes waste" or "A fool and his money are soon parted" and write your story based on that.

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The Audience

You can sit there and have a universal experience, of fear, of anger, of tears, of love, and I discovered that it's the audience, really, that is doing the acting. - **Marlon Brando**

Theater is a collaborative art form. The success of a production relies upon every member of the ensemble performing their role expertly, from the cast and crew to the administrative staff to the audience themselves. Come prepared to make your contribution as a member of the audience. You have an active role to play, and the performers are relying on you to be respectful and attentive. Months of preparation, weeks of rehearsal and hours upon hours of effort have gone towards providing the best possible performance for you.

Your participation is what makes this process worthwhile.

Visiting The Rep ...

Milwaukee Repertory Theater is housed in the Milwaukee Center at the corner of Wells and Water Streets, downtown. Our building was formerly the home of Electric Railway & Light Company. This name is still carved on the wall outside.

You'll enter on the Wells Street side into a large, open space. Our box office will be visible on your left as you come through the front doors. The large space is the main hub for the businesses that share this building: a bank, an office tower, the Pabst Theater and the Intercontinental Hotel. If you walk into the center of this area, you'll see a staircase on your left. You will take this staircase to the Quadracci Powerhouse Theater lobby.

Inside the lobby are restrooms, water fountains and a coat check. If you decide to bring a snack, please know that food and drink are NOT permitted in the theater. However, you can leave things (at your own risk) in the coat check room, and enjoy them outside the theater during the intermission. Most plays have one intermission that is about 20 minutes long. You might also want to look for signs in the lobby which give the full "running time" of the play.

If you arrive forty-five minutes before the show, you can participate in a FREE pre-show talk called Rep In Depth. An actor from the show usually leads this discussion. This person will tell you a little about the play, the playwright, and the period in which the show is set. Often, they will also share stories about the design and rehearsal process. You can ask questions too!

For information on our education programs and our productions, visit our website at www.milwaukeerep.com

