

**HIS NAME IS MICHAEL**  
By Jeromy Darling

Cast of Characters

1 Females; 5 Males

THE CONDUCTOR

SISTER MARY CATHERINE

FR. PATRICK MANOGUE

MICHAEL (PIG)/DEMON

GREGORY

THE KING

## Scene Breakdown

PROLOGUE

SCENE 1 – Fr. Manogue’s Rectory

SCENE 2 – Inside Church, Fr. Manogue’s Parish in Nevada

SCENE 3 – Fr. Manogue’s Rectory

SCENE 4 – Fr. Manogue’s Rectory

SCENE 5 – Fr. Manogue’s Rectory

SCENE 6 – Fr. Manogue’s Rectory

SCENE 7 – Fr. Manogue’s Rectory

SCENE 8 – Fr. Manogue’s Rectory

SCENE 9 – Fr. Manogue’s Rectory

SCENE 10 – Fr. Manogue’s Rectory

SCENE 11 – Multiple

SCENE 12 – Fr. Manogue’s Rectory

SCENE 13 – Fr. Manogue’s Rectory

Note: The entire play may be performed with no set changes and instead with stage lights illuminating different portions of the set.

### Approximate Length

75 minutes

### Time

c. 1867

### Place

Virginia City, Nevada

PROLOGUE

Setting: In front of curtain.

At Rise: THE CONDUCTOR begins his song in front of the curtain, or at front of stage.

THE CONDUCTOR

*Flesh and name mired in earth's mud  
And so Christ gave clean lineage by his heavenly blood  
And wakened hearts for God's love to tell  
So now, hear it ring  
His name is Michael*

(THE CONDUCTOR begins singing in Gaelic. Then he returns to the music station.)

(SONG: Casadh an tSúgáin)

FADEOUT during song

## SCENE 1

Setting: Fr. Manogue's Rectory.

At Rise: Lights up on SISTER MARY CATHERINE, the story's narrator. Throughout her story, the stage comes alive around her, MANOGUE and others acting out portions of the story silently.

## SISTER MARY CATHERINE

The old west is filled with tales of outlaws and marshals, sheriffs and Indians, gold mines, wild horses, saloons, whiskey, robbers, and shootouts. Most of it is fiction, but all of it is legend. Tonight I'd like to tell you a story that's a little bit of both.

You've all heard tales of the characters who brought the wild west to life: Wyatt Earp, Jesse James, Billy the Kid, Calamity Jane, and the like. Less is known of the men and women who cleaned America's wounds, rescuing her soul from depravity and desolation. The missionaries, priests, nuns, and circuit riders that quietly went about their work saving souls from the edge of perdition. It's a shame: the world loves to canonize folks who should be forgotten and forget the folks who should be remembered. Like Fr. Patrick Manogue, a man of great courage and faith, who helped many a person on his or her path to holiness—myself included. But is a tale for another time. Tonight's story is about someone else. But first, I'd like to introduce you to Fr. Patrick Manogue. Let me tell you about his life.

(SISTER MARY CATHERINE now begins to move through MANOGUE's rectory, stopping at the desk, or the chair, at his table, or by his bookshelf, picking up as she goes, arranging things and generally remembering fondly the rectory where our story takes place. Certain items remind her of different memories.)

Patrick Manogue was born in Desart, County Kilkenny, Ireland, on March 15, 1831. When he was just three years old, both his parents died, and the little thatched cottage in Kilkenny became an orphanage of sorts for the seven children they left behind. In the wake of the potato famine, which would send Irish settlers fleeing to America in droves, Michael Manogue, the eldest of the children, set off for America, working hard to bring his siblings to the New World after him.

Patrick arrived in the United States in 1848 at the age of 17. He worked in Connecticut for two years before movin' to Chicago, where he attended the College of St Mary of the Lake Seminary for three years in his quest to become a priest. But by the time the entire Manogue family arrived in the US, the family's need for money had grown desperate. There remained one option for a young Patrick looking to support his family: the gold mines of California. In 1854, at the age of 22, Patrick arrived in California and spent three years at a small but prosperous mining camp known as Moore's Flat, situated about 20 miles from Nevada City on the trail leading north.

