

SAINTS

KAI: Libby. Libby.

LIBBY: What's up?

KAI: Hey. Well, I just want to make sure you don't make any sudden movements.

LIBBY: Why?

KAI: Apparently I cannot negotiate with wolves.

LIBBY: What?

KAI: Well, you know how we're talking about saints today? I figured if I could demonstrate a miracle, you know, for ...

LIBBY: What about wolves?

KAI: Yeah. Well, St. Francis and the wolf of Gubbio. You remember the story, where he convinces the wolf not to attack the town? I figured maybe if I brought a wolf ...

LIBBY: Here?

KAI: No sudden movements.

LIBBY: Kai.

CATHOLIC CENTRAL OPENING TITLES

LIBBY: Welcome to Catholic Central. I'm Libby.

KAI: And I'm Kai.

LIBBY: So today we'll be talking about the saints, the non-football-related ones.

KAI: But more importantly, why should we care?

LIBBY: You might be thinking that long-dead people who lived in distant times and places could never have any effect on your life.

KAI: Except possibly to give you nightmares about their statues coming to life and uniting as an army to kill you. No? Is that just me? OK.

LIBBY: But anyway, the saints can help us out a lot.

KAI: And yet still remain dead.

LIBBY: Because they're alive in heaven. Of course, we all know people on earth that we describe as living saints, but this is just an expression.

KAI: Well, yeah. If your experience is anything like mine, perhaps this is how people routinely describe you.

LIBBY: Or if your experience is anything like Kai's, that's how people routinely describe you in your dreams.

KAI: Oh, come on. As arrogant as that might sound, there's no problem with hoping you'll be a saint one day.

LIBBY: Actually, you're right. Technically, sainthood is what we should all be hoping for.

KAI: The word saint comes from sancti, the Latin, which literally means holy ones.

LIBBY: Holy meaning someone who uses their gifts and passions in a way that reminds us of God's love, not necessarily that they just walk around glowing.

KAI: Although it doesn't rule out glowing, either. Like the story of Saint Fillan, whose left arm was said to give off enough light to read by the Bible by.

LIBBY: Which brings us to the more specific definition of those formally recognized saints, the saint somebodies honored by the Universal Church.

KAI: The Church describes everyone who is in heaven as saints. They just don't go putting the word saint in front of every dead person's name.

LIBBY: The people formally declared saints by the Church are people in heaven who lived holy lives, and had a lasting impact in the life of the Church.

KAI: So they're like the VIP list. But even though they did amazing things and often played a major part in history, they were still real people, everyday real people like you and me, with likes and dislikes, vices and quirks. You don't have to be a perfect person to be a saint.

LIBBY: Saints get depressed, angry, frustrated, and sometimes they think they're total failures. They might not look or feel like saints. In fact, as Thomas Merton says, one of the first signs of a saint may well be the fact that other people don't know what to do with them.

KAI: St. Jerome, for example, was a notorious grouch. As one theologian put it, he attacked just about everybody for anything.

LIBBY: But the one thing that saint somebodies, like St. Jerome, did have to do was be radically open to God's call to make a difference in the world without worrying much about whether it makes sense or seems possible in others' eyes.

KAI: The Church describes these as lives of heroic faith, virtue and love, and when the Church declares someone a saint through the process called canonization, the Pope puts a saint statue in a canon and then ...

LIBBY: No. Canonization in the Catholic Church is recognizing whether someone is worthy enough to be put on a formal list, or canon, of saints.

KAI: Although the process of canonization isn't really simple. In fact, it's amazingly complicated.

LOUDSPEAKER: Now serving B3 at window number 15.

DECEASED KAI: Hello. So I just got out of Purgatory, and I'd like to see about becoming canonized, so I can help people on earth get their prayers answered.

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ATTENDANT: You can't apply for sainthood. Somebody has to have a reason to think you're a saint in the first place, and bring your cause for sainthood, as they call it, to the Vatican. Maybe the process gets started and maybe it won't.

DECEASED KAI: And maybe it will. There are four steps to canonization, right?

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ATTENDANT: Right. The process can take years. They'll need a complete investigation of the person's activity on the earth, an honorable life of heroic virtues, and miracles happening after

they died, yadda, yadda, yadda. The first stage is can you read this?

DECEASED KAI: Servant of God.

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ATTENDANT: Next level.

DECEASED KAI: Venerable.

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ATTENDANT: What does it mean?

DECEASED KAI: Venerable?

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ATTENDANT: I do the jokes. The word means honorable. Next level.

DECEASED KAI: Blessed.

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ATTENDANT: Blessed. Next level.

