

Dear Padre,

Is there really an unforgivable sin?

In the Gospels, Jesus teaches that blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven (Matthew 12:31–32, Mark 3:28–29, Luke 12:10). This seems to imply the existence of a sin that God either cannot or will not forgive. Yet we have the overwhelming testimony of the Scriptures and Church teaching that God's mercy and forgiveness are more powerful than any sin, no matter how serious or frequent it might be. This apparent contradiction disappears when we carefully consider the context of Jesus' teaching on the "unforgivable sin."

Jesus' statements regarding blasphemy against the Holy Spirit occurred as part of his ongoing dispute with the scribes and Pharisees who witnessed Jesus' exorcisms but attributed them to the power of Satan, thus denying the evidence of the Spirit's saving action in Jesus' work and teaching (Matthew 12:22–32). This denial is not simply a misunderstanding. Rather, it is willful, malicious, deliberate, and unrepentant. For such people, there can truly be no forgiveness, not because God is unwilling or unable to forgive, but because the people will not recognize their need for forgiveness.

The "unforgivable sin" is not an action so horrible that even God's patience and mercy are exhausted. Rather, it is the attitude of people who reject the Lord's presence in their lives. God's offer of forgiveness is still universal. We need only respond to his grace and seek his forgiveness. ●



The Redemptorists / DearPadre.org

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
July 29	July 30	July 31	August 1	August 2	August 3	August 4
<i>Ss. Martha, Mary, and Lazarus</i>	<i>Weekday</i>	<i>St. Ignatius of Loyola, Priest</i>	<i>St. Alphonsus Liguori, Bishop and Doctor of the Church</i>	<i>Weekday</i>	<i>Weekday</i>	<i>Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time</i>
Jer 13:1–11	Jer 14:17–22	Jer 15:10, 16–21	Jer 18:1–6	Jer 26:1–9	Jer 26:11–16, 24	Ex 16:2–4, 12–15
Jn 11:19–27 or Lk 10:38–42	Mt 13:36–43	Mt 13:44–46	Mt 13:47–53	Mt 13:54–58	Mt 14:1–12	Eph 4:17, 20–24
						Jn 6:24–35



A WORD FROM POPE FRANCIS

***Every day...around seven thousand children under the age of five die due to malnutrition.... Jesus also addresses an invitation to us...
“Be brave, give what little you have, your talents, your possessions, make them available to Jesus and to your brothers and sisters. Do not be afraid, nothing will be lost, because if you share, God will multiply.”***

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