

What is the unpardonable sin?

The Douay Catechism of 1649

CHAP. XIX. The Sins against the Holy Ghost Expounded

Q. 915. How many are the sins against the Holy Ghost?

A. Six: despair of salvation, presumption of God's mercy, to impugn the known truth, envy at another's spiritual good, obstinacy in sin, and final impenitence.

Q. 916. What is despair of salvation?

A. It is a diffidence in the mercies and power of God as also, in the merits of Jesus Christ, as if they were not of force enough to save us. This was the sin of Cain, when he said, "My sin is greater than I can deserve pardon." Gen. iv. 13. And of Judas, "when casting down the silver pieces in the temple, he went and hanged himself." Matt. xxvii. 4, 5.

Q. 917. What is the presumption of God's mercy?

A. A foolish confidence of salvation, without leading a good life, or any care to keep the commandments; such as they entertain who think they will be saved by faith only without good works.

Q. 918. What is it to impugn the known truth?

A. To argue obstinately against known points of faith, or to prevent the way of our Lord by forging lies and slander, as Heretics do, when they teach the ignorant people, that Catholics worship images as God, and give Angels and Saints the honor which is due to God; or that the Pope for money gives us pardon to commit what sins we please; that all which, greater falsehoods cannot be invented.

Q. 919. What is the envy to another's spiritual good?

A. A sadness or repining at another's growth in virtue and perfection; such as sectaries seem to have when they scoff and are troubled at the frequent fasts, prayers, feasts, pilgrimages, alms-deeds, vows, and religious orders of the Catholic Church, calling them superstitious and fooleries, because they have not in their churches any such practices of piety.

Q. 920. What is obstinacy in sin?

A. A willful persisting in wickedness, and running on from sin to sin, after sufficient instructions and admonition.

Q. 921. How show you the malice of this sin?

A. Out of Heb. x. 26, 27. "If we sin willfully after having received the knowledge of the truth, there is now left no sacrifice for sins, but a certain dreadful expectation of judgment."

Q. 922. What other proof have you?

A. Out of 2 Pet. ii. 21. "It was better for them not to know the way of justice, than after the knowledge to turn back from the holy commandment which was given them."

Q. 923. What is final impenitence?

A. To die without either confession or contrition for our sins, as those do of whom it is said, "With a hard neck, and with uncircumcised hearts and ears, you always resist the Holy Ghost." Acts vii. 51. And in the person of whom Job speaks, saying, "Depart thou from us, and we will not have the knowledge of thy ways." Job xxi. 14.

Q. 924. Why is it said that those sins should never be forgiven, neither in this world, nor in the world to come?

A. Not because there is no power in God or in the sacraments to remit them, if we confess them, and be sorry for them, (excepting only final impenitence) of which we read, "There is a sin to death for that I say not that any man ask." 1 John i. 9. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive our sins, and cleanse us from all iniquity."

“Therefore I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven.” 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.