

# Pope Warns Vatican Staff Against Gossip

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By Edward Pentin

For the second time in two weeks, Pope Francis has warned against the temptation to gossip and speak ill of others. He has also made another reference to someone who has escaped mention in Church homilies in recent years: the Devil.

Preaching to Vatican staff Tuesday at an early morning Mass in the chapel of the Vatican's guesthouse where he is staying, the Pope said that complaining behind each other's backs is a temptation that comes "from the evil one who does not want the spirit to dwell among us and give peace."

He urged those present to model their relationships on those of the earliest Christians, whose new life in baptism was expressed in "unity, unanimity, that harmony of feelings in mutual love."

He also said meekness — one of the virtues the new Pope loves most, according to previous interviews — is crucial to harmony, but it has been "a bit forgotten." Meekness, he added, has "many enemies" and the first is gossip. "When one prefers gossiping, gossiping about another, it's like clobbering another. This is normal, it happens to everyone, including me — it is a temptation of the evil one."

The struggle against such harmful chatter, he said, is something that continually sows tensions in parishes, families, neighborhoods, and among friends. Although he did not explicitly refer to it, such gossip has also been the cause of dissension within the Vatican, as the recent Vatileaks scandal revealed.

Christians, he said, "must not judge anyone" because the Lord is the only judge. They should "keep quiet," but if they must say something they must speak only to the person who could remedy the situation, "not the whole neighborhood."

"If, with the grace of the spirit, we were able to stop gossiping, it would be a huge step forward," Francis said, and "it would do everyone good."

In another morning homily, on March 28, Pope Francis said speaking poorly of someone else is equivalent to selling them "like a commodity," not unlike Judas who sold Jesus for thirty pieces of silver. "There is some arcane pleasure in scandalmongering," he said, adding that it is important to pray and ask for God's grace "for the good of the other."

Since his election last month, the Pope has made frequent references to the devil. In one of his first tweets, he warned followers not to "believe the evil one" when he suggests there is "nothing that can be done in the face of violence, injustice and sin." He warned cardinals not to "cede to the bitterness and pessimism that the devil offers us every day." In another homily, he preached that when one does not profess Jesus Christ, "one professes the worldliness of the devil."

As a cardinal in 2010, Pope Francis was also unafraid to single out the devil's works, saying same-sex marriage was a move by the "father of lies."

Observers have noted this emphasis with interest, especially as explicit mentions of the devil largely fell into disuse in the years following the reforms of the Second Vatican Council in the 1960s. With his disappearance from Church texts, exorcists complained that the rite of exorcism had become useless against demons.

Pope Francis's frequent allusions to the evil one may well be part of an effort —one that Benedict XVI had already begun — to bring back healing and harmony to the Church, and parts of the Vatican in particular.

## **Quo Vadis? Be loyal to fear and guilt or to Truth and Justice.**

Sunday, 14 Apr 2013 5:47 PM By: Konkn'no Vijay Naik

Gossip is an activity that nobody should indulge in. The dictionary meaning of the word 'gossip' is "idle talk or rumor, especially about the personal or private affairs of others." Logically then, talking about others is not gossip. **Idle talk and rumor mongering about personal or private affairs is.** We should not be trapped into thinking that, just talking about others is gossip. Leaders - mostly- religious and political, fortify themselves by making us believe that speaking about/against those in positions of authority is in itself gossip. By their thoughts, words and deeds, those in positions of authority affect our thoughts, words and deeds. While not interfering with the private life of our leaders, how do we ensure that they think, speak and act in our absolute benefit?

