

September 13, 2013

## Pope: There is no such thing as innocent gossip



(Vatican Radio) He who speaks ill of his neighbor is a hypocrite who lacks the courage to look to his own shortcomings. Speaking during his homily at morning Mass at the Domus Sanctae Marthae, Pope Francis focused on the fact that gossip has a “criminal” side to it, because every time we speak ill of our brothers, we imitate Caine’s homicidal gesture.

The seed of Pope Francis’ homily on Friday was Jesus’s thought provoking query when he asked: “Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother’s eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye?” After having spoken about humility – he said – Jesus speaks to us of its opposite: “of that hateful attitude towards one’s neighbor when one becomes a “judge” of his brother”. In this context – the Pope points out – Jesus uses a strong word: “hypocrite”.

**“Those who live judging their neighbor, speaking ill of their neighbor, are hypocrites, because they lack the strength and the courage to look to their own shortcomings. The Lord does not waste many words on this concept. Further on he says that he who has hatred in his heart for his brother is a murderer. In his first letter, John the Apostle also says it clearly: anyone who has hatred for his brother is a murderer, he walks in darkness, he who judges his brother walks in darkness”.**

And so – Pope Francis continued – every time we judge our brothers in our hearts – or worse still when we speak ill of them with others, we are Christian murderers:

**“A Christian murderer.... It’s not me saying this, it’s the Lord. And there is no place for nuances. If you speak ill of your brother, you kill your brother. And every time we do this, we are imitating that gesture of Caine, the first murderer in History”:**

And the Pope added that in this time in history when there is much talk of war and so many pleas for peace, “a gesture of conversion on our own behalf is

necessary". "Gossip – he warned – always has a criminal side to it. There is no such thing as innocent gossip". And quoting St. James the Apostle, the Pope said the tongue is to be used to praise God, "but when we use our tongue to speak ill of our brother or sister, we are using it to kill God", "the image of God in our brother". Some may say – the Pope commented – that there are persons who deserve being gossiped about. But it is not so:

**"Go and pray for him! Go and do penance for her! And then, if it is necessary, speak to that person who may be able to seek remedy for the problem. But don't tell everyone! Paul had been a sinner, and he says of himself: I was once a blasphemer, a persecutor, a violent man. But I have been mercifully treated". Perhaps none of us are blasphemers – perhaps... But if we ever gossip we are certainly persecutors and violent. We ask for grace so that we and the entire Church may convert from the crime of gossip to love, to humility, to meekness, to docility, to the generosity of love towards our neighbor".**

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## **From the Book of Heaven**

### **The Writings of the Servant of God Luisa Piccarreta**

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#### ***Do not judge your neighbor.***

It continues almost always in the same way. This morning, as Jesus transported me outside of myself according to His usual way, we passed through the midst of many people, and the majority of them were intent on judging other people's actions, without looking at their own. My beloved Jesus told me: "The surest means to be upright with one's neighbor is to not look at all at what they are doing, because looking, thinking and judging is all the same. Besides, by looking at his neighbor, one comes to defraud his own soul; therefore it happens that he is not upright either with himself, or with his neighbor, or with God."

After this, I said to Him: 'My only good, it has been a while since You gave me even just a kiss.' And so we kissed each other. Then, almost wanting to correct me, He added: "My daughter, what I recommend to you is to preserve and

cherish my words, because my word is eternal and pure as I am Myself, and by preserving it in your heart and profiting from it, you will have your sanctification and will receive an eternal splendor as recompense, which is produced by my word. By doing otherwise, your soul would receive a void, and you would remain my debtor."