

## BEING HUMAN

LIBBY: You know what separates us from animals? Makeup. For you, it would be hair products. Am I right? Kai?

KAI: The one you know as Kai, has been replaced with K-A-I AI777, a more efficient, less destructible model than the mammalian biped you knew as the Homo sapien, Kai.

LIBBY: So, I logically conclude that you did not do your homework for today's topic, which is what it means to be human, and you're stalling. Shame on you.

KAI: Cannot compute. Robots feel no shame. Entering shut-down mode.

## CATHOLIC CENTRAL OPENING CREDITS

LIBBY: Today we are talking about the Catholic teaching on what it means to be human. We are a complicated species capable of great good and great evil, and since our creation, we've a lot to day about our existence.

SHAKESPEARE : "All the world's a stage and all the men and women; merely players."

KOHOLET: "Oh, vanity of vanities."

SURFER: What am I doing with my life? Why is it so hard to get anything done, man?

LIBBY: Okay, now Kai's talking about the stuff of life, what happens to us. Catholics believe being human is more so about what's happening within us, who we are at our essence and made in God's image. We are loving, learning, mourning, celebrating, growing, longing, existing in relationship to God and to each other.

KAI: Well OK, but animals love and learn and feel happy and sad, so what makes humans different than animals?

LIBBY: The writer, William Hazlitt, said, " Man is the only animal that laughs and weeps; for he is the only animal that is struck with the difference between what things are, and what they ought to be."

KAI: Ah yes, the old we know, and we know we know, right?

LIBBY: Right. The philosopher Emmanuel Kant ...

KAI: Oh, not him.

LIBBY: Why not?

KAI: Because I Kant even.

LIBBY: Kant said there are three basic questions that people ask about their lives. What can I know? What can I hope? How should I live? He called them the basis of all philosophical and religious inquiry. One way to answer these questions is to know where we come from and-

KAI: Fire.

LIBBY: Wait, what?

KAI: Humans have fire.

LIBBY: OK. Good point, but it's our search for meaning, the need to know where we come from and where we're going that reveals-

KAI: Language.

LIBBY: Interrupt much?

KAI: Yes.

LIBBY: Yes, though some animals do have language skills, humans alone use verbal and written language to communicate our knowledge, record our stories ...

KAI: Also, and I mean I love dogs, but could a dog come up with a cure for polio or send a rocket into outer space or have an internal debate about whether to howl or hunt or mate or sleep?

LIBBY: That's the key. Animals don't struggle with their instincts. We do. We wrestle against behaviors we believe are harmful. Murder, greediness, barking at the postman.

KAI: I can honestly say I've never done two of those three things.

LIBBY: To be human is to wrestle with our own nature. Saint Paul himself writes about it in Romans chapter seven.

SAINT PAUL: "What I don't understand about myself is that I decide one way, but then I act another, doing things I absolutely despise."

KAI: That's me.

LIBBY: That's all humans, but the good news is Catholics believe that human beings were created by God, on purpose, and with great divine purpose.

KAI: Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, after our likeness."

LIBBY: And, get this, in that Bible story of creation we are the only creature into which God personally breathes the breath of life.

KAI: "Then the Lord God formed man out of the dust of the ground and blew into his nostrils the breath of life, and so man became a living being."

LIBBY: And just to say, this doesn't deny the theory of evolution, and we will discuss that in another show.

KAI: Catholics believe that each one of us has a soul, and our soul is immortal and will now exist throughout eternity. The Church teaches that we'll have an eternal body as well. Meanwhile, our spirit wrestles with the challenges of our earthly body.

LIBBY: It's not that we're spirits trapped in bodies. We're spirit and body in one, but that does bring a particular set of challenges.

KAI: But more importantly, all Catholic teaching about what it means to be human begins with love in that God is love, and we were made by love to love and serve God and others. We are made to love and for love.

LIBBY: God gives us a unique consciousness and reason, which drives us to question who is this God that made us, lives within us, and calls us to know him as our father. The fine arts, literature, movies, philosophy, the sciences, biology, archeology. To be human is to question.

KAI: We're the only creatures that have a deep need to express our innate dignity, as in human rights. You know, declaring those rights, America's founding fathers expressed it as, "Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." The Catholics have always believed that God created us to live full, joyful lives, and the key to that depends on the right use of our freedom.

LIBBY: Freedom requires another human attribute, free will. For the church, sin is understood as an abuse of our freedom, making choices that make ourselves and others miserable.

KAI: Hamartia.

LIBBY: Yes, hamartia is the Greek word for sin in the New Testament. It's an archery term that means missing the mark. It suggests the idea that we have taken aim at certain goals but have

missed the mark or maybe have failed to take proper aim in the first place or just aim at the wrong targets.

KAI: Despite humankind's notoriously missing the mark throughout history, the Church teaches that our creator who is all love continuously calls us humans to rediscover the image of God within us and to act in this love. The spirit is life because it sets up back in a right relationship with God and others.

LIBBY: Yeah, others. That's another key part of being human. We are social beings. The Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, is in constant relationship, and we are born in that image, which is reflected on how we are made for community.

KAI: Just as we grow throughout our lives from infant to adult, Catholics believe we're called to become holy. Our existence does not end with our earthly bodies. Through the sanctification of Jesus Christ, we're invited to be one with God from birth to eternity.

LIBBY: So to sum up, being human means being made in the image of God.

KAI: We were created with the capacity to freely give love to God and others and to receive love as a gift. Our souls were created to exist eternally.

LIBBY: We have consciousness that causes us to question, explore. We have free will, which makes us capable of great good and great evil.

KAI: And we are social beings.

LIBBY: Well, that's it from these humans. Go forth and know you are unique and beautiful creatures loved by your creator, God.

KAI: Bye-bye for now from Libby and Kai at Catholic Central. Initiating shut-down mode.

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