# Lesson 13 Matthew 10:1-42 Work of the Church

Life in Christ: When did you feel closest to Our Lord this week?

1. A. When this incident is described In Mark’s Gospel, it includes a condemnation of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit as does Matthew’s Gospel in chapter 12. What is in this story that constitutes blasphemy against the Holy Spirit? Why is that considered to be a sin of greatest gravity? See Catechism 1864.

Matthew 9:32-34

32 As they were going out, a demoniac who could not speak was brought to him,

33 and when the demon was driven out the mute person spoke. The crowds were amazed and said, “Nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel.”

34 But the Pharisees said, “He drives out demons by the prince of demons.”

Mark 3:29-30

29 But whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never have forgiveness, but is guilty of an everlasting sin.”

30 For they had said, “He has an unclean spirit.”

Matthew 12:31-32

31 Therefore, I say to you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven people, but blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven.

32 And whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.

Catechism 1864

1864 "Whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin." There are no limits to the mercy of God, but anyone who deliberately refuses to accept his mercy by repenting, rejects the forgiveness of his sins and the salvation offered by the Holy Spirit. Such hardness of heart can lead to final impenitence and eternal loss.

B What does Matthew 12:32 have to do with forgiveness of sins after death and how does that relate to the Church’s teaching about Purgatory? See Catechism 1031.

Catechism 1031

1031 The Church gives the name Purgatory to this final purification of the elect, which is entirely different from the punishment of the damned. The Church formulated her doctrine of faith on Purgatory especially at the Councils of Florence and Trent. the tradition of the Church, by reference to certain texts of Scripture, speaks of a cleansing fire:

As for certain lesser faults, we must believe that, before the Final Judgment, there is a purifying fire. He who is truth says that whoever utters blasphemy against the Holy Spirit will be pardoned neither in this age nor in the age to come. From this sentence we understand that certain offenses can be forgiven in this age, but certain others in the age to come.

1. The Bible does not always use consistent terminology. A disciple is a follower, an apostle is one sent out as an ambassador. How many Apostles did Jesus have? Do we know how many disciples he had?

Matthew 10:1-8

1 Then he summoned his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits to drive them out and to cure every disease and every illness.

2 The names of the twelve apostles are these: first, Simon called Peter, and his brother Andrew; James, the son of Zebedee, and his brother John;

3 Philip and Bartholomew, Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James, the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddeus;

4 Simon the Cananean, and Judas Iscariot who betrayed him.

John 6:66-67

66 As a result of this, many [of] his disciples returned to their former way of life and no longer accompanied him.

67 Jesus then said to the Twelve, “Do you also want to leave?”

1. A. In the persecutions to come prophesied by Jesus, how long do we and the Apostles have to persevere? See, also, Romans 2:7?

Matthew 10:21-22

21 Brother will hand over brother to death, and the father his child; children will rise up against parents and have them put to death.

22 You will be hated by all because of my name, but whoever endures to the end will be saved.

Romans 2:7

7 Eternal life to those who seek glory, honor, and immortality through perseverance in good works

B In the martyrdom that will come to all the Apostles except St. John, are the Apostles to seek martyrdom or avoid it, if possible, without denying the faith?

Matthew 10:23, 32-33

23 When they persecute you in one town, flee to another. Amen, I say to you, you will not finish the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes.

32 Everyone who acknowledges me before others I will acknowledge before my heavenly Father.

33 But whoever denies me before others, I will deny before my heavenly Father.

1. A. Jesus as a cause for dissension even within a family seems like a harsh teaching for the Prince of Peace, but picture a faithful Jewish family in the days of the Apostles when one member of the family becomes a Christian. How do you think other family members, especially elders, might react?

Matthew 10:34-35

34 “Do not think that I have come to bring peace upon the earth. I have come to bring not peace but the sword.

35 For I have come to set a man ‘against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law;

36 and one’s enemies will be those of his household.’

B Do you know of any such dissension within a family today when you or a member of the family became a Catholic?

1. A. Some translations say Christians must “hate” their father and mother. The NABRE provides the proper perspective. Nevertheless, why is faithfulness to the Lord more important?

Matthew 10:37-39

37 “Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me;

38 and whoever does not take up his cross and follow after me is not worthy of me.

39 Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

Catechism 2232

2232 Family ties are important but not absolute. Just as the child grows to maturity and human and spiritual autonomy, so his unique vocation which comes from God asserts itself more clearly and forcefully. Parents should respect this call and encourage their children to follow it. They must be convinced that the first vocation of the Christian is to follow Jesus: "He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me."

B How do Jesus’ words create an obligation on the parents of a Christian child as well as on the child himself?

1. A. Why do you think even the smallest kindness to a Christian will be rewarded? See Matthew 25:40.

Matthew 10:40-42

40 “Whoever receives you receives me, and whoever receives me receives the one who sent me.

41 Whoever receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet’s reward, and whoever receives a righteous man because he is righteous will receive a righteous man’s reward.

42 And whoever gives only a cup of cold water to one of these little ones to drink because he is a disciple—amen, I say to you, he will surely not lose his reward.”

Matthew 25:40

And the king will say to them in reply, ‘Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.’

B Here and in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus likens His followers to the prophets. Why is that? What makes a faithful Christian a prophet?

Matthew 5:11-12

11 Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you and utter every kind of evil against you [falsely] because of me.

12 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven. Thus they persecuted the prophets who were before you.