

Preparing for the homily today

I came across an analogy for our Gospel

Have you ever noticed a drug advertisement in a magazine?

Normally a half page or even a full page ad

Then flip the page

And there is a page or two of side effects

We see the full color ad

We all want the good things these promise

Heart health, free from diabetes, clearer skin

Whatever it might be

But then we see the side effects

Spiritually, we all want spiritual health

We want that great relationship with God

We want to close to Jesus

We want to know the Father

To be guided by the Holy Spirit

The disciples wanted this

Peter wanted this

In fact, last week's Gospel and today's are from one conversation

Who do you say that I am?

Remember Peter's reply

You are the Christ

The Son of the Living God

A few weeks ago at the transfiguration

Let us build 3 tents here

To stay with him on that mountain

These beautiful moments

Jesus paints this picture, and they desire it

We desire it

Then flip the page

Here are the side effects

This is the reality of what it will take to attain this life

The Son of Man will suffer and die

And on the third day be raised

Peter once again pushes the envelope

No, Lord

That cannot be

You are the Son of God

And Jesus' response:

Get behind me Satan

This is the reality of life

We need to put away worldly thoughts

And strive to see as God sees

Something Jeremiah sought to do

In all of the Old Testament

Jeremiah is one who continually calls his people to repent

To live lives of penance

But even he could be tempted to buy into the good things

You have duped me Lord

And I allowed myself to be duped

He felt duped into becoming a prophet

Seeing all the benefits

He allowed himself to be duped

But then came the reality

He flipped the page

His was not a mission of comfort

But an unpopular mission

Warning the people of God

Calling them to conversion

Offering a message they did not want to hear

One they would violently oppose

Making him an outcast in his world

The apostles must have felt this same way

They had been with Jesus

They had witnessed so many of his miracles

They had come to believe that he was the Son of the Living God

And now he flips the page

He tells them he will go to Jerusalem

He will suffer at the hands of the chief priests

And he will die

But will rise again on the third day

Things we read about

They are so commonplace for us

But for the apostles

He was not making sense

To die was the worst thing that could happen

Especially to die on a cross

It meant he would be totally disgraced

And what is this being raised on the third day?

It is easy to identify with Peter

God forbid

But then Jesus' reply cuts to the heart

Get behind me, Satan

In the strongest of terms

He is telling Peter to leave this scandal behind

And follow him

In the desert Satan tried diverting Jesus from his mission

Peter is unwittingly trying to do the same

In the temptation in the desert

Jesus tells Satan 'Be gone!'

Here he calls Peter his adversary

But he does not banish him

He tells Peter to get behind him

To follow him

God's way is not man's way

"For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it

But whoever loses his life for My sake and the Gospel will save it

When we cling to even good things in the world

We can become miss-guided

Learning to follow Christ means taking up our cross

Out of love for others

This is the path of true glory

As St Paul tells us

Do not conform yourselves to this age

But be transformed by the renewal of your mind

Discern the will of God

What is good, pleasing and perfect

We need to look at the promises

We naturally seek the beauty of the promise

We seek spiritual health

But if this is where our journey ends

We can be duped

We can find ourselves demanding the Church conform to our vision

To my desires

To my way

Like those pages of advertisements

We can forget about the realities of the side-effects

We can take these good things

And they can become our god

Think of three or four things you really like

Even people in your life

Do these lead you to Christ?

Even good things

Family and friends

Sports, leisure and recreation

Business and work

These and so many more

They can lead us to Christ

Or they can lead us away

They can take priority over our worshiping God

What if we were called to give up one or more?

Would we give up the things of the world

Or would we give up Christ?

We see so many people in our world today giving up Christ

Giving top priorities to things

If not in word

Then in what we actually do

If not, this church would be packed today

That is the challenge for those of us who are here

To put Satan behind us

To lose our life for His sake

To be that example for our family and friends

To show by both word and our actions

That attaining the promise of salvation

Is attained only when we take up our cross

And follow