

Making A Choice

21st Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year B)

August 26, 2018

Fr. Tony Davis

We make many choices every day. In the United States in particular, we are very blessed by our freedoms and the tons of options we have. While our freedom to make choices is something to celebrate, though, we need to ask ourselves if the choices we make every day are really that significant. More often than not, they're aren't. They are simply dealing with our personal preferences- what I like and what I dislike- and we think that is choice! Our scripture readings today take us beyond personal preference and into the deeper choices of life.

The deeper choice that *Joshua* gives his listeners is this: "decide today whom you will serve". As the people were drifting away from their belief in the one true God, he confronted them to make a decision. Their answer would shape who they were as a people. Joshua firmly gives his choice: "as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord." By the end of the reading, the people thankfully make a similar choice: "far be it from us to forsake the Lord, our God...therefore we also will serve the Lord, for he is our God."

Our second reading from *Ephesians* touches on another serious choice. It is the choice that husbands and wives make to love each other. St. Paul tells husbands to love your wives as Christ loved the Church. As many of you know from personal experience, marital love isn't just a feeling. There are days when you don't feel like loving, yet you make the choice to love. That is a deep choice to make.

In our Gospel from *John*, in response to many of his followers leaving him to return to their former ways of life since his teaching on the bread of life was too hard to accept, Jesus asks his remaining followers, "Do you also want to leave?" Each of you have a choice: stay or leave. Peter's answer should motivate us as believers; "Master, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life."

Not every choice we make carries the same weight. We can get so caught up in our choices of preference that we never really deal with the more significant choices of life and eternity. We never deal with what moral theology calls our 'fundamental option.'

Our fundamental option is our response to the fundamental choice in life: do we choose God or not? Everything ultimately comes down to that choice.

Our faith is demanding us to deal with the deeper choices of life.

Am I able to deal with any choices deeper than personal preference? We know many people who live at that level. They are highly opinionated and hard to be around. For all of us, let us pray for the courage to no longer ignore the deeper choices of life, but to face them as best we can. So, like Joshua, I ask each one of us, "decide today whom you will serve."