DECEASED KAI: Blessed. I'm talking here.

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ATTENDANT: Sainthood.

DECEASED KAI: Next level.

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ATTENDANT: Sainthood. No canonization for you, OK? For now, just be happy you made it into heaven. Maybe they'll start your process later.

DECEASED KAI: Yeah. St. Kaiser of Hollywood.

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ATTENDANT: Don't hold your breath. Next.

KAI: So canonization is a big deal.

LIBBY: That's why once a person is canonized, Catholics may go crazy with enthusiasm, especially on Feast Days, which each saint has. A Feast Day is a specific day of the year in which the Church remembers the saint with prayers, readings or processions.

KAI: Or parades and parties, which might happen when a Feast Day goes mainstream, like St. Patrick's Day, St. Valentine's Day, or Halloween, which comes from All Hallows' Eve or the day before All Saints Day.

LIBBY: The feast of all 10,000 saints and counting.

KAI: So obviously, Catholics love saints. But why do they matter so much?

LIBBY: One reason. They inspire. They show the amazing things that God can accomplish with human beings, beginning with St.

Mary, otherwise known as the mother of Jesus and queen of saints.

KAI: But even the saints that didn't bear the Son of God are inspiring, because they refused to let anything stand in their way, like Joan of Arc, who fearlessly led an entire army in the Middle Ages, despite being a teenager.

LIBBY: Some saints inspire by demonstrating what it is to care for the most poor and undesirable in society, like Martin de Porres, who advocated for social justice in Peru for sick and radically oppressed mestizos.

KAI: Or a martyr like Maximilian Kolbe, who gave his life in place of another prisoner in Auschwitz, showing us the power and goodness of putting someone else's needs before our own.

LIBBY: Saints, also serve as inspiring guides on how to use the artistic talents God gives us.

KAI: Other saints fought heroic internal battles, like Pope St. John Paul II, who was a great pope, despite struggling against debilitating illness.

LIBBY: God was clearly working in their lives, and if they could do it, well, as Catholics say, so can we.

KAI: For Catholics, even when they don't feel very saintly, they can all be inspired by how close the saints were with God.

LIBBY: Saints show that the deeper your connection with God, the closer you get to your own calling.

KAI: The second reason Catholics love saints, they instruct us better than anyone on what it means to love God and love neighbor, not only with their lives, but with their writings, stories and preaching.

LIBBY: Some were scholars who saw the profound connection between faith and reason.

KAI: St. Therese of Lisieux wrote a bestselling book on the Little Way of our everyday lives, lived as a gift of love to God and the people around her. The common thread with saints is a deep trust in God for the shape and evolution of their lives.

LIBBY: And because the saints lead such different kinds of lives and lifestyles with such different evolutions, just about every aspect of life is covered by what we call patron saints. Patron saints are special protectors over pretty much anything you can think of, including professions, illnesses, countries and cities.

KAI: There's St. Joseph for workers and fathers, St. Jude for hopeless causes.

LIBBY: St. Anthony for lost things.

KAI: I know I've got St. Anthony on speed dial just for my keys alone.

LIBBY: You know who I've got on speed dial? St. Genesius.

KAI: The patron saint of clowns? Libby, you really should take yourself more seriously.

LIBBY: Funny. He's, also, the patron saint of actors, which has got to mean show hosts, too. Patron saints are perfect examples of the third reason Catholics love saints. They intercede. For Catholics, saints are like their friends in heaven who they can ask for prayers, just like they'd ask their friends on earth.

KAI: You might say, "Isn't praying to saints idolatry or conjuring the dead with superstitious mumbo-jumbo?"

LIBBY: Valid questions. As we pointed out in our episode on Mary, Catholics don't worship saints or statues, and there's no magic spell to get them to give us what we want.

KAI: They are people that are alive in heaven, because of their faith and love of God. Since they were real, living, breathing humans on earth, no matter what you're going through, whether it's grief, addiction, or money problems, well, there's a saint you can turn to who knows exactly what it was like.

LIBBY: So, to wrap up, there are just as many paths to sainthood as there are saints. For Catholics, the road starts in daily life. It's about making choices that put love at the center, and a life that helps to move the world to a better place.

KAI: Catholics look to saints, because, one, they inspire.

LIBBY: Two, they instruct, and, three, they intercede from their place with God in heaven.

KAI: It's possible for everyone on earth to one day inspire, instruct and intercede, just like the saints that have come before us.

LIBBY: After all, saints are sinners, but just keep trying. I'm Libby and this is Catholic Central.

KAI: And I'm Kai. No sudden movements.

LIBBY: Kai!