

In today's passage from the Gospel of John, we can find Jesus' statement that gives to many believers of all age's sleepless nights.

In the beginning, let us briefly recall where it all began. From Jerusalem to Galilee, scribes and scholars of the Jewish law came to evaluate the works they had heard Jesus was doing there and look in particular at his exorcisms - casting out demons from the possessed.

Incredibly, when the scribes met Jesus, they came to the astonishing conclusion: "He has Beelzebub, and by the ruler of the demons he casts out demons" (Mark 3:22). Beelzebub was used in ancient times to refer to the Canaanite deity Baal: literally "owner", "lord" of the Earth. In Jesus' day, the Jews used Beelzebub name as a name for the prince of demons.

So, when Jesus heard of these allegations, he exposed the absurdity of this supposition that Satan's power could be overcome with his own help: "How can Satan cast out Satan?" Jesus asked. And then he accused those who made such an absurd claim of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.

And a moment later, Jesus declares that all sins and blasphemies will be forgiven, except for the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.

There are two terms for sin in the Greek text of Scripture: *hamartia* and *blasphēmía*. *Hamartia* means "to miss the mark", "to err", "to wander from the law of God", or "to violate God's law".

The word βλασφημία (*blasphēmía*) means "slander, abuse, curse, profanity". In fact, *blasphēmía* is a combination of two words: *blabto* = "to tarnish" and *feme* = "reputation".

*Blasphēmía* concerns the other person when we damage someone's reputation. But it also applies to God. This is what the third commandment revealed to Moses on Mount Sinai is all about: "You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name" (Exodus 20:7).

Literally, this commandment means to falsify who God is and what He stands for. This is important information for today's Gospel. However, I think in the words of Jesus, the matter is much more severe and more profound.

We can see it when we look at the word *blasphēmía* in Aramaic, the language used by Jesus. In this language, we have the word *godfa*. *Godfa* means "to cut", "to scrape", "to make empty". In other words, *godfa* is about cutting God out of our life, scraping every memory and thought of God out of our life.

*Godfa* means telling the Holy Spirit, "I don't want anything to do with you, I don't need your gifts, I don't need Jesus' sacrifice, I don't need salvation." Blasphemer is like a selfish and insolent person who spits in the face of someone who goes to meet him with open arms, a sign of friendship and love.

The Holy Spirit in the womb of the Trinity is Love. The Holy Spirit comes from the Love of the Father and the Love of the Son. The Father and the Son give their nature to the Holy Spirit out of Love and through Love.

The Holy Spirit is also a Gift of the Father to the Son and a Gift of the Son to the Father. And in this way also a Gift to creation. In the Letter to the Romans, Paul wrote: "God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us" (5:5).

The Holy Spirit is Love and also a Gift. The Holy Spirit is the Gift that dwells in us, purifies us, enlightens us, renews us, transforms us because The Holy Spirit makes us sharers in the very life of God who is Love.

The Holy Spirit allows us to experience that we are accepted and loved by God. The Holy Spirit also helps us to go beyond ourselves and become a gift to others. Charity is not only the fruit of our self-discipline and our effort; it is also the fruit of the Holy Spirit who enlarges our hearts (cf. Galatians 5:22).

That's why "blasphemy against the Holy Spirit" is conscious and hardened opposition to love. This is not a one-time sin. Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is a lifelong attitude that takes years to come.

Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit understood in this way cannot be forgiven, not because God does not want to forgive it, but because, by doing so, God would violate human freedom. And we know that God respects human freedom. God capitulates in the face of human freedom that goes as far as the rejection of God himself and His Love.

God's mercy is infinite, but it is not absurd. God's mercy is limited by human freedom. Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is a rebellion of freedom that does not want to receive anything from God, a freedom that wants to exist independently. Due to pride, blasphemer closes his/her heart to love. Blasphemer does not want to be loved and cannot love anymore.

A common mistake is a belief that at the end of our earthly life, we will be judged based on sinfulness - sinlessness. In Matthew 25 (25:31-46), Jesus described the Final Judgment. He explained there very clearly that the Final Judgment and salvation criterion is love, not sinlessness. God, who is Love will judge us out of love.

"God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them. Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness on the day of judgement" (1 J 4:16-17).

This was very clearly understood by Viktor Emil Frankl (1905–1997) - an Austrian psychiatrist and psychotherapist. Prisoner of concentration camps in Teresin, Auschwitz, Dachau. Founder of existential analysis and logotherapy. In the concentration camp in Auschwitz, while thinking about his wife, he experienced a kind of spiritual revelation he later wrote about:

"A thought transfixed me: for the first time in my life, I saw the truth as it is set into song by so many poets, proclaimed as the final wisdom by so many thinkers. The truth — that love is the ultimate and the highest goal to which man can aspire. Then I grasped the meaning of the greatest secret that human poetry and human thought and belief have to impart: The salvation of man is through love and in love" (Viktor Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning*).

These words are fully confirmed by the book "The Tattooist of Auschwitz". An incredible love story in a place of death. The story of calculated brutality alongside selfless acts of love. A testament to the endurance of love and humanity under the darkest possible conditions.

"The Tattooist of Auschwitz" is the story of Ludwig "Lale" Sokolov (Eisenberg), a Slovakian Jew, who in April 1942 is forcibly transported to Auschwitz, the Nazis' biggest concentration camp. When Germans discover that he speaks several languages, Lale was given the job - the main tattooist for the prisoners - scratching numbers into his fellow victims' arms in indelible ink. Lale uses his privileged position, many times risking his own life, tried to help as many fellow prisoners as it was in his capacity.

One day Lale saw a Slovakian girl, Gisela "Gita" Furmannova. She was waiting in line to be tattooed, and they fell in love. Lale vows not only to survive himself but to ensure this woman, Gita, did, too.

For over two years, despite the danger they face, they have met privately from time to time. Lale smuggles for Gita his extra rations and even manages to get her moved to a better workstation, living all this time with the hope that one day he will be with Gita forever.

Two days before the liberation of Auschwitz by Soviet troops (in late January 1945), Lale was moved to another concentration camp. He managed to escape from this place, and in hiding, he survived. Gita also survived, but they lost touch with each other.

Knowing only Gita Fuhrmannova's name, Lale went to Bratislava, Slovakia, the main entry point for returning survivors, to search for her. The couple married in October 1945, and after a few years, they decided to move to Australia, Melbourne. Gita died in 2003, Lale 3 years later. They spent 58 years together as a married couple.

Outside love of neighbour, there is no salvation. The salvation of man is through love and in love. And this is the testimony and commandment that Jesus left us.