

I would imagine that everyone is familiar with the cartoon characters in the comic strip "Peanuts." Charlie Brown. Snoopy. Lucy. Peppermint Patty. And Linus.

Linus is well-known for his constant companion - his security blanket. I would guess that in every family, there's someone who when they were little had a favorite blanket. My little niece was so attached to her blanket, that my sister-in-law had to have a second one that she kept clean in the laundry room and would switch at just the right moment ... and for years my niece thought that it took seconds to wash a blanket.

For many toddlers, their security blanket is a constant companion - always at their side; or at least in sight. A source of comfort, close at hand.

Other children perhaps are attached to what in my family was called a "binky." A pacifier, I think is the technical term. Unless the child is eating or drinking - they would have their "binky" in their mouth.

Today's readings - the first reading from Acts, the second from St. Peter's First Letter, and John's Gospel - appear to correspond to the three Theological Virtues of Faith, Hope, and Love.

In the reading from Acts, the Word of God preached by Philip is accepted in the area north of Jerusalem. The people BELIEVED because of the Word of God. And their FAITH is strengthened ... or confirmed ... by the laying on of hands by the Apostles.

In the second reading, St. Peter tells us to always be ready to give the reason for our HOPE - and goes on to explain that that reason is the Sacrifice of Jesus Christ - which has led us ... or drawn us ... into the heart of God.

And finally in the Gospel, Jesus tells his disciples, and tells us as well, that whoever LOVES Him will be LOVED by both Him and His Father. And that they will send us the Holy Spirit - on those who are LOVED.

Jesus calls the Holy Spirit the Advocate - sometimes translated as Comforter, or Consoler. Those two words come to us from Latin - the first meaning to make joyful, the second meaning to strengthen ... And in the Greek text, the word used is παράκλητος (*paraklētos*), which means someone who stands at your side to offer support.

For us, it is important that we seek our comfort from God - in the three Persons of the Holy Trinity. We should look toward the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit for security ... And realize that as Jesus tells us - as long as we keep His commandments, that we are loved by Him and His Father, and that the Holy Spirit will always be by our side. We need to seek comfort in God in order to be strengthened in supernatural FAITH, HOPE, AND LOVE.

If we seek comfort anywhere else, we won't be receiving that supernatural strength.

Let us resolve to take as our "security blanket" - our comforter, our consoler, our advocate - the Spirit of God - the Holy Spirit. Let us never go anywhere or do anything without acknowledging the presence of the Third Person of the Trinity - the Holy Spirit. And let the Word of God be always in our mouth and on our lips - perhaps if you will as a "binky" - a source of comfort - to bring us peace - to be our pacifier - giving us God's peace ... peace of mind, peace of heart, peace of spirit.

We are two weeks away from the great Solemnity of Pentecost - when the Holy Spirit first came upon the Apostles and Our Lady.

Let us ramp up our daily prayers asking for a greater outpouring of the Holy Spirit for ourselves, our families, and our parish communities. Let us cast aside any other comforts that are not rooted in the Holy Spirit, and let us seek our peace in the Word of God ... so that we may grow in the theological virtues infused into us through Baptism - FAITH, HOPE, and LOVE.