While at Moore's Flat, Patrick did quite well digging for gold. The rigors of mining did little to deplete his energy and vitality. He was a young man of great frame and strength and worked tirelessly from morning to night—yet he still put in every spare moment studying. Manogue's popularity with his colleagues is well documented. He frequented the Miners' Union Hall, the Brewery, or Piper's Opera House, and his fellow miners always chose him to arbitrate conflicts between the miners. They accepted his verdicts with grace, preventing many a fight among the men who stood in awe of his powerful Celtic physique and personality.

The wealth Pat acquired might have quickly sidetracked a less motivated man, but while everybody else was seeking fortunes, Pat handled the sledge and the drill. It was not by rail or river that he traveled then but by rough and slow coach into the mountains to face bedrock in a tunnel, for weal or woe. Fortune smiled, and his labor was rewarded with a competence: Pat had not forgotten his desire to join the priesthood, and he realized that if he could become a good priest of the church, he would be the happiest man in the world.

Undeterred by the lure of gold, Manogue left Moore's Flat and traveled to Paris to complete his studies at Saint Sulpice Seminary. At last, on Christmas Day in 1861, Cardinal Francois Morlot ordained him a priest. He returned from Europe to his adopted homeland the next year and reported for duty to his Bishop Eugene O'Connell in Marysville. O'Connell requested that Manogue take the whole territory of northern Nevada as his parish. A daunting task indeed: after scouting the large territory, Manogue decided to make Virginia City the hub of the parish.

For Father Manogue, being a priest seemed somehow to enhance his vitality, good nature, and charm. He often made long trips into the wilderness by himself, sleeping along the trail or on the floor of a log cabin. On his journeys, he converted many Native Indians who could always be distinguished by their Irish baptismal names. He gave gifts of crucifixes and medals to the children he baptized, and those gifts became prized possessions in their adult life, gifts from their Soggarth Aroon, which is a term of endearment the Irish brought to America...it means "Beloved Priest."

By the middle of 1863, Fr. Manogue had collected \$12,000, enough to build his first church. And so he did: a church, a school, and an orphanage, which he staffed with the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul from San Francisco.

(SISTER MARY CATHERINE smiles knowingly here. She is one of the Daughters of Charity.)

We were privileged to be entrusted with the first institutions of learning in Nevada, and to have Fr. Manogue as our leader. And this is where our story begins. It's the story of a good man, a broken boy, and the power of a name.

BLACKOUT

SCENE 2

Setting: Inside Church, Fr. Manogue's Parish in Nevada.

At Rise: FR. MANOGUE is sweeping up his parish after Mass and whistling a tune.

(Out of the shadows, a small, cloaked figure appears and watches him, moving ominously. It darts about and constantly maneuvers just out of sight. The figure crosses behind FR. MANOGUE, but he is ready, sticking the broom's end out to block the figure's path.)

FR. MANOGUE

Alright, that's quite enough.

(The figure stops dead in his tracks)

FR. MANOGUE

If you're looking for something to steal, I keep the silver locked up.

(Pauses)

Show me your hands.

(The boy quickly brandishes a knife and points it forcefully at MANOGUE)

FR. MANOGUE

Now, what do you think you're going to do with that?

MICHAEL

Kill you!

(MANOGUE is startled. The voice is unnatural. Inhuman. He sees a small boy before him but hears the voice of something else.)

FR. MANOGUE

What is your name?

MICHAEL

You're a priest!

FR. MANOGUE

And you're very observant.



MICHAEL

A priest of God!

FR. MANOGUE

Yes. I am. What is your name?

(MANOGUE slowly begins to circle the boy as he now realizes he's dealing with a possession. The boy slowly turns his body, ready to strike.)

MICHAEL

Your parents are dead. I watched them die.

FR. MANOGUE

(With a fury)

In the name of God, tell me your name!

MICHAEL

Raim!

FR. MANOGUE

(Calmly)

Get out of that boy.

MICHAEL

I'm not done with him yet! I make his owner good money!

FR. MANOGUE

Leave him.

MICHAEL

No!

FR. MANOGUE

Alright, I've had just about enough of you.

(MANOGUE turns, grabs a vial of holy water, and begins loudly reciting the Hail Mary as he splashes the boy)

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee...

MICHAEL

Stop it!

