

Speaking Of The Risque

Leonard Lyons, the noted columnist, has this to say about dirty stories:

"The mystery of how risque stories originate and spread always has puzzled story tellers. Seven of them, members of the exclusive Bath Club in London, discussed this mystery and decided to test it. The group made up a story and the seven men agreed that each was to tell the story to only one person, only one, and then to keep a record of how often and in what varied versions each heard the story re-told. At the end of a week the seven men met again at the Bath Club. Their records showed that the story repeated to only seven people originally, had come back to them in two hundred and seventy-eight different and lurid versions."

No mention here of course of the immoral principle, and justifying the means, employed by the would-be moralists who made the above experiment. Nor is there mention of the scandal involved; no theologizing on the gravity of the sin. There are a number of moral questions involved.

1. Is It a Grave Sin to Tell Dirty Stories? Assuming that the obscene, filthy, gutter talk that ridicules the source of life and belittles woman hood is meant, the answer is an emphatic YES! There is nothing more dangerous to innocent bystanders than the rotten story or gutter-type sex discussion. It is possible to speak in a jocose manner about cheating or robbery or gossip or murder or any other vice without exposing the listener to grave sin. But the smeller-teller can be just as much a betrayer of womanhood as the seducer because he is just as apt to rob a listener of his or her innocence as the person who propositions another. There are many mouse-minded Catholics who are always picturing to their mind's eye Christ the Good Shepherd, or Christ promising the good thief heaven for his repentance. But it was the same Christ who displayed righteous anger and uttered terrible imprecations against the giver of scandal, especially the person with the dirty mind and dirtier tongue: "He that scandalizes one of these ...it were better were a millstone hanged about his neck, and that he be drowned in the depth of the sea...woe to the world because of scandals!...Woe to that man by whom the scandal cometh." (Matt. XVIII).

2. Is It A Grave Sin To Listen To Dirty Stories? If the listener takes deliberate and voluntary pleasure in the situation, and if the story or conversation is de facto obscene, the answer again is an emphatic YES!

If a person cannot remove himself from the occasion (a necessary occasion of sin), and if he takes no deliberate pleasure from the conversation, there is no sin at all, providing the listener makes effort to reduce the proximity of sin to a remote possibility by prayer or some other form of distraction.

If the listener, out of a motive of human respect, or out of curiosity, does not leave the scene when he can do so, he commits venial sin.

3. What Means May One Employ To Cure The Smeller-Teller.

- a) Give the smeller-teller the lake treatment.
- b) Tell him that his tale would be nice to repeat to his mother the next time he goes home.
- c) Ask him if his sister or mother told him that one!
- d) Get the rest of the gang in your hall to give him the deep-freeze--stay from him!
- e) Punch him in the nose--the PD and PR depts. will always back you up on such occasions!

Prayers: (Deceased): Father of Fr. Al. CSC & Helen Hasinski; uncles of Paul Votilla (W.), John Enders (ZAMA); Jim (CV) & Bill (MOR.) Kelly; aunt of John Fagan (FAE.)  
Serious oper. . Sister of Dave Smith (Badin); thanksgiving for successful Operation: Mellie Murray; 2 special intentions.