

26th Sunday in Ordinary Time 2021 B

You may remember Charles Schulz as the creator of Charlie Brown, Snoopy, Lucy, Linus, and the rest of the Peanuts characters. For 50 years and about 18,000 comic strips, Schulz entertained millions of people. But more than just generating a chuckle, Schulz wanted to inspire people to think of life in hopeful ways. Though subtle, his Christian faith was often the motivation behind his humor. I still remember one of those Sunday comics, where Linus is sitting in a room reading, and his sister Lucy storms in saying, “I don’t want to read those books; I want to read MY books!” So he calmly goes to coloring; she follows him with “I don’t want to color those pictures; I want to color MY pictures!” So he patiently goes to listen to records; and of course she says, “I don’t want to listen to those records; I want to listen to MY records!” Linus says, “Fine, I’ll just go out to look at the stars.” To which she begins: “I don’t want to look at those stars, I want to look at MY ...” ... and then she lapses into silent understanding. In the last panel, they are sitting side by side on the grass, looking up at the constellations – God’s stars.

Mr. Schulz could have had these Scriptures in mind. At their heart is the concern for unity ... a very timely need today as well in our Church and world. Joshua was concerned that Moses, his master, would lose control if Eldad and Medad started speaking for God as well. John shares the same worry – mighty deeds done on some parallel track and not under the control of their Master, the Rabbi who had convened these Twelve, will undermine their work.

Humanly speaking, of course, they are correct. Multiple conflicting voices confuse us and pull us in different directions, which we see all too painfully in our times. But Moses understood what Jesus much later fulfilled – if what is happening is the work of the very Spirit of God in our midst, then we are NOT being divided, we are simply being sent to different people and different needs. The one Holy Spirit is the source of unity in the Church, the Body of Christ, just as the Spirit is the bond of love between the Father and the Son in life of the Trinity. The wide spectrum of the saints we honor shows that God can, and does, choose anyone and anywhere to do His will. Our task as disciples is not to control, but to follow, where

the Spirit leads us. ***If we are united as one Body in Christ, whatever good is done benefits us all.*** As long as we work for the same goals and the same Gospel, united by the same Gifts we received in Confirmation and bringing our unique gifts to this work, great things happen to serve as Christ serves. ***I see it among you, and through you, every day.***

Whenever we are unsettled like Joshua or John by many voices that can divide and confuse ... read MY books, color MY pictures, listen to MY records ... take a moment to look at the changing trees, the refreshed green grass, ***and this evening, especially at the stars***, and remember Whose Spirit is really in charge of nature and of history. We will not quickly or easily resolve the great and vexing questions of human conflict, suffering, injustice, and sorrow; but as St. Therese of Lisieux understood, we can respond in the small routines and chores of our days with love. Even if it is just a cup of water, every kindness we show, and every kindness we experience, is a window into the work of the same Spirit still among us. We offer anew the ancient prayer of God's people: ***“Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful; and kindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit, and they shall be created; and you shall renew the face of the earth.”***