

Homily — Tenth Sunday in Ordinary Time, 2018 (B)
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**Jesus makes a surprisingly harsh-sounding statement in today's Gospel.
He says, "Truly I tell you, people will be forgiven for their sins
and whatever blasphemies they utter;
but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit
can never have forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin."**

So just what is this unforgivable sin?

**In Mark's Gospel, Jesus quite regularly casts out demons.
Part of what people believed at that time was that
only someone who came from God had power to cast out a demon.
Jesus had done that,
but the Scribes and Pharisees who had witnessed this
found it to be an inconvenient truth because they denied Jesus' goodness.
So in the face of the truth,
they had to either acknowledge something that they did not want to
or they had to manipulate the truth to give it a different meaning.
They chose to manipulate the truth.
They accused Jesus of performing miracles through the power of Satan.
They knew better.
They knew they were lying,
but the actual truth didn't quite fit their agenda.**

**Jesus is saying this to them . . . and really to all of us:
"Be careful about what you are doing just now,
putting a false spin on something because it is too awkward to accept as true.
The danger is that if you continue doing this
you may eventually come to believe your own lie.
That will be unforgivable, since you will no longer want to be forgiven
because you will see truth as a lie and a lie as the truth.
The sin cannot be forgiven, not because God doesn't want to forgive it
but because we no longer want to be forgiven."**

**A dictionary definition of blasphemy is an act of showing contempt
or lack of reverence for God.
We don't necessarily blaspheme
when we use foul language when we're frustrated;**

or when we shake our fists at God in anger
or turn away from God in bitterness.

God can handle that.

The one thing God cannot handle is lying, where we lie to the point
of believing our own lies.

Lying eventually warps our consciences
so that we can no longer tell truth from falsehood or falsehood from truth.

Christians believe that God is One.

That means that God's inner truthfulness assures
that all of reality also has an inner truthfulness, an integrity.

It means that something cannot be and not be at the same time;
it means that two plus two cannot equal anything but four;
it means a tree is always a tree no matter what you say it is;
it means black can never be white.

God's Oneness allows us to both trust reality
and trust our normal perception of it.

That is what's under attack today, most everywhere.

It's the ultimate moral danger: God is One and so two plus two can never be five
– and if it is, then we are no longer in touch with God or with reality.

We are warped in conscience and are blaspheming the Holy Spirit.

We are becoming irresponsible, manipulative,
and outright dishonest with the truth, denying it where it's inconvenient,
bending it to suit our own purposes, or labeling it as
“fake news,” “alternative facts,” “misinformation” or as “political correctness”
with no truth value.

Studies from major scientific institutes are dismissed as just another opinion
with the result that we are creating an entire society
within which it's becoming more and more difficult for any of us
to trust what's a fact and what isn't.

That's dangerous territory, not just politically but especially spiritually.

Jesus claims to be the TRUTH that sets us free.

We come to these tables to be imbued with the truth

Poor People's Campaign

Focus this week: Everybody's Got a Right to Live:
Education, Living Wages, Jobs, Income, Housing.