

Probably the biggest decision I ever made in my life was to become a priest. I've been happy with that choice, but at the time, nearly 25 years ago, it was both easy and difficult to make. We make big decisions based on what we know, and that makes them easy, but we don't know where they will lead, and that makes them hard.

We make little decisions every day, but over the course of a life, a few decisions are huge: what school to attend, whom to date, whom to marry, where to work, where to live, or what treatment to receive – all these choices strongly influence how we live our lives. They are both easy and difficult to make.

One of those big decisions is faith. If we choose to believe in God, that determines how we pray, how we decide what's right and wrong, whether to study or play, whether we give to the needy, how we treat members of our family, and how we deal with a difficult neighbor. We determine those actions based on what we believe.

In today's first reading, Joshua asks the Israelites to make a big decision about faith. They had all just completed the long exodus from Egypt and now they were in the Promised Land. So he asked them to decide which god they would serve: the many gods of the foreigners or the one God of their ancestors. To help them make the right choice, Joshua said, "As for me and my household, we will serve the Lord"; i.e., Yahweh, the God of their ancestors. They all agree – all of them – all the tribes of Israel, their elders, leaders, judges and officers. They all say to Joshua, "We also will serve the Lord – the one Lord, for he is our God."

This was a major decision for Israel. It was probably easy and difficult all at the same time. But they made their decision based on what they knew: God had worked wonders in their midst and had protected them from attack as they journeyed to the Promised Land. They made their choice based on what they knew. They could not have known what lay ahead. They didn't have to know. They knew enough from the past to make the choice they needed to make, and they made it with confidence together. They never regretted it.

We reaffirm our choice for God every time we come to mass, recite our creed and share communion, week after week. We do it the way we make our other decisions in life. If we make the big decisions well, based on what we know, they will prepare us for what we don't know.