

Rev. Paul A. Hottinger

**Witness to the Holy Spirit**    Twenty-eighth Week in Ordinary Time    Saturday,  
October 17, 2015 8:15 AM    Rom 4:13, 16-18; **Lk 12:8-12**    **St. Ignatius of Antioch**  
(The Holy Spirit in the New Testament means direct, immediate contact between the human mind-soul-spirit and God, a direct guidance, direction, even inspiration of the believer.)

**“For the Holy Spirit will teach you at that moment what you should say.”**

In a way—in a way—the principal difference between the Old Testament and the New Testament is the Holy Spirit. Now this term **“Holy Spirit”** is found in the Old Testament, but not in the sense it’s used in the New. It really means **direct, immediate contact between the human mind-soul-spirit and God. It means a direct guidance, direction, even inspiration of the believer.** And this is something **Jesus** taught, and he **taught his disciples to rely upon it.** This was very different from the Old Testament where everything went through the rabbis, where everything was an interpretation of the Scriptures, where things had to be debated, not for Jesus.

Now **have we lost something of what was for Jesus essential:** this sense of the Holy Spirit, the proximity, the immediacy of the divine Spirit, the trustworthiness, the teaching quality of the Holy Spirit? “You have but one teacher, the Spirit.”

Today he is speaking of **the need to bear witness to the Holy Spirit.** He says, **“Those who blaspheme the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven.”** What does that mean? I’m not exactly sure; I can’t exactly tell you what that means. But it means something like that **those who blaspheme God’s revelation when it comes cannot be forgiven because they have really simultaneously had an insight into God and rejected it.** They have experienced God and said that they don’t want it. In a way of putting it, they cursed the experience of God.

Whereas he says, **“Those who blaspheme the Son of Man will be forgiven.”** What does that mean? Well, the “Son of Man” is a term he used for himself. It’s an indirect way of talking. So he is saying, well, **people will blaspheme me not knowing who I am.** And many people didn’t not know who he was. His own disciples really didn’t know who he was. They didn’t catch on until after the resurrection. It was only in the resurrection that his disciples

understood who he was, and even then it's still shrouded in a mystery. Up until then they were dithering and they were in darkness.

**Even the word “Christ” or “Messiah” isn't exactly Jesus' identity because he is Christ and a Messiah in a way that they did not foresee.** So when Peter said, “You are the Messiah,” Jesus rebuked him because people wouldn't get the right message from it. We have attached to the word “Christ” and “Messiah” the understanding of Jesus as the Second Person of the divine Trinity, who took on humanity, who suffered, died, and rose again. So that's what we mean by Christ, but they wouldn't have meant that. They thought Christ meant something else. So when Peter said, “You are the Christ,” Jesus said don't tell anybody that. They didn't know; they didn't get it, what much less do Muslims get it or Buddhists or Taoists or atheists. They don't get what the Son of Man is either. And they are saying all kinds of very nasty things about Jesus. The Jews in the Talmud condemn the name of *Yeshua*. That blasphemes the Son of Man. Jesus said, well, they will all be forgiven because they are ignorant and they don't understand. But **“those who blaspheme the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven.”** Why? Because that takes real ill will, real diabolical malice. **That's diabolical malice to blaspheme the Holy Spirit. That's saying no to God face-to-face.** And this is a reality of which the Old Testament does not speak, does not know. The Old Testament was good. It had all kinds of wonderful insights, laws, sayings, proverbs, psalms, songs, and stories; but **there's a lot the Old Testament doesn't know, principally the Holy Spirit.**

Today we celebrate the memorial of **St. Ignatius of Antioch who witnessed—who witnessed—to Jesus with his life.** This is what “martyr” means. He witnessed to Jesus with his life. Jesus says, “Anyone who witnesses to me I will acknowledge before the angels of heaven, but anyone who denies me I will deny before the angels of heaven.” **It is very important that believers express their belief somehow.** Ignatius did it by giving his life. A very interesting story, so say Ignatius's disciples, is that when he died, when he was martyred, no one smelled blood. What people smelled was bread baking. They all claimed that. **They all smelled bread baking.** He was what Jesus was, the bread of life. He let himself become part of that loaf which is food. That is a true martyr.