

Phil Friedl  
Catholic Church (Pope Michael)  
November 11, 2009  
Delia, Kansas

Sara: Alright, it is November 11<sup>th</sup> again, and we are here at Pope Michael's Church and we are starting the interview. I just want to say that we do plan on making this a public record. We want to make sure that's ok with you, we want to put it up.

Phil: That's fine. Go for it.

Rachel: Maybe just introduce yourself and tell us where you're from.

Phil: Ok. My name is Phil Friedl. I'm 22. I came from Illinois, I was in college for two years for mechanical engineering. I left college because I always thought I was called to the priesthood. It's a really long story but I'm going to really try to shorten it. There was essentially what I wanted to do and what God wanted me to do. God wanted me to be a priest and I wanted to live my life per se. My parents guided me and wanted me to become an engineer and I kinda went with it. I just kind of thought it was really cool. I always loved math. I continued on throughout high school and all that. And eventually I finally failed two mechanical engineering classes I think my second year. And so I just started thinking, is this what I really want to do because I don't want to waste four/five years and not find out if this is not what I want. So I decided after my fourth semester, this is not what I want to do. So then at that time I found, I was looking on youtube, and I found a 1941 Easter mass that was held in Chicago. I watched it and said this is not that same as what I grew up with. Cause I grew up in the Novus Ordo Church my whole life. I though this was much more reverent you know, it's in Latin, you see everything what they did back in those days. It was jaw dropping for me. I was, especially in college I started going to mass more. I would try to go every day but I always had a busy schedule. I watched that and for like two hours it was a nice long mass and saw this is what we need to be. And so I did a lot of research and I found out that Benedict wasn't holding the right doctrine and so I spent a lot of money on books. I don't know if you've heard of the publisher Tan Books in Illinois, I think they moved to Virginia or something now. But in any case, I bought a lot of books, a lot of Catholic books and I did a lot of research and so I saw a trend as Pope Michael was talking about, traditionalism and I was indirectly in it vaguely. I just kind of identified myself as a traditionalist. I think for a month or two and I realized that was wrong when I found his site. I think the key word that I got in his website was traditionalism and the first line was that "traditionalism is seeking a solution outside the papacy." And it completely summed up everything that was wrong with it because during the meantime I was thinking about either going to a monastery, a traditionalist Catholic monastery or the traditionalist Catholic priesthood. And so I saw that there was a lot of, I didn't see the end fighting per se, I saw that there was a lot of separation because I was trying to find what is wrong, why aren't these people united because the church is always united. As soon as I found that there's no Pope, I said, we have to find a pope, we have to do something; we have to get a pope. Eventually I found Pope Michael. I bought the book. I did all the research. I read it once thoroughly right off the bat and then I just kept studying so I came to a moral conviction that he was the Pope and then I sent him my email saying this is my life story, this is kind of what happened, this is why I think I'm called to the priesthood and I want on and

we just kind of talked about it. At that time too, there was another person, I don't know if you know, there's Teresa Bennis also helped with the election and the co-writing of the book Will The Catholic Church Survive the 20<sup>th</sup> Century? and so she was putting out propositions that Pope Michael wasn't the pope. So I was very confused because I was just getting into is Pope Michael the pope or not? So after doing a lot of the research I started writing from my understanding and my moral conviction why Pope Michael is the pope. And I started doing it through church history and through biblical proof. I tried to summarize, not really summarize but kind of gel them in together and why these two parts, these two proofs, the biblical history and the church history would prove Pope Michael. That's essentially what eventually came out to be this document. I wrote a rough draft and I sent it in to Pope Michael and he liked it. I dove into Church history and all this stuff, and I always loved history but in any case I addressed many of the errors that she was pointing out. And that made my moral conviction. This one it's a lot thicker book, my first draft was just twenty pages or something, something real small, just kind of a rough draft. I understood it, I saw from the beginning you can see this slow, it's called the lack of charity in the Bible. So when the sins have grown many, the lack of charity. Which charity as theologians define it is divine love. When divine love has slowly withered away it's because of sins and you can just see this slowly whining of divine love of just Catholics in general about the faith. And so when you get up to 1950s and you see, you know, all the anti-popes and Vatican II you can just see, bam, for me it was just a night and day difference. I saw what was wrong, Catholics were not feverish about their faith and they just didn't care and it was just disheartening in a certain fashion. You find all this stuff out but you always put hope in the situation that the people will come around. If I'm getting off topic...

