

THE TROUBLE WITH TQ AT NARO EXPANDED CINEMA MAY 15, 2014

Film on Controversial Catholic Priest Thomas "TQ" Quinlan Coming to Naro Expanded Cinema on May 15

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Film on Controversial Catholic Priest Thomas "TQ" Quinlan

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Norfolk, Virginia – [The Trouble with TQ](#), a documentary on the late Rev. Thomas J. Quinlan, a colorful and sometimes controversial Catholic priest, will be shown as part of the Tidewater Visionaries Documentary Series at the Naro Expanded Cinema on May 15, 2014.

Produced and directed by Calvin Thomas, a Norfolk native, the film covers Rev. Quinlan's attempts to attack apathy and spiritual complacency within the church. He strove to change the way Catholics celebrate mass through the use of symbolism, pop culture and history. Rev. Quinlan served numerous parishes in Virginia over the course of nearly 50 years, and in each, his goals were to make mass relevant and inspire the members to assume leadership roles within the church and the community.

This quest led Rev. Quinlan, known as "TQ," to take some creative approaches. That included driving a Volkswagen down the aisle during a Palm Sunday procession at Good Shepherd Catholic Church in Alexandria, Va. On another Palm Sunday, he drove a three-ton forklift down the center aisle at The Basilica of St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception in Norfolk. Later, Rev. Quinlan led that same parish in a re-enactment of the trial of Nat Turner as the culmination of the Lenten liturgy.

Rev. Quinlan's career came to an end after a controversial Christmas Eve homily in 2005 that referred to the Virgin Mary's birth canal. Rev. Quinlan said he did it to humanize Jesus, but it led the Diocese of Richmond to bar him from celebrating the sacraments publicly. Rev. Quinlan died in 2012 at the age of 83, leaving behind a host of admirers and former parishioners whose lives he touched, among them Calvin Thomas. A graduate of Booker T. Washington High School, Thomas founded [Prodigal Altar Boy Films](#), a media company dedicated to telling stories close to the heart.

"TQ was revolutionary in his approach to Mass and how he led the church," said Thomas, who now



resides in Baltimore. "I was blessed to have him as my pastor when I was a teenager, and TQ gave me a wonderful gift when he agreed to do the film."

"The thesis of the film is the publicity TQ garnered due to his unorthodox liturgies overshadowed the sound biblical foundations he used to build those liturgies. I created this film to provide a greater understanding for TQ and to stimulate conversation about the church and where we are in society." The Trouble with TQ features interviews from 2008 until 2011. Historical photographs, animation, and archival documents put interviews into perspective to tell the story of a priest determined to wake up the congregation and put the teachings of Christ into action.

"I began editing prior to TQ's passing, and he got to review key scenes," Thomas said. "I wish that he could have lived to see the film completed."

Thomas brings the film back to his hometown so Rev. Quinlan's many friends and supporters could view it. But Thomas also feels that people who are being exposed to TQ for the first time will learn a great deal, and perhaps be moved by the film.

There will be one showing of the film at the Naro, located at 1507 Colley Avenue in the heart of Norfolk's Ghent section. Doors open at 7:15 p.m. for the 60-minute film, followed by a discussion on the production and Rev. Quinlan's legacy. [Tickets are \\$15.](#)

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