

Weekly Gospel Readings
The 3rd Sunday of Paone

Blasphemy Against the Holy Spirit

“Therefore, I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven” [\(Matthew 12:31\)](#)

On the Third Sunday of the blessed month of Paone, the Church reads from the Gospel according to St. Matthew [\(Matthew 12:22–37\)](#). In this passage, we encounter a man who was oppressed by a demon and suffered from blindness and muteness. He was brought before our Lord Jesus Christ, who healed him immediately, causing the people to marvel and wonder whether this could be the long-awaited Son of David. However, when the Pharisees witnessed this miracle, rather than glorifying God, they hardened their hearts and accused Christ, saying that He cast out demons by *Beelzebul*, the ruler of demons.

In response, the Lord exposed the foolishness of their accusation, teaching them that a kingdom divided against itself cannot stand. He said: “If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself... But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you” [\(Matthew 12:26–28\)](#). Through these words, Christ revealed both His divine authority over the powers of darkness and the reality that the Kingdom of God had already begun to manifest itself among His people.

The Lord then spoke to the Pharisees about the seriousness of rejecting the work of God, saying: “Therefore I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven” [\(Matthew 12:31\)](#). This raises an important question: Why is blasphemy against the Son of Man forgiven, while blasphemy against the Holy Spirit remains unforgiven? St. Augustine offers a profound explanation: “Indeed, every sin and blasphemy is forgiven to people, and not only what is said against the Son of Man. ... as long as the sin of unrepentance is not there. If a person persists in rejecting repentance, then forgiveness itself is refused.”

The sin against the Holy Spirit is not a single spoken offense, but rather the persistent rejection of God’s grace, the continual refusal of repentance, and the deliberate resistance to the work of the Holy Spirit within the heart. When a person continually hardens himself against the Spirit, he closes the very door through which forgiveness is received.

The Lord then warns the Pharisees about the seriousness of their words and actions. He teaches that every careless word spoken by man will be accounted for on the Day of Judgment. He further explains that a tree is known by its fruit: “Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad, for the tree is known by its fruit” [\(Matthew 12:33\)](#).

Christ then directly confronts the hypocrisy and corruption of the Pharisees, rebuking them sharply: “Brood of vipers! How can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks” [\(Matthew 12:34\)](#). Their outward appearance of righteousness could not hide the corruption that filled their hearts, for their words revealed the true condition of their souls.

This Gospel presents several important spiritual lessons for us:

- Christ possesses complete authority over Satan and all powers of evil.
- The Kingdom of God is revealed wherever Christ reigns and His power is manifested.
- We must recognize, honor, and cooperate with the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives.
- Persistent rejection of repentance hardens the heart and distances man from God’s mercy.
- The words we speak reveal the condition of our hearts and will bear eternal consequences.

May God keep us from hardening our hearts against the work of the Holy Spirit. Through a life of humility, repentance, and obedience, may we remain receptive to His grace, so that we may receive the remission of our sins and inherit the joy of eternal life with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Sources:

- Holy Bible, English Standard Version
- Commentary on the Gospel of St. Matthew – Fr. Tadros Y. Malaty
- Sermons of Augustine of Hippo on repentance and the work of the Holy Spirit