

Scene 5

Queen of Angels Cathedral, South Philadelphia.

The Narthex

The nuns are singing poorly and joylessly as they file through on their way to mass.

NUNS

SANCTUS, SANCTUS, SANCTUS DOMINUS, DEUS SABAOTH.
PLENI SUNT CAELI ET TERRA GLORIA TUA.

(The nuns turn a page in their hymnals)

MOTHER SUPERIOR

Thank you, sis—

NUNS

HOSANNA IN EXCELSIS.
BENEDICTUS QUI VENIT IN NOMINE DOMINI.
HOSANNA IN EXCELSIS.

(Mother Superior and Monsignor O'Hara enter during the nun's singing)

MOTHER SUPERIOR

Off to Christmas mass we go, sisters. And remember, God loves us when we sing. Even like that.

(The nuns exit)

Monsignor, there will be so few people in church this evening, who will notice how poorly they sing?

MONSIGNOR O'HARA

Which brings me to my news.

MOTHER SUPERIOR

What is it?

MONSIGNOR O'HARA

The Archdiocese is threatening to shut down our church.

MOTHER SUPERIOR

Yes, I've heard those rumors.

MONSIGNOR O'HARA

An offer has been made to purchase the Church.

MOTHER SUPERIOR

Who would buy a church?!

MONSIGNOR O'HARA

Two bachelors who deal in antiques. Just last week, I saw them eye the chapel, loudly say the word "Gothic" three times and then cling to one another for support.

MOTHER SUPERIOR

No one will buy this church.

(Doorbell rings)

Who is that at this hour?

MONSIGNOR O'HARA

The Philadelphia police department. They need to hide a wayward woman in our convent.

MOTHER SUPERIOR

A wayward woman? But Monsignor, I don't—

MONSIGNOR O'HARA

They are making a generous financial donation.

MOTHER SUPERIOR

I see.

MONSIGNOR O'HARA

Think of it as a test.

(Doorbell rings)

Coming! Coming!

(He goes)

MOTHER SUPERIOR

(To God)

Dear Lord, if this is a test, I cannot fail with you by my side. May she be of faith, of modesty...

DELORIS

(From offstage)

Woah! Would you look at this place—damn!

MOTHER SUPERIOR

Perhaps the choir of angels drowned me out and you didn't hear me lord. Faith... modesty...

(Deloris and Eddie enter with Monsignor O'Hara)

DELORIS

I'm cold!