

Will of God Fifteenth Week in Ordinary Time Saturday, July 20, 2019 Ex
12:37-42; **Mt 12:14-21** (St. Apollinaris, bishop and martyr) (What went wrong in the
time of Jesus is going wrong today as well.)

“So the Pharisees, the leaders of the synagogue, took counsel against Jesus to put him to death.”

Now you may recall yesterday that there was contention concerning the fact that Jesus’ disciples were breaking off the heads of grain and eating them on the sabbath, and this was technically harvesting, and the Pharisees objected. Then in between that event and today there’s another very interesting little paragraph where on the sabbath again, there’s a man with a withered hand. And Jesus quizzes the Pharisees about **whether they would in fact pull a sheep, one of their own sheep, out of a hole if the sheep fell in it on the sabbath.** They don’t answer him, and he says well you would and **people are more important than sheep, so therefore I can heal on the sabbath.**

So here we have an issue of, what is really important to God? That’s really the issue. How does God see things? And the **Pharisees** are convinced that they know the will of God; they are convinced of that, and therefore **Jesus must be some terrible blasphemer because he is violating what they know to be the will of God.** But Jesus knows, not only the will of God, **he knows the heart of the Father, who is really the lawgiver and so he takes it upon himself to interpret the will of God.** And this is really something he intended his disciples to also do because he sends the Spirit, his Spirit, as teacher. So there’s a great difference then between the religious faith, which is sincere, the religious faith of the Pharisees, and the religious faith of Jesus. They are very, very different.

And we should not take it upon ourselves to condemn the Pharisees, but rather to try to find what went wrong because it is obvious to anyone who looks that **what went wrong in the time of**

Jesus is going wrong today as well where very well-intentioned and sincere people are utterly convinced in what is false, even to the point of doing damage to others, as you see here. “They took counsel against Jesus to put on the death”; that’s doing damage to others. That goes on today.

Now in the section after this reading, after all these healings take place, and of course Jesus says don’t tell anybody; don’t speak about me; I don’t want people to know. And the Pharisees say, well, “He is healing through the power of Beelzebul.” And it’s that point where Jesus says, “**There is an unforgivable sin, blaspheming the Holy Spirit,**” which no one has ever been able to define. Nonetheless it’s very important to ponder. What does it mean to blaspheme the Holy Spirit? **What does it mean to speak badly about God?** How do we really know? This is the point of this reading, the next one, and the one before. **How do we really know what God wills?** The gospels present Jesus as the way; we know through him. Do we really open ourselves to his wisdom? Do we let his wisdom really be our wisdom? Do we get out of the way with our own opinions and values and convictions and let Jesus teach us through his Spirit? That is the question.