

11th July 2022

Decisions

**“Decide not rashly. The decision made
Can never be recalled. The gods implore not,
Plead not, solicit not; they only offer
Choice and occasion, which once being passed
Return no more. Dost thou accept the gift?”**

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Masque of Pandora, Tower of Prometheus on Mount Caucasus

François Rabelais was a 16th century French humanist writer of satirical romances. One of his major works, *Gargantua*, written in five books, is a remarkable piece of writing, though too full and complex to do justice to here. But tucked away in the first book is this little gem:

S'asseoir entre deux selles le cul a terre.

Between two stools one sits on the ground.

What do I take from this aphorism from Rabelais? If you are fortunate to have a choice to make, get on with making the choice. Make a decision, or you'll end up on your bottom between the stools! And, if you *choose* to sit on the ground, make sure that's the right choice too.

Of course, we keep Longfellow's advice in mind. "Decide not rashly. The decision made can never be recalled." We have to take care when we decide, and rashness, ill-considered decisions, are fraught with danger. But decide we must, and to dither and procrastinate is not a helpful approach.

The Book of Acts tells us that the disciples of the early Church had to make a decision. Judas, the twelfth disciple, had gone. A complete team was needed. They had a choice between two candidates, Joseph Barsabbas and Matthias. We know that a decision was made – and they made it by drawing lots! The King James version of the Bible tells us:

*And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias;
and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.*

No sitting on their bottom between two stools for them! A decision was made, and they moved on. And more decisions followed thereafter for the good of the Church – now that they had twelve disciples who could get on with their job of deciding what was best!

A prayer for today

When I decide, help me to believe in my decision, and to go forward in faith. Amen

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