



## *Reflection from Ben Babaran*

These days, we hear many people saying “it is a free world” as their response to mask mandates due to rising cases of the delta variant of Covid-19. Very true! Thanks to God who did not withhold the gift of free will from us even after the colossal disobedience of Adam and Eve. Nevertheless, we are asked to make responsible choices in the so-called free world as our choices determine our chances and the changes we experience in life.

In Sunday’s First Reading, Joshua challenges the Israelites at Shechem to make a choice of whom they wish to serve. Joshua’s declaration tells us about God’s patience with us even when we are disobedient. His narrative shows us that God cares about us, desires our salvation and gives us the opportunity to make reliable choices.

Likewise, in the Gospel, our Lord Jesus wraps up his teaching on the Eucharist by challenging his hearers to choose to accept his doctrine that leads to life or leave it for a damnable fate. In the same manner as Joshua, Jesus takes time to explain to them why they need to make a choice and where it would lead them. As a matter of choice, many people could not accept his teaching and left him.

The same invitation to make a choice is open to us today. When Jesus challenged the apostles to choose as the other people were leaving him and going back to their former way of life, Peter replying on behalf of others says, “Master, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life”.

Joshua and Jesus propose new ways to their respective audiences while leaving them to choose. Choice-making characterizes life. We must choose to take a chance before our life could change. However, our undue attachments to various ways of living often make it difficult for us to accept some new and helpful realities that life opens for us.

This is the time for responsible choice-making. It is imperative for us to remember that whenever we make a choice, we also choose the consequences. There are many options in life, but we need to go for the optimal option. What choice would we make today in our personal lives, in our family, in our relationship with others, and ultimately in our journey with Christ? Are we going to choose to fight and eradicate the Covid-19 virus and its variants by responsibly listening to the experts or are we going to help spread the pandemic of misinformation? Will we, like Peter and the disciples, make the right and responsible choice by sticking with the Lord who has the message of eternal life and without whom no option is tenable?

Have a beautiful Sunday and a pleasant week ahead as we choose wisely and responsibly.

*~ Peace,*

*Ben*