

Fr. Romeo Evangelista Homily
Weekday Mass – Thursday, February 18, 2021
Cycle B

Two extremes can go overboard. A masochist is someone who finds pleasure in self-denial, submissiveness, and negation. When you are happy that others are deprived of better things they are supposed to have, you are at the border of being a masochist. If I cannot get it, then you should not have it either.

A sadist, on the other hand, is someone who takes pleasure in inflicting pain, punishment, or humiliation on others. When you find delight when others are whipped, shamed, and embarrassed, you are at the border of being a sadist.

Jesus, in today's Gospel, seems to promote prescriptions along this line. First, He said, deny yourself. That seems masochist. Second, He suggests, take up your cross. That appears sadist.

However, what makes Jesus' teaching unique is the fact He did not end with only two prescriptions. He added the third prescription of following Him that puts meaning in the whole process of denying the self and taking up of the cross.

You do not look for suffering like going for window-shopping or island-hopping. Our denying of the self is to empty our soul from worldly clutter that distracts us. We do not deny for the sake of denying; we do it to allow space for God to dwell in our hearts.

Our taking up of the cross is not to enjoy the weight inflicted by pain but to alleviate the burden of others who are suffering more than us. This way, suffering takes on a more profound redemptive meaning.

Suffering comes, we do not seek it. They are more profound when they are unplanned, least expected, and uncharted because they demand submission of the will.

We take up our cross not for any ideological or psychological reasons. We go through it because we are following someone in the person of Jesus.

Amen