(The boy slashes at MANOGUE's hand, cutting him and sending the vial of holy water flying)

I'll kill you!

FR. MANOGUE

You're a stubborn one.

(MANOGUE grabs a crucifix on his desk and wields it against the demon, who averts his eyes)

Now get out of that boy.

MICHAEL

His owners will come for him! They will come for you! I make them rich!

FR. MANOGUE

I'm done debating with you, demon. Get out of that boy!

MICHAEL

I will not leave him! I'm the Prince of Nevada!

FR. MANOGUE

And I'm the priest of Nevada! Get out of that boy in the name of Jesus!

(The demon squeals and flees as the boy's body crumples limply into MANOGUE's arms. MANOGUE removes the boy's hood and is finally able to see his face.)

FR. MANOGUE

Who are you, boy?

BLACKOUT

SCENE 3

Setting: Fr. Manogue's Rectory.

At Rise: The boy is still unconscious, lying on a cot. MANOGUE is at his desk in prayer.

(The boy begins stirring and to MANOGUE's surprise, he does not wake up startled or alarmed. He's perfectly calm and absolutely filthy.)

FR. MANOGUE

Well well. Hello.

(Sees the boy is uneasy)

It's alright, I'm not gonna hurt ya. What is your name?

(The boy just stares at MANOGUE, curious but completely calm.)

FR. MANOGUE

Do ya understand me boy?

(No response. MANOGUE is unsure if the boy is deaf or cannot speak, or both. MANOGUE lets out a gentle bird-like whistle, and the boy perks up, amused.)

FR. MANOGUE

Alright, so you can hear me. My name is Father Manogue.

(Gestures)

Are you hungry?

MICHAEL

Food!

FR. MANOGUE

Well, there's a good word. This is for you.

(MANOGUE motions for the boy to join him at a nearby table as he puts some food together on a plate. Bread. Jam. An apple. A mug. The boy sits in amazement and hesitates.)

FR. MANOGUE

Go ahead, boy. Eat up! As much as you want!

(The boy slowly begins eating, then drinking, then eating more. His ravenous appetite fuels a frenzy of eating and drinking. MANOGUE is pleased. Briefly, the boy stops to offer some food to MANOGUE. MANOGUE, smoking a pipe, politely refuses with a smile and a nod.)

FR. MANOGUE

Alright now, let's try this again. What is your name?

(The boy continues devouring his food)

MICHAEL

Pig.

FR. MANOGUE

I'm sorry, boy, I don't have any bacon at the moment.

(The boy stands and points at MANOGUE, then himself)

MICHAEL

(Pointing at MANOGUE)

Father.

(Points at himself)

Pig.

FR. MANOGUE

(MANOGUE's face falls)

Who calls you that?

MICHAEL

(The boy is back to the meal and answers with a mouth full of bread)

Man.

FR. MANOGUE

What man?

MICHAEL

(Louder)

Man!

FR. MANOGUE

Yes, but what's his name?

MICHAEL

(Angrily)

Man!

FR. MANOGUE

A man calls you by the name of an animal, and you don't even know his name?

(Stands)

Well, that's not your name anymore. I'll give you a new one.

(MANOGUE waits for the boy to respond.)

As soon as I can think of one. A name isn't something you should rush after all.

(Suddenly the boy knocks his mug off the table and, believing himself to be in trouble, stands, turns, grips the table tight, and exaggerated breaths, braces for the whipping he's expecting.)

FR. MANOGUE

(Reassuringly)

It's alright, boy. It's alright. Around here, it's ok to spill.

(The boy doesn't understand)

FR. MANOGUE

Look, I'll...I'll clean it up.

(MANOGUE grabs a towel from a nearby bowl, bends down, and begins mopping up the spill)

You see?

(MANOGUE continues drying and pauses as he notices the boy's filthy feet. He finishes and returns to the bowl of water but comes back and places it on the floor, before grabbing the boy's chair and setting it in front of the water.)

FR. MANOGUE

Have a seat.

(The boy, now more relaxed, is confused. MANOGUE lovingly beckons him to sit and washes his feet.)

FR. MANOGUE

There you go, boy. All clean. I don't have any shoes for you, but I know someone who does. You'll meet her tomorrow morning. Right now, it's time for bed.