WHO IS GOD?

KAI: Oh, OK. Old.

LIBBY: Socks.

KAI: No. OK. It's like a never-ending hug from a big soft, cozy armchair.

LIBBY: Pride and Prejudice.

KAI: No, OK. Picture it. OK. Like the car dealerships, they've got those mascots, the big floppy tubes, but this one can hear your thoughts and it loves you so much.

LIBBY: A really tired ferret.

KAI: No. This is like a wedding-planning team, but it's made up entirely of Olympic shot-put champions.

LIBBY: Wait, is this a person place or thing?

KAI: It's complicated.

CATHOLIC CENTRAL OPENING TITLES

LIBBY: Hi, I'm Libby.

KAI: And I'm Kai. Welcome to Catholic Central. Today we're talking God.

LIBBY: Who or what is God? Is He even a He?

KAI: And what's He really like? How has fatherhood changed Him since the beginning of time?

LIBBY: When we say God, most people think of God, the Father.

KAI: Who Catholics believe is the first person of the Holy Trinity. The Trinity means that God is three persons in one in eternal communion … and you know what? Just watch our episode on it.

LIBBY: Catholics recognize that who God is goes far beyond what we can know or express in human language. In fact, some theologians say that God is so vast that, as soon as we think we've defined God, we're already wrong.

KAI: But that's never stopped us from trying.

LIBBY: So let's get one thing out of the way. What pronouns do we use for God?

KAI: The Catechism of the Catholic Church is clear that God is neither male nor female and transcends human terms. It says that God is pure spirit, in which there is no place for the difference between the sexes.

LIBBY: However, both Scripture and the Church have traditionally used He and Him to refer to Him.

KAI: It has to do with the way the language works.

LIBBY: In English, the masculine pronoun is gender neutral, which is why you can say all men and include everyone, even grandmothers, girls in first grade and your neighbor who thinks he's descended from dragons.

KAI: And among the other gender-neutral options, it would be really weird.

LIBBY: In Scripture, when asked who he is, God says, "I am who I am," which means personhood and existence itself.

KAI: And you probably wouldn't call someone it.

LIBBY: Unless you were really trying to make them cry.

KAI: And also because Jesus called God His Father. This carries on from the Old Testament.

LIBBY: God has also been called Creator of Heaven and Earth, King of Kings, Lord of Lords, Most High and, more confusingly, I Am, and … I'm not going to say that.

KAI: That name is called the Tetragrammaton -- which, missed opportunity, *Transformers* -- and has traditionally not been spoken out loud, because Hebrew doesn't use vowels and no one knows how to say it.

LIBBY: Actually, it has to do with the fact that it wasn't said out loud in Jewish tradition, as an expression of the infinite greatness and majesty of God, a practice that continued in Christianity.

KAI: Infinite greatness and majesty, which is a great segue to our next point, what is God like?

LIBBY: Catholics believe God is the Creator of the Universe. Since nothing existed before Him, and I mean nothing, He transcends time and space, making Him eternal.

KAI: And He's omnipotent, meaning He has the power to control everything, because He holds all things in existence.

LIBBY: Which is also why He is omnipresent.

KAI: Meaning He is everywhere all at once.

LIBBY: God is kind of like (singing).

KAI: You hear that? Silence. That means that Libby created the note. She existed before and after, had full control over it, was fully present to it, and it stopped existing when she cut it out.

LIBBY: In a similar way, God is eternal to His creation, present all at once and everything depends on Him.

KAI: You sang that note because you wanted to.

LIBBY: Right. Catholics believe that God had no reason for creating the universe or all of us other than love. God only knows why.

KAI: Really, did God need to get pestered with prayers for a win on Sunday?

LIBBY: But for some reason God loves us and wants to be with us.

KAI: Catholics believe that God never ceases to call us to seek Him.

LIBBY: Since we're created by God, the desire for Him is an inherent part of us.

KAI: Which means it's only in God that we will attain true happiness.

LIBBY: So, at this point, you might be thinking, great, but if God is so loving and good, why are there so many stories about Him that make Him seem … not?

REPORTER KAI:

Yes, I'm here in Canaan, where Joshua is on a slaughtering rampage, reportedly commanded by God to leave no survivors. That's right, every living being.

KAI: Not exactly the warm, fuzzy, lovey-dovey image of God we have today.

LIBBY: Stories where God seemed to command murder and genocide are definitely tough.

KAI: The thing to remember, though, is that the Old Testament is the story of the development of God's relationship with Israel.

LIBBY: All of the civilizations we're talking about were living in the Bronze Age. Even the concept of metal tools was revolutionary, let alone just having one God.

KAI: Sacrificing children to gods wasn't uncommon, and something even the Israelites were tempted to do on a few occasions.

LIBBY: That's not to say that two child sacrifices make a right.

KAI: But more like, God had to reveal himself to humanity gradually, shaping and protecting the children of Israel.

LIBBY: When it comes to commands to commit genocide …

KAI: I'm uncomfortable.

LIBBY: I'm happy to say we won't be getting any commands like that, because Christ revealed God in a completely different way than what people had gotten used to.

KAI: True. While adherence to the law was seen by many as the most important way to serve God, Jesus showed us a God that emphasized love, mercy, and forgiveness, enough to give Himself for us.

LIBBY: God didn't change, but their ability to perceive God evolved.

KAI: And Catholics see Jesus is having the final word on God, seeing as He is the Word of God.

LIBBY: Where does that leave us today?

KAI: Catholics believe that our duties to God are summed up by Jesus. "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind."

LIBBY: Which is because God loved us first and continues to love us unconditionally. As 1 John 4:8 says, "God is love."

KAI: But you might be wondering how you actually go about loving God.

LIBBY: The first way is prayer, and there are plenty of prayer options to choose from to grow in relationship with Him.

KAI: As we said earlier, who God really is, goes beyond what we can even grasp or describe.

LIBBY: So it's OK if the word Father doesn't mean something positive to you. The tradition of the Church offers a variety of ways of describing and naming God. However, it's important to not get tempted to make our own idols, which can happen when we try too hard to make God into what we want Him to be. You can even make an idol out of the word God.

KAI: Human reason and thought aren't enough to contain God, but humans are great at trying to put Him in a box. However, often, the things we think God is, say more about us than they do about Him.

LIBBY: It's important to ask ourselves in daily life what we're making more important than God.

KAI: When we feel a void in our lives, it's natural to look to other things like food, romance, or judging people on reality TV.

LIBBY: But ultimately only the totality of God can fill that hole in our hearts.

KAI: Our desires for those things might make it more difficult for us to hear God and know what He wants us to do.

LIBBY: Catholics believe that God is always ready to be present to you, though, but you have to be willing to perceive Him.

KAI: Well, it's been seven minutes, so I'm pretty sure we've said all that needs to be said about God.

LIBBY: To say the least, there's a lot more to be said. For more information and resources, check out our website, CatholicCentral.com.

KAI: And subscribe to us on YouTube.

LIBBY: From all of us here at Catholic Central, thanks for watching.

CATHOLIC CENTRAL CLOSING CREDITS

LIBBY: Because let's be honest, He can be present in our lives in no way ... In a way no parents can.

KAI: Why does thunder follow lightning? Because even God has to wait for sound.

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