Response: No you're fine.

Phil: That's what happened with Adam the documentary film maker; I was like am I even on topic anymore?

Sara: Yeah, you're great.

Phil: After writing this and when I finally came here in Kansas to this seminary I started doing research, more on this. I kind of put it together. I asked him "do you think I should continue on this?" "Yeah I think you should." So we started doing, I think in total it took me a year and a half to write, that's with the research and the writing, but mainly the writing took only a few months. After the writing, I sent it to Father Disnus, he's talking to some bishops right now, and he really enjoyed it, so it's not just me who just likes it. And of course, the Pope's mother liked it, the Pope liked it himself. And so, it's nice to see that kind of reaction. You know, it's not just my really fine point it's kind of a general church history of what happened from, I think I started during the 16<sup>th</sup> century, and I just brought it forward. I proved biblically and through church history why Pope Michael is the pope and, I tried not to go too much into theological proofs and stuff because I wanted it to be more of a church history. So it's real nice and simple for people to read and that's what I hoped to gain out of it, for other people, for their education.

Sara: Could you just tell us, give us some time frame, what year did you find Pope Michael online and what year did you end up here? And how did you end up here too?

Phil: oh, the how is always interesting. Back in 2007, that was the spring of 2007, that was my last semester. After I failed my two engineering classes, right in January, or February of 2007 I not really moseyed around, but I didn't really go to classes. I started doing a lot of research about what I wanted to do with my life and then when I found out that, I wanted to be morally convicted of it. and that was when I found the Youtube about the Latin mass, which is called then Tridentine Mass. I found that shortly in March and then after that was kind of just "wow." I had to grasp this wow part. After the wow, because I realized I lived in error my whole life I started doing research and I think it was in the summer of that year, almost early fall when I found Pope Michael. After that, I left in October. I waited almost a whole year I think it was. I left in 2008 of October. I'm trying to get my dates right. October was when I found him in 2007. Practically a year went by. I went and got a job so I could buy more books mainly. After buying more books. My parents were resistant to the idea. Firstly, they didn't want me, indirectly, not wanted me to become a priest. Obviously parents want grandchildren and all that other stuff. So they always went "we don't want you to do that" kind of that. So they never really said it straight out but you just kind of knew it. After I decided all that, we went to the Novus Ordo priest and all that stuff. I think we went to one and just had several discussions with other people in general. It wasn't too deep because they didn't dive into it, they never asked why or that kind of stuff. But we did have a few discussions. Seeing that I was not being the old Phil per se compared to what I am now, you know being a Christian and Catholic. I don't know if they didn't like it if they didn't want to accept it right away. So after that, on the day that I was leaving, my whole family came out not wanting me to go. No, they did not want me to go. They followed me everywhere I was going. I went to the library, to check email and they followed me. So the day that I was leaving, the Pope and I joke about this all the time, but my whole family was there, my mother was crying. I was like "you're gonna see me at Christmas. It's not the end of the world." They were thinking thoughts I don't understand. But anyways, I was leaving, very silent except my mother. After I got in the car, I packed up my bag or my stuff, because I had a lot of books with me. I packed up all my stuff by myself because my father was not the happiest person. He was very silent. He didn't want the Pope to take me to Kansas. After seeing all this resistance climb up to that one moment. I was at peace with myself, I was probably the happiest person there. After that it was probably the Pope or something. But I was so completely at peace with myself, I was so happy. I didn't understand it at a certain point I was happy and they were completely sad. I hope one day to kind of talk to them about it: "Why are you guys so upset?" But any case, after I got into the car and were driving down the road seeing all that resistance, the Pope asks me this question, I'll never forget, he says "are you doing this out of free will?" I was like "are you nuts?" I wanted to say "are you nuts?" Because my father was standing right here, the Pope was standing right here, on a public street. My dad was like this to the Pope, just silent. I wanted to ask him "are you nuts Pope?" I didn't say that, so I said "yeah I'm doing this out of free will." I mean come on! So I joke to myself about that all the time. I'll never forget that. But in any case, what's the question again, did I miss it?

