

30th Sunday in Ordinary Time – October 27/28, 2018 – Reflection

One of my very favorite people in the world isn't a full-grown person at all. He's a little boy. And, as a matter of fact, he isn't even a real person. He's a cartoon character. Still, I absolutely love and admire lispng, innocent Linus from the Peanuts comic strip and the Charlie Brown specials and holiday movies.

Linus is friend to Charlie Brown, when all the other kids would call him a blockhead. Linus is the long-suffering little brother to the insufferably pompous Lucy Van Pelt and the teacher and guide to Charlie Brown's little sister Sally who adores him as her sweet baboo.

When all the Peanuts kids ... and Snoopy too ... get all caught up in the commercialism of Christmas, Linus reminds them of the true meaning of the day of the dear Savior's birth: "That night in the fields near Bethlehem some shepherds were guarding their sheep. All at once an angel came down to them from the Lord, and the brightness of the Lord's glory flashed around them. The shepherds were sore afraid. But the angel said unto them, "Fear not, for I bring you tidings of great joy. For this day in the City of David a Savior is born for you who is Christ the Lord. And let this be a sign unto you: you will find a Baby dressed in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger. And suddenly, the heavenly host came down from heaven, singing and praising God: *Glory to God in the highest, and peace to people of good will!*" Hark! The herald angels sing!!

At this time of the year, little Linus is a lone voice crying out in the wilderness, trying to swim against the Halloween candy and costume tide as he preaches about the Great Pumpkin who will rise out of the most sincere pumpkin patch and will give toys to all the good children who wait for him and see him. Each year, while the rest of the kids dress themselves up as ghosts, goblins, princesses and witches, and go out Trick-or-Treating making a killing in the candy market, Linus faithfully sits in a pumpkin patch hoping that this year, at long last, his patch will be judged the most sincere and he'll see the Great Pumpkin. And every year, he falls asleep before he can glimpse his hero and the other kids laugh at him, scoff at him, and call him a fool. But Linus, undaunted, defends his faith, witnesses to the Great Pumpkin, and shares the good news with whoever will listen, even if he almost never makes any converts.

Linus may not be a real person, but I think he's a real hero. Innocent, persistent, unflaggingly loyal, optimistic, and standing for good and truth, kind and gentle, and maybe a little naïve, Linus is what a real friend, what a real disciple, what a real leader, what a real Christian should look like.

You could read about it in the funny papers!! Wouldn't it be great if you could glimpse it in the mirror, see it rise up in real life?!!

