

## **Homily – Twenty-first Sunday in Ordinary Time San Fernando Cathedral – August 25, 2024**

**My dear brothers and sisters in Christ, today, the Scriptures invite us to a moment of decision, both as individuals and within our families. Joshua, in the first reading, calls the tribes of Israel to choose whom they will serve; whether it be the Lord who delivered them from Egypt, or the gods of the land they now inhabit. This was not an easy decision. The people of Israel were surrounded by influences that challenged their faith in the true God, and yet Joshua boldly declares, “As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”**

**This ancient choice reflects a struggle that persists today. In our modern world, families face numerous challenges that can pull us away from our commitment to God. The culture around us often offers tempting alternatives, leading to materialism, vanity, and pleasure for its own sake. We are tempted to serve these false gods instead. Yet, just as Joshua urged the Israelites to make a firm decision, so too are we called to choose God each day, especially within our families.**

**The decision to serve the Lord is not a one-time event but a continuous commitment. It is echoed in the Gospel when many disciples, struggling with Jesus’ teachings, turn away. Jesus then asks the Twelve, “Do you also want to leave?” This question is as relevant today as it was then. We must confront ourselves and ask: To whom shall we go if not to Christ, who has the words of eternal life? Like Peter, we are called to affirm our faith, acknowledging that Jesus is the Holy One of God.**

In this journey, our families play a crucial role. The family is the first place where faith is nurtured, where the decision to serve the Lord is lived out daily. The family is where the world begins to change as the People of God is edified. That is why Pope Francis invites our families to let ourselves be changed by Jesus, *“so that you too can change the world and make it ‘home’ for all those who need to feel welcomed and accepted, for all those who need to encounter Christ and to know that they are loved.”*

But let us not forget that even if we falter in our commitment, the Lord remains steadfast. He continues to offer Himself for us in the Eucharist, inviting us to return to Him. The Eucharist is a powerful reminder of Christ’s unwavering love and the life He offers us.

As we leave here today, let us ask Our Lady of Guadalupe to help us renew our commitment to serve the Lord with our whole heart. Through her powerful intercession, let us ask for the grace to remain faithful to this decision, especially in our families, so that together we may find the strength to say, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.”