Sara: Yeah, how you ended up here.

Phil: Yeah, so we were driving down and we stop at a motel for a night. Then we came back the next day and that's when we got here. And then what else did you want to know?

Sara: Did he come up to get you?

Phil: Yeah, actually he went to Indiana to visit someone else, I can't remember who. On that one same trip he came into Illinois. He went from Indiana to Illinois then the next day, he stayed one day with them or in a motel, one of the two and then the day he came and picked me and then we drove down half way, got a motel the next day.

Rachel: What was it like once you got here?

Phil: My brother, before I left, I think he called. He said, "Are you scared about being the first one there?" And I said "no, why would I be scared?" It was interesting because during the whole time I didn't know what to expect but I didn't even think about it. Well this is probably going to be a house and something else. When we got on these dirt roads it was interesting. I'm used to paved roads, asphalt and we're sitting here bumping up and down. Getting out in the country is real nice. I really loved it. Cause there's a creek, about a mile west of here. It's just so peaceful and it's almost like, I don't want to be in a monastery in a certain sense but we're so detached in a certain sense from the world and locality of people. There are so few people in this area because it's the country. It's so peaceful, it's so nice. In that respect, I loved it a lot because then you can really sit down and focus. Because if there's restaurants and movie theatres, you're like let's go there. You always have that temptation to just enjoy yourself and not do anything. When I came here, it was really good that we sat down right away and we got down to business. What did you study? What books do you have? And then he always jokes about it. I brought a lot of shredded wheat and stuff because my parents just don't eat that stuff, so I thought well why waste it, so I brought it with me. And he always jokes because I left books at home and he's always like "why didn't you bring the books?" He always rats on me, jokingly. I keep asking my mom "send me my books" and she says "no you got them all." When I go home for Christmas I'm going to go look but that one was funny. When I got here, he always had that excitement, that energy wanting to find a bishop to restore the sacraments, the faith, and that is not an easy task because people are to a certain extent indifferent, or you have people who just don't believe you. So it's a long process and that regard, so you learn a lot of patience. But other than that I mainly just do a lot of studying here. This wasn't my intention writing a book but I did do it. After that, then Eli, he's another Catholic seminarian. He stopped by a couple times. I think two of three times. He stayed one long session before this last one. I think it was four or five months but it was a good stretch of time. We got to bond, you know, like brothers. It's really nice to have someone more my age even though I think he's a few years older than me. Just knowing someone else on that same level, he understands exactly what I'm going through because his parents resent when my parents did too.

Sara: Do you feel like it changed the atmosphere around here, having another person here?

Phil: It did change. Obviously, cooking, I never cooked for myself so in that regard I had to start learning how to cook. So I made some interesting meals, some good, some bad, some indifferent. I'm still working on the cooking part. That's the main part, is trying to chip in, so cooking isn't the easiest thing for me at least. Maybe it's not one of my strong suit, unless it's grilled cheese and tomato soup. So just doing more of the country stuff, picking up fire wood, cutting stuff, pulling weeds that are taller than you out of the ground. That stuff too is always fun. We're thinking about bringing back some chickens because they have a chicken coop, or they call it the chicken mansion because there's a lot of chickens in there. So that kind of stuff, that was very fun. We have a pretty big garden. I think it's 50x50 ft so it's a lot of physical labor. In the winter

we have to kill a lot of trees because they threaten in the water line. So it's mainly a lot of chores and that kind of stuff. It's a little bit different from what I did back home; you know cleaning bathrooms, vacuum that kind of stuff. I do a lot of the same stuff here you know, just everyday normal stuff.

Rachel: You've been here how long?

Phil: This is going to be my second year.

Sara: What do you think was the hardest thing to adjust to when you got here?

Phil: Food. For me it wasn't hard. Surprising I think food would be the hardest thing. It was not hard for me. I don't know why, but it was just like that. That's probably a blessing in disguise that I just don't know.

Rachel: So you kind of touched briefly on it but I was wondering if you could go into more detail on the interactions that church has with people from outside who are either on your side or aren't. You mentioned a little bit about how that requires a lot of patience, I was just wondering if you could talk about that a little bit more?

