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| LIBBY: | Boo. |
| KAI: | Whoa. |
| CRANKY THEATER PATRON: | Shhh. |
| LIBBY: | Come on. It's just a movie. |
| KAI: | Exorcisms are real. |
| LIBBY: | Real, but rare.CATHOLIC CENTRAL OPENING TITLES |
| LIBBY: | Hi, I'm Libby. Welcome to Catholic Central. |
| KAI: | And I'm Kai. Today, our topic is the forces of evil. |
| LIBBY: | A lot of people talk about evil in movies, TV, social media, but what does that really mean besides just bad? |
| KAI: | In the Catholic worldview, evil is actions and attitudes contrary to God's love. |
| LIBBY: | Catholic teaching says that evil is something we do, not something we are. Even the worst criminals in history weren't inherently evil. They were people with fundamental human dignity like you and me, who chose to do bad things. |
| KAI: | From earliest human history, artists, writers and great thinkers have wrestled with the complex natural human tendency toward destructive attitudes and actions. |
| LIBBY: | This destructive tendency is demonstrated by scientific research and recognized by most of the world's largest religions. |
| KAI: | The Church teaches that this isn't about psychological weakness or random mistakes. There is a supernatural force of evil working on human beings from our beginning. |
| LIBBY: | So you might ask, is that the devil? Is the devil really real? |
| KAI: | Catholic experience identifies our tendency to do evil with the influence of something we call Satan or the devil. |
| LIBBY: | Now, pop culture thinks of the devil as a big horned guy with red skin, wings and a pointy tail. |
| KAI: | Flames optional; brimstone sold separately; razor-sharp talons void where prohibited. |
| LIBBY: | Well, yeah, if you saw that, you'd run for the hills screaming for your mom, but that's not always what evil looks like. |
| KAI: | So what does the Church mean when it talks about the Evil One? |
| ANNOUNCER KAI: | Etymology. |
| LIBBY: | Well, let's take a step back for a second. Catholics believe that God created humans with souls and free will. Sometimes people use that free will to reject God and do evil things. |
| LIBBY: | Tradition identifies the leader of these demons as the devil in English, which comes from the Greek word *diabolos*, meaning divider. |
| KAI: | The devil wants to divide people and make them work against each other. |
| LIBBY: | It's also known as Satan, from the Hebrew for deceiver or accuser. It tries to instill doubt about the goodness of God or other human beings. |
| KAI: | People also call the devil Lucifer, which in Latin means light bearer, and it refers to it being one of the most beautiful and powerful angels before rejecting God. |
| LIBBY: | Satan isn’t a proper name like Stan or Janice. We don't know what this being is truly like, but we understand it by its influence in the world. |
| KAI: | The Book of Genesis tells the story of how the devil, the divider, influenced the first people, Adam and Eve, in the form of a serpent. It convinced them that something God told them not to do would be good to do. |
| LIBBY: | Just like in the Garden of Eden, the main way that the force of evil works on people is through temptation. Temptation is when you try to convince yourself that something harmful or wicked or hateful is actually something good. |
| KAI: | Deep down you know that watching another episode on Netflix when you should be going to bed isn't the right thing to do, but you convince yourself that it's okay because it will make you feel good, because it's just one episode, and you can sleep when you're dead, after all. |
| LIBBY: | Temptation in itself doesn't make a person bad. Everyone suffers from temptation. Even Jesus did. |
| KAI: | The real question is how you respond to temptation. |
| LIBBY: | Can you just say no? |
| KAI: | It can actually be really hard. Even the strongest people can't always recognize or resist temptation on their own, but Catholics believe God wants to help in those moments. They call this grace. For Catholics, the force of good and God's love in the world is always there to guide and strengthen. |
| LIBBY: | But when most people hear forces of evil, they think about possession. But long before possession, there are three earlier stages of evil's power over us. The first is temptation, which we've talked about. The second stage is called obsession. |
| KAI: | People in this stage may feel totally pummeled by the forces of evil. This could be unrelenting temptation or afflictions of body, mind or heart, with no physical explanation. |
| LIBBY: | In more serious cases, known as oppression, people may feel totally cut off from God and the world, or have mysterious physical symptoms, like a loss of control over their thoughts or actions. |
| KAI: | Sometimes these symptoms indicate a biological or a psychological illness, and not demonic obsession or oppression. It's important to seek professional medical help to discern this, though, because, in some cases, the symptoms do indicate a supernatural origin. |
| LIBBY: | It's also not a good idea to try to figure that out for yourself. Best to talk to a priest or a spiritual mentor and let them know what symptoms you experience. |
| KAI: | Don't suffer in silence, because evil thrives in silence and secrecy. Sometimes the most important step is to ask for help, and one of the best ways to ask for help is through prayer. Opening yourself to God's love and letting Him bring you peace of mind. |
| LIBBY: | For Catholics, there are the sacraments of Reconciliation and Communion, rituals that bring them closer to God and strengthen their habits of choosing good and rejecting evil. |
| KAI: | But what about possession? |
| LIBBY: | In rare and extreme cases, evil affects someone much more than just temptation, obsession or oppression. Throughout its history, the Church has documented cases where someone is no longer able to even control their own body. |
| KAI: | In those cases, when some kind of demon has taken over the body, specially trained priests can drive it out in the ancient Catholic ritual of exorcism, a specific form of prayer that the Church uses against the power of the devil. |
| LIBBY: | But the vast majority of suspected possessions turn out to have a psychological or physical explanation, and don't require an exorcism. |
| KAI: | So in all likelihood, and I mean, like, a 99.99% chance, you'll never have to worry about possession and exorcism in your own life, but there are some very real ways that you can fight evil. |
| LIBBY: | The most important way to fight evil is to not let yourself become a cause of evil. By developing your own conscience, you can confront social injustice or discrimination, and we've got a whole episode on that. If you let yourself think that there's no such thing as good and evil, you'll be more vulnerable to evil. As the French poet Baudelaire put it, "The loveliest trick of the evil is to persuade you that he does not exist." |
| KAI: | Catholics believe one of the best tools for fighting temptation is to surround yourself with the true, the good and the beautiful. |
| LIBBY: | Basically that means living a balanced life, forming loving relationships, a vibrant faith life, healthy hobbies and lifestyle. |
| KAI: | A balanced life isn't a one-time decision. It's a habit every human being has to build, every day, with the help of the community, for their whole lives. |
| LIBBY: | Prayer can strengthen those habits. Like every time someone says the Our Father, privately or at Mass. “Lead us not into temptation,” the prayer asks, “but deliver us from evil.” |
| KAI: | So, here are the main things to remember. One: there are forces of evil at work in the world. Two: the devil is real, and he has four stages of power over us: temptation, obsession, oppression and very rarely, possession. |
| LIBBY: | Three: exorcisms are real, but they are only performed in extreme cases. Four: resisting temptation is the starting point for fighting evil in your own life. |
| KAI: | By choosing God's love, you can overcome the forces of evil. As Pope St. John Paul II championed, be not afraid. |
| LIBBY: | Yeah, see, look, if people hadn't been so afraid of that movie earlier today. |
| KAI: | Yeah, just a movie. Nothing to be scared of. |
| LIBBY: | No. No, definitely not … you. I'm Libby for Catholic Central. Thanks for watching. |
| KAI: | And I'm Kai. See you next time. |
| LIBBY: | Boo! |
| KAI: | Oh. Libby.CATHOLIC CENTRAL END CREDITS |
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