

Twenty-First Sunday in Ordinary Time,

Joshua 24:1-2, 15-18 Ephesians 5:25-32 John 6:60-69

HOMILY

You may have heard that story of a man who met an old school friend whom he hadn't seen for years. There was an attractive woman by his side. Smiling, the man asked his friend, *'By any chance, is this your wife?'*

The school friend replied, *'Not by chance, my friend, but by her choice'*.

We make all sorts of choices every day of the week. Many of them are not all that significant. Nothing much would change if we made a different choice. There are other choices that shape us for life, such as this woman's choice for her man or any man's choice of their wife, or the choice of priesthood – the reason why Dave is in our midst to discover if this is for him, or our choice of the course of studies or a career. These are fundamental choices that shape a lot of our other choices.

The readings today focus on the fundamental choices in the life of God's people.

FIRST READING

We see Joshua putting a fundamental choice before the people. They must choose either to serve the local gods of the land or to serve the Lord, the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Moses.

GOSPEL

We see Jesus putting before his own disciples a significant choice. *'What about you, do you want to go away too?'* They must choose either to follow him or to walk away from him and take another path.

These fundamental choices in life are not made once for all. They need to be renewed again and again. Once you have made that fundamental choice for someone or for a way of life, you cannot just sit back and relax.

In making such a choice it is time to start re-making it over and over again

We need to keep registering that fundamental stance in life. Making, and remaking our choices over and over again helps us to remain consistent with our choice, to refocus our stance in life and to remain in tune with our choices. But to remain consistent with our choices, to remain focussed and in tune to our choices is not done in a vacuum. We need to hear others like Peter, who when Jesus asked, do you too want to go away, Peter answered: *'Where can we go, you have the word of everlasting life.'* This greatly encouraged the other apostles to remain.

We need Peters in this community to sustain us in our way of life. But we also need to be Peters to those who need affirmation in their way of life.