Phil: I'm just trying to think of a good answer. Say that question again, I have to think about it.

Rachel: What has your interaction been with people outside your church?

Phil: Actually, we've had a couple physical times speaking in presentations, I think it was our second time presenting at Kansas University. It's actually really positive and that's what I'm glad about, is that people are not so... obviously you're going to have those people that think you're just nuts. My parents are probably one of them. I can't argue that because that's just plain accusation. It's always exciting when you see those people in the crowd just "whoa, I've never thought about that before." It's mainly really easy. People are not that resentful. I think the first time we went we had those few people that just did not like us. Whatever we said they'd try to find something, that was very interesting. But that second time people were taking pictures with us and were just being very cordial, very nice. And so, that was very easy to live with compared to the other, "we hate you" kind of thing. When we went to Iowa it was a real nice set up there too. We were in a classroom and there were about 10-15 people and they were all real nice. The professor, when it was lulling down a little he would throw in a question that he was thinking of or something. It kept a good pace; people were always asking questions which is good. So it's kind of just more of a interest or curiosity. Whenever we go out, at garage sales we talk to people they just... Actually a guy at Wal-Mart, he was 50- 60 years old and he said this is the first time I've seen a man in a cassock for x amount of years. It blows you away because you're just walking and all of a sudden he's just standing there looking at you. I'm not an alien, I'm not a green little guy, nothing like that. And so he shakes our hands so you have those type of reactions too where people just look at you, it's like "wow". A lot of that is lost in today too because people do not realize what we have lost. All the treasures in the church, whether physical or spiritual, just even a simple cassock. The Pope was explaining, he was reading one day that one of the saints was talking to his fellow priests that were walking through the town,

and he they were going to be preaching and all they did was walk and one of the other priests said “aren’t we going to preach?” and he said “no we preached, it was silent.” That’s essentially what we’re doing just by our physical presence. We’re preaching just by the cassock itself, it talks about the vow of chastity and so on and so forth. And so there’s a lot of hidden preaching going on as well, without us even saying a word. So that’s kind of a nice thing about it, you don’t have to say a lot of words to really bring something home.

Rachel: Can you tell us a little about some of your interactions with members of the congregation?

Phil: I had a physical interaction with Eli, other than Pope and the Pope’s mother I’ve had interactions with Lauscio, who is in India, obviously by email. With Eli we were just best buds, just long lost buds. We never saw each other before but real easy friendship. He’d always ask me deep, theological questions and he’d be like I have no one else to talk to. You know I don’t think, some of these questions would be like “what would heaven be like if this, this and this?” I’d be like “man I do not know, I’m just trying to get to heaven.” So you have that kind of camaraderie going around too, Asking those deep questions like that. It’s always nice to see that kind of spark, that interest in the faith as well. He’s very supportive of what we’re doing. He’s so supportive that, there was a possible bishop in Africa and he was “I want to go to Africa.” “Wait a second we have to check him out. Hold on a second.” After a while they weren’t for whatever, reason it didn’t work out. That excitement is always exciting. What else? When he was always here, it was during the summer and so we’d play wiffleball out there, playing around. It’s kind of that innocent fun that a lot of people miss these day and you don’t normally do. That one was fun. Then when he was here we’d have classes at 8 in the morning. When you get more people you kind of have to make a more formal schedule. So that’s one thing that I did notice when he had come. More classes, learning Latin, this, this and this. So you knew you were coming down to real business when that was working around. Too, in a certain sense, seeing my future, when you look at all these vows, it’s like “whoa, I’m making a vow.” It hits you sometimes, for me, when I made that I was like I made a vow to God about chastity or about obedience or about whatever. So seeing the seriousness of it, just blows me away. It almost is scary in a certain sense, but I don’t want to say scary, but it definitely will make your mind think. So when he came here it was good because that road of restoration is slowly coming about. He’d always ask me about “what’s going to happen in the future?” this kind of stuff. We’re talking about possibly economic collapse in the United States because of monetary problems and all this other stuff. So he has a lot of political issues he’s talking about too and so we both kind of came on the same road, somewhat similar, so you kind of bounce off ideas. “Well I think the economy is going to collapse and this is going to bring about this, this and this” or that kind of standpoint. I hope I’m answering your question.

