CATHOLIC DATING

LIBBY: Wow. Is this the best the Catholic Church has on dating advice?

KAI: We've got a lot of work to do, Libby.

LIBBY: We?

CATHOLIC CENTRAL OPENING TITLES

KAI: Welcome to Catholic Central. I'm Kai.

LIBBY: And I'm Libby. So, Catholic dating -- how are we supposed to do it?

KAI: What does dating even mean?

LIBBY: And why is it often so awkward and weird?

KAI: Today we'll look at some wisdom we can find in the Catholic tradition and how it might be able to help.

LIBBY: But first, what do people mean when they say dating?

KAI: The answer is, there is no real answer, and that's part of the problem.

LIBBY: Up until our moment in history, each culture had pretty specific customs when it came to courtship and marriage. Good or bad, at least everyone was on the same page. In 2016, there were 110 million singles in the US, but no common social script or understanding of how to do dating.

KAI: Dating situations can become like a trip to the emergency room. You're not sure what you're even doing there, and you're kind of afraid to find out.

LIBBY: Then there are the specifically Catholic problems.

SINGLE LIBBY:

Why won't any of these guys ask me out? All I want is a good Catholic marriage.

SINGLE KAI: Well I'd ask that girl over there out, but I don't know if her credit's good enough to cosign on a mortgage. What about that guy? He's looking your way.

SINGLE LIBBY:

Yeah. I need to marry someone with green eyes. What about that girl over there? She's smiling at you.

SINGLE KAI: Oh yeah, but see, I'm friends with friends of two of her friends, so if she says no, I'll never see them again. And they're the best Frisbee golf players I know.

SINGLE LIBBY/SINGLE KAI:

What if there's something better out there?

KAI: So everyone knows there are problems. What are the solutions?

LIBBY: One, be intentional.

KAI: But not too intentional.

LIBBY: Catholics essentially see dating as what you have to do in order to get married. So if you can't see yourself marrying someone, ask yourself why you want to date them.

KAI: On the other hand, we can't get so freaked out by potential far-off events that we can't make any decisions. Jesus himself said, "Do not worry about tomorrow. Tomorrow will take care of itself."

LIBBY: There are a lot of things you can learn about yourself and others when you're dating, so look for those, and don't try to guess the ending before you even begin.

SINGLE LIBBY:

Hey guys. I mean, I totally understand the whole not overthinking it part, but I met this great guy at church and I think he would make a great father, and he asked me out for coffee. What does it mean?

LIBBY: It means he wants to have coffee.

KAI: One date doesn't mean you'll get married.

SINGLE LIBBY:

Fine. Yeah.

LIBBY: Well, it also means that he wants to get to know more about you.

KAI: Take it step by step. If you like him, keep going out with him, without assuming he's probably your future husband. You can always reassess if you spend time with him, but don't see a future with him.

LIBBY: And that brings us to number two: Don't use people.

KAI: Catholics believe that all people have dignity and worth. We all have to learn to respect people because they are people, not because they can do something for us, either physically or emotionally.

LIBBY: Running that icky "I've been used" feeling is the most basic reason why the Church teaches that sex should be saved for marriage.

KAI: If you make it a point not to use people throughout the whole dating process, it won't be as scary or painful to end it. Let's face it -- even the best relationships do end, or at least change once one of you kicks the bucket.

LIBBY: That brutal honesty leads us to number three. Be honest.

KAI: We need to be honest with ourselves and others about what we think is going on and what we want.

LIBBY: As Jesus tells us, "Let your yes mean yes, and your no mean no."

KAI: Human beings are great at being selfish, and dating is no exception.

LIBBY: There are so many reasons of wanting to be with someone that might not be healthy, and that brings us to number four. Be healthy.

KAI: We all have bad habits, not to mention wounds from childhood, past relationships, and bitterness from getting our names spelled wrong on our coffee at Starbucks. But it isn't productive to blame others for our unhappiness.

LIBBY: You know, Neil Clark Warren, the founder of eHarmony, says that finding the right person starts with being the right person.

KAI: Ultimately another person is going to fall in love with the person you are.

LIBBY: So if there are a few things you could improve in, focus on healing what could be holding you back and developing your gifts and talents.

KAI: If you don't know who you are, you can't look for someone truly compatible.

SINGLE KAI: So yeah, I started dating this girl and I just admitted to myself that I don't actually enjoy talking to her, but she checks off all the boxes. You know how long I've looked for someone that checks off all the boxes? A long time, I can tell you that much.

KAI: So that's an excellent example of why not to be in a relationship with someone.

LIBBY: Just because you think someone is perfect on paper doesn't mean you're meant to be together. And getting married is not going to magically fix all of your problems, or even any of them.

KAI: Walking away might be one of the hardest things to do, but this actually takes us to one of the most important guidelines for dating: Be vulnerable.

LIBBY: Catholics follow in the footsteps of people who stared down lions without complaining, and yet we are terrified to look someone in the eye and tell them how we feel.

KAI: In the Theology of the Body, Pope Saint John Paul II says that we all want to be seen. Vulnerability is hard, but it makes it possible for us to have our deepest desires fulfilled in a way that nothing else can.

LIBBY: Lastly, be careful not to dwell on single hood like it's a curse, or make marriage into an idol. Obviously it can be really hard.

SINGLE LIBBY:

I mean, my biological clock is not slowing down, and all my friends are already married and having babies, you know. Here I am eating donuts.

KAI: And that can be a really difficult cross to bear. But there are so many things you can do as a single person while your married friends are back home changing diapers.

KAI: Catholics believe that every person is born with a brand-new, never-before-seen soul. And so each person will have a unique path.

LIBBY: If you look at the saints, the fact that they had such different lives from everyone else is precisely what made them who they were.

KAI: So you can't let yourself get sucked into comparing yourself to others. It'll leaVW you depressed and unable to see the good in everything you do have … and even what God might be calling you to do.

LIBBY: Single hood and dating might be messy and lonely and awful, but the silver lining, it's not more messy, lonely, and awful than being in a bad relationship.

KAI: Each stage in life has its own joys and suffering.

LIBBY: Learning to be happy with yourself and your life is a really valuable skill no matter which state you're in.

KAI: And is yet another thing which makes ending things when you need to easier.

LIBBY: Right. If you're happy with who you are, it's easier to remember that rejection doesn't say anything about your value.

KAI: There are thousands of reasons why it might not work out the way we want it to with someone, but none of them have anything to do with whether either of you are worthy of love.

LIBBY: So to recap: Get out there, work on yourself, reveal the depths of who you are, and never doubt your worth. No big deal.

KAI: It might sound like a lot, but doing dating this way can help you find someone and actually enjoy the process while you're at it.

LIBBY: On that note, I'm Libby.

KAI: And I'm Kai. Check out our website CatholicCentral.com for more resources on Catholic dating.

LIBBY: From all of us here at Catholic Central, have a good date.

CATHOLIC CENTRAL CLOSING CREDITS

KAI: Libby, no no. No ,no, no, no, no, no. No, no, no, no, no, no. No, no, no.

LIBBY: I just … it's a lot.

KAI: She's very emotionally stable ordinarily, gentlemen ...

LIBBY: Wow.

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