

Messenger Of Truth

"Holding forth the Word of Life" (Phil. 2:16).

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Secrets

"A secret is something I tell to only one person at a time." – Anonymous

"Nothing is so burdensome as a secret" – French Proverb

"Three may keep a secret if two of them are dead." – Benjamin Franklin, *Poor Richard's Almanack*, 1735

"A secret is seldom safe in more than one breast." – Jonathan Swift

Don't you just hate it when someone shares something with you and they want you to promise that you won't share it with anyone? In such instances, wouldn't it be better if they hadn't told you at all, rather than burden you with information that often is very troubling?

Now for some folks, keeping a secret is about as foreign as going without sleep. They can't wait to tell what they have learned. Such reminds us of Scripture, when the writer of Proverbs says, "A talebearer reveals secrets, but he who is of a faithful spirit conceals a matter" (Prov. 11:13). Taken from the original language, a talebearer is in effect a scandal-monger. Isn't it a shame that some folks take delight in seeing others scandalized? Maybe that is why the tabloids sell so well?

There is the matter of knowing too when a secret needs to be shared. For example, suppose someone comes to you and tells you secretly that they have committed a crime. Perhaps they have stolen thousands of dollars and they felt the necessity of confessing it to you. Is it right for you to keep that a secret?

When I worked as a police chaplain, I was told very clearly that if someone confessed to me a crime in secret, that when called into court I had to make it known or I would be complicit in the crime. The only way to avoid that would be for the church to have an understood teaching that all confidential information told to a preacher would remain confidential. But that had to be in writing and a known practice of the church. As far as I know, only Catholicism holds that teaching. But how does the Catholic priest live with the knowledge of a theft, or for that matter, a murder without feeling a burden of needing to tell?

Now there are some folks just dying to learn a secret that they can share with others. It is tricky to let something slip on purpose just to see with whom they share that information. Sometimes it can be to their shame, but then again, it seems to be more in their nature and they feel no remorse for sharing.

Seriously, the fewer secrets we are told, the better!