Rachel: Absolutely.

Phil: Okay.

Sara: Does Eli plan on coming back? I remember he came to the lecture I was at last year.

Phil: He hasn’t made it clear. But part of the problem is that he doesn’t know....

Sara: If you don't want to answer it that's fine.

Phil: No, no I'm trying to find the right answer. I'd have to say yes, but he's kind of got stuck for a second. As the Pope's mother said "he's kind of in a tub of butter." He's kind of used to the family atmosphere. So he's kind of wrapped up into that. He definitely would want to come back, it's not like he's out. He hasn't formally said anything to me but he's definitely going to come back whenever he wants to. He's studying at home too. As far as I know.

Rachel: So what's it like working with Pope Michael?

Phil: Great. It's a blast. I guess the main thing is when you get emails in from people, and sometimes they're just off the wall and we just joke about some of them "man what are these people thinking?" So with that aspect, we enjoy a lot of the same things, like math and games and stuff. It's just very cordial, country living. I don't know where you guys are from or anything but I was from a suburban area, more city life. And so coming out to the country, just talking slow, talking funny, that kind of stuff. It's the funniest thing, I went to Habitat for Humanity for two years and funny, all the guys, not all the guys but my best friends in the group, we'd go talk to the country girls and listen to how they would talk. We'd say a word and they'd laugh, we'd say a word and they'd laugh, and so we'd go back and forth. When you go to that country style, it's a different atmosphere. It's slower, sometimes it can be slow but mainly we're going all the time, either for questions or anything. Because there are a lot of people who do send in serious questions, whether about theology or about what we're doing or about how I came to my solution or just people saying "you're wrong because of this and this and this." Then you spend all day trying to figure out and you're like "no look at this, look at this, look at this." So there's a lot of answering questions mainly, always trying to find a bishop, but that's kind of out of our hands because Disnus is working up in the Northwest area. So we're always working toward a goal, which is the restoration of the Church. Now on the way, we're going to have fun, we're going to play card games, we're going to enjoy my bad cooking sometimes. Or at least pour some Tabasco sauce to hide the flavor, that kind of stuff. Not to have fun along this road is to miss out on life and you don't want to miss out on innocent fun. And so if you're not having fun, why are you doing it? Yeah, of course the Pope explained what we do every day normally. I'm not a real Jeopardy fan. I have to admit that I'm not a real Jeopardy fan, those two really get into it and I'm just like man... If it was my selection, anything in German or something that's more my generation, I think I have an answer I'll shout out an answer. Yeah, Jeopardy is not my thing, I don't know why.

Sara: What is your relationship like with Pope Michael? Do you see him more as a friend, or like a mentor, a teacher?

Phil: Well the obvious answer is I see him as the Pope. I've never really thought of it. On certain levels you have him as a friend, because you talk about personal issues like my mom says this, this and this. What the heck do I say to her about that? So you have that friend issue, then you have that superior issue because he is the Pope. I'm just a seminarian and eventually a priest so we have that superior level. When we get into doctrinal issues, you always ask him, "hey what do you think?" Most of the time it's on that kind of friendship level because you're not always being serious all the time. So I see him more of him as a friend but when it comes down to the

serious matters, when it comes down to talking about a bishop, I say “hey Pope, what do you think?” It’s more of a cordial kind of relationship.

Rachel: Now that you’ve written your book, do you have any particular things that you want to specifically focus on in your studies?

Phil: That’s part of restoring the seminary, what do we want to bring back or what can we bring back. And one of them that I want to particularly do is not to get a doctrine in church history but bring back the church history section. On the Annunciation website, we talk about all the specific emphasis you can go into. Church history is one of my favorites personally because it just ties in everything with what’s going on today and what happened back then. With church history you get all the lives of the saints and stuff. So you get into more of that every day stuff, how they lived their lives. With this book, I just haven’t had the time to per se promote it because I am thinking about donating to libraries because if people want to read it.

Sara: Can you tell us the name of your book?

Phil: The name of the book is History of the Church: The Formation of the Apostles of the Latter Times. The Pope always joked about the title because it’s one of those 19<sup>th</sup> century or 18<sup>th</sup> century titles, where it’s so long you might as just well write a paragraph or two sentences with it. It’s funny because when you go back St. \_\_\_\_\_ some of his titles are so long. Yes?

