

FROM THE PADRE'S PEN

GOSSIP



My name is GOSSIP. I have no respect for justice. I maim without killing. I break hearts and ruin lives. I am cunning and malicious and gather strength with age.

The more I am quoted the more I am believed. I flourish and my victims are helpless. They cannot protect themselves against me because I have no name and no face.

To track me down is nigh impossible. The harder you try, the more elusive I become. I am nobody's friend. Once I tarnish a reputation, it is never the same. I topple governments and ruin relationships. I ruin careers and cause sleepless nights, heartache and depression. I spawn suspicion and generate grief.

I make innocent people cry in their pillows.

My name is GOSSIP."

Words do tremendous damage. Unless you've been a victim of violent crime or a major illness or something catastrophic, your deepest pains have probably come from hurtful words. Words have great power. God created the world through His words. He said, "Let there be light" and there was light. Humans use words in producing great novels and poems that move us and music that stirs and warms our hearts.

We listen and communicate words every day that either lift us up or bring us down. Powerful, positive words can offer great healing, while negative words contain great destructive power.

Gossip slanders and ruins reputations, families, marriages, friendships. Knowing that gossip is so destructive Comrades,

WHY DO WE GOSSIP?

Gossip makes us feel superior to the person about whom we are gossiping. We gossip to draw people into our own hurt and anger. We want others to side with us so we must tell our side of the story. Our friends then repeat the story to their friends and on and on it goes ad infinitum. Even if you gossip the truth, it does not justify unnecessarily passing on hurtful information about someone.

Gossip also hurts the gossiper. When you speak ill of someone, you alienate yourself from that person.

So

When someone approaches our table in the Royal Canadian Legion and begins talking negatively about a Comrade, we can try to determine the speaker's motivation and encourage accountability by asking such questions as, "is this something I NEED to hear about?", "Who gave you this information?", "Have you spoken to those people who are directly involved with this situation?", and, "Before you share any further, what are you expecting from me?"

Comrade, THINK before speaking about another comrade in a controversial manner. Ask yourself, Is it True? Is it Helpful? Is it Inspiring? Is it Necessary?

IS IT KIND?

If what we are about to say does not pass these tests, then it is gossip and we should keep our mouths shut!

Great minds discuss ideas; average minds discuss events; small minds discuss people.

**Your friend and Padre, Fr John.
(who must also practice what he preaches, eh?!)**