

## What Constitutes Gossip?

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*The Gossip. Painting of Nikolaos Gyzis*

Strangely enough, the word 'gossip' originally meant 'godparent' and it is connected with the word 'sibling'. It is useful to recall, because it means that gossip comes about when people are too familiar, too close to each other. I think that in the hothouse of certain tiny convert groups, where relations are too close for comfort, this can be a problem. I have not particularly come across the problem of gossip in more 'normal', larger parishes.

The essence of gossip is pride, the wish to feel superior to others, it is smugness, pretentiousness, self-importance. Gossip always condemns others. Here we must distinguish between 'judging' and 'condemning'. We constantly have to judge - judges have to do it, parents have to do it, priests have to do it.

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