*When corruption enters governance, milk turns red in color; words get redefined and unconditional loyalty is demanded to the King rather than to Truth and Justice. - The Mahabharata.* Early christians were persecuted by romans and others. Informants were everywhere; they did not know who would inform the 'authorities' and what that information would be. Most often, the authorities were given wrong information, resulting in the torture and painful deaths of innocent people. Informants did this to gain favour with the king, to strengthen and fortify their own positions. This is common to all religions and political governments. In a democratic election, when one party wins, supporters of the opposing party are subtly targeted. This is why most of us do not get involved in the electoral process. If, out of mutual love, harmony, unanimity and unity; the early christians said to each other, "be careful of these persons in authority, they are giving the king incorrect information, and based on that, the king is arresting, torturing and imprisoning members of our group." Would that be gossip? To the king and the informants; early christians were rebels conducting an activity that could cause an uprising and eventual change in government. The king doesn't want this. He can arrest them and also subtly change the definition of gossip. By reminding us of the devil and all the bad that the devil can do, we are instilled with fear. By reminding us of the beatitude that Yeshua spoke of "blessed are the meek"...we are ridden with guilt and a perception of unworthiness. Our auto-logical response then, is to conform to a behaviour-pattern that avoids feelings of guilt and fear; and in turn avoiding **all** talk of the king. .... What happened? We gave up our freedom of thought, speech and action. Nobody took it from us. **WE GAVE IT UP.**

Not just Christians, WE (all beings) must not judge. Even the Lord does not judge. "I do not condemn you either. Go and sin no more" John 8:11. No! We should not keep quiet, we should speak out. Yes, we should speak directly to the person that can remedy the situation. However, if that person, has or will act defensively by creating fear or guilt in us, than WE WILL SPEAK OUT LOUD. Did John the Baptist keep quiet when the king Herod refused to listen to him? NO he did not, and yet Yeshua said of John "I assure you, of all who have ever lived, none is greater than Yohan." The meekness that Yeshua preached in the beatitudes is not the meekness as understood today. The meaning of this word is ambiguated. Yeshua spoke Aramaic; the word translated to meek is "**Makhikey**". Makhikey is not meekness as we know it, it is absoluteness of humility. A state of complete awareness of the situation or environment without attachment to the knowledge, the situation or the outcome thereof. By being meek we conform to the will of those in power. By being Makhikey we are humbly aware, yet not afraid to attempt a change in outcome.

Loyalty is due to Truth and Justice not to the person dispensing it. Truth and Justice are eternal, the dispenser is transient. If our loyalty is to the dispenser of Truth and Justice, we have become loyal to the transient and not the eternal. We have become loyal to the creation and not the creator. How can the transient control the eternal? "But when they bring you before the synagogues, the rulers, and the authorities, do not worry about how you should make your defense or what you should say for the holy spirit will teach you at that moment what you must say." Yeshua's words as written in John 12:11-12. Yeshua said that the creator (through his spirit) will let us know what to do and say at the right time. Why should we let fear and guilt stop that knowledge-flow from the creator?

When a child, my cousin thought me to ride the bicycle. The ability to ride was given to me by the creator, but the first time I tried to ride, I fell. I kept trying harder and harder, the more I tried, the more I fell. I became afraid of falling...I pondered if I should give up? Then suddenly, I balanced for a while and fell again. The pain and fear of pain came back. Back on the bicycle I got again and again. Slowly but surely I learned to ride the bicycle. What happened, did my cousin give me the ability to ride? Did he transfer it from him to me? No, he just enabled me to activate the ability I was given by my creator. We have every ability we need. The creator has been thinking about this, **we have forgotten**. My cousin helped me remember my ability; our leaders should help us remember what we are capable of. If my cousin had focused on the injuries I could suffer on the bicycle, I probably - out of fear - would avoid the bicycle and some advancements of the sport. My cousin could have told me of all the accidents I could meet with and the bones I could have broken if I ride the bicycle, he chose not to. I learnt and experienced the pleasures of riding a bicycle and also met with accidents. Should that stop me from bicycling again?

"Listen! A sower went out to sow And as he sowed, some seed fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured it. Other seed fell on rocky ground where it did not have much soil. It sprang up at once because the soil was not deep. When the sun came up it was scorched, and because it did not have sufficient root, it withered. Other seed fell among the thorns, and they grew up and choked it, and it did not produce grain. But other seed fell on good soil and produced grain, sprouting and growing; some yielded thirty times as much, some sixty, and some a hundred times." And he said, "Whoever has ears to hear had better listen!" Mark 4:3-9

Fear and guilt restrict, cause stress and cramp our abilities. These abilities are God given. We can choose to be loyal to fear and guilt or to Truth and Justice. **Quo Vadis?**