Pope’s Mother: I’m just looking for the Pope. He’s lost again. I didn’t mean to interrupt. It’s getting late; I made a big pot of chili, if you want a bowl of chili when you get finished.

Rachel: How do you see the future of the Church over the long haul?

Phil: Obviously, you’re going to have a serious problem with the United States. Because there’s two problems here, there’s the monetary problem and also the social problem. You have a social corruption which is, as far as you past the Roman Empire, I talked about that here in my book, how bad it was morally, just people would not work. You have that issue, you have people living immoral lives and that part, I kind of show that parallel I guess. Just like the Roman Empire, after the Roman Empire fell that’s when Christendom came about. That’s per se the Dark Ages of the Church. That’s more of a worldly sense, but during that time that’s when the Church really aspired. That’s when a lot of the great saints came out too. And so that’s the same thing with what’s happening now. The world has been just corrupt in general. So having that corruption it’s going to fall because it cannot last the way it is. When you spend, specifically America, when you spend beyond your means, when you spend more money than you take in, then you’re just going to go in debt. And that’s essentially what happened. So when the United States falls, it’s not going to take more than five years in my opinion, no more than five or ten years and United States will fall. After that, there will be a slow process in restoring the church and society as well. How that comes about is going to be pretty interesting. I personally told the Pope beforehand, I think before it’s going to fall I think you’re going to be consecrated. God is allowing us to be able to be in contact with all these bishops and priests and stuff now because it’s a lot simpler. And that’s what happened during the Roman Empire. When the Gospel was preached, the Roman Empire was at its utmost power but also there were the roads, you have the



roads and the seas, and that made spreading Christianity really easy and really quickly and that's what's happening now. We're not really spreading Christianity as quickly but we're getting our message out to bishops and priests, telling them to join the Church and this is why we're the Church. And so when we get a bishop that consecrates the Pope. That's when I think things will definitely shake up and it is in a certain sense scary because when you have all these people who do not know the basics of how to grow a garden even, how are they going to live? There might be a lot of immoral actions. You might see murders, who knows what will happen. And so it was interesting, I was reading in history too, the Roman Empire was so oppressive in taxes that the people prayed to God to send the barbarian because it was so bad. So you kind of wonder when it's just going to collapse. I'd say that society is going to collapse within five to ten years because personally looking at the monetary problems; you can't spend all that money and not have problems. So that's always a serious thing to think about. I think that's what's going to cause the world to essentially collapse because the world has the US dollar as their current reserve so the world is essentially invested in our problem and that's not good for the world. That will definitely cause a world conversion if the world collapses.

Sara: When will communion and mass be able to be part of the Church again?

Phil: Well you have two types of communion. You have spiritual communion, which is essentially a prayer. Also you have the sacramental and you're talking about the sacramental. The sacramental is when we get a bishop in the Church, he accepts Pope Michael, probably, the most logical step would be consecrating the Pope but you can do it without the Pope being consecrated. When the bishop is in the Church he can say a vow of mass because he has jurisdiction from the Pope. Because the Pope is the one who sends him, so that's where he gets his authority. And so after you have authority, you can say the mass properly, obviously, you know in Latin and all the rites that go with the Church. And after following the rites you can have a mass. So as soon as we get a bishop more or less is when we're going to have mass. We're not going to have a really nice beautiful church right off the bat but we're going to have essentially what the early Christians had in the first 300 years, which was mass in the homes or the catacombs. And so we're trying to make it most appropriate with what you have. So when we get a bishop, the sacraments will be restored because that's when everything will flow.

Rachel: I don't have any other questions. Is there anything else that you'd like to add?

Phil: That's good I don't know. I was mainly talking so I wasn't thinking.

Rachel: Is there anything that you feel is important that we haven't touched on yet?

Phil: I just thank God everyday that I'm a virgin. Because living in these times, it's hard. Just seeing people, it's hard. I think God every day for that. Other than that just I keep praying for people.

Sara: Well thank you so much. Like we said we're going to make this public.

Phil: Go for it.

Transcribed by Sara Vestal