

Deuteronomy 30: 19-20 – DSC October 10, 2025 – Elyse Marie Ramirez, OP
(Springfield)

A reading from the book of Deuteronomy.

Inclusive Translation

I call heaven and earth to witness against you today: I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Choose life, then, so that you and your descendants may live, by loving Adonai, your God, by obeying God's voice and by clinging to the Most High. For that will mean life for you, a long life in the land which God swore to give to your ancestors, Abraham and Sarah, Rebecca and Isaac, and Jacob and Leah and Rachel.

The word of God.

I live at Jubilee Farm now. Which means I am learning a lot about collecting eggs. How precious they are. It is no easy task collecting them from the chickens, even though Sr. Anita assures me, "they may peck but will not break your skin!"

Right now, I suggest we are holding this precious passage from Deuteronomy. Together in this moment let us begin to break open this word together. Dominican women that we are. As we break open, crack open this word together, we can glimpse a few points of light coming through for us.

Crack - ---Point of light, one.

Commentators and textual scholars point out that this one verse from Deuteronomy is the only time in the Old Testament that the verb choose is used with human beings as the subject.

That would be us. We are doing the choosing. This first ray of light in our breaking open this passage illuminates our humanity. **Our agency.** Us in this room. We in this shared faith.

Point of light two. Careful, the breaking open is widening.

Scholars also emphasize the phrase, "I set before you" indicates a word given to the people **from within** their relationship with God. Setting up the truth - that the choice is not a means to the relationship. No. Rather, the choice is from within that relationship.

The truth of tending the intimacy of our own **relationship with God is ours to choose. It is where we find our strength, our wisdom.**

Careful, do not let it all fall into the bowl yet! Point of light three

There are two possible contexts for this passage. One is this is Moses's final word, encouraging the people who are at the end of their wandering in the

wilderness not knowing what is going to happen next. Another context is it is being delivered to sixth century BCE Israel driven into Babylonian exile.

In either setting the shape of Israel's future is uncertain. The future is unknown. Sound familiar? And this is where the choice for life lies. In fidelity even within the unknown.

Choosing life is our choice as we shape what is uncertain in our future.

And wait. More light making it through.

Perhaps you see it coming through the Gospel echoes emanating through our ancestors' names, Sarah, Rebecca, Leah and Rachel.

Being agents of change and transformation is the **faith DNA** in our blood. Generating new life, no matter what our age as our ancestor Sara, or being the resourceful trickster Rebecca's. Can there be a more complicated sisters' relationship than Leah and Rachel?! Yet they join in a single purpose so that both are able to seed life in their wombs!

Oh God, have mercy on us indeed!

Sisters, today ***as Dominican women, anointed disciples of Jesus Christ, we stand together in God's own light and choose life!***

Oh God, have mercy on us indeed!

Together, choosing life, we breathe and push!