

## **Our Security Blanket**

Homily for Trinity Sunday

When I was a child, I had a particular blanket that I went everywhere with. It was a lavender blanket my mommie made me, and I simply couldn't go anywhere without that blanket. One time, at my mother's insistence, my blanket needed to go in the wash. Apparently, as I'm told, that was very upsetting to me at the time, being only two years old. She tells me that I waited as the blanket finished the wash cycle and the drying cycle, wanting my blanket. And, finally, when that blanket came out of the dryer, I was finally reunited and would not again be parted with it, at least until I was three anyway.

Linus had a blanket that he carried with him. You know who I mean...Charlie Brown's friend, who walked everywhere with his thumb in his mouth and that blanket. Where Linus went, so did that very security blanket.

At St. John's, we make prayer shawls. A recent

member of ours who passed away, dear Caroline, she was given one that was bright blue. It looked so beautiful with her blue eyes as she draped herself in the prayers of the person who made it for her.

Whether or not we had blankets as little ones, any adult may think about how comfortable it is to have a bed that is warm and comforting or that special chair we love to sit in. Each of us may rely upon something that comforts us, and I'm sure that for you, given the stark, difficult reality of the world we now live in, if it's not your favorite blanket, you could name something. Wouldn't it be great if there was something equivalent that could bring this kind of comfort and assurance to us now, the kind of comfort that we could rely on?

Actually, there is, and it's in today's Gospel. If there is one phrase in the Gospel to bring us assurance, peace, and comfort to our lives, it's this one: "I am with you always, to the end of the age." Jesus makes us a promise, to be with us until...forever. Actually, depending upon who you talk

to, it could be translated as “until the end of time”, or “until the end of all things”. However you want to remember that phrase, Jesus is promising to be with us forever...no matter what we can possibly do to screw it all up.

What a great security blanket! It is a comfort that we can count on. However, let us not forget the stuff Jesus says before that promise. First, Jesus says: Go, make disciples. Then, he says: Go, baptize in the name of the Triune God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Lastly, he says: Teach them all what I have commanded you. And, know that I will be with you until the end of time. The security blanket also includes a commandment, to enfold others into that blanket of security and promise. It includes accountability as well. That is not always the comfort we would define for ourselves, but the certain comfort Jesus gives.

There is no question about the fact that the task we have been given is challenging. It always has been challenging to be faithful and to encourage the next generation of believers. I

mean, how are we all going to do this now, since we claim to be disciples like those first disciples? How can we all go and make followers for Jesus Christ even and especially with these new hurdles of digital worship, distancing, and strangeness that is today? Is this just something that we think Faith Family ministries and Church Councils do?

And, how are we to do this while at the same time refraining from our usual modes of operating as the whitest denomination in the United States and as racial strife divides our country? Really, should we even be comfortable right now at all? What should our security blanket really look like? We have some hard questions to ask ourselves as Lutherans for it is very easy to skip to comfort, often forgetting the accountability Jesus also gave us in his commandments.

Did you ever notice when hearing this part of the Gospel story from Matthew, that Jesus didn't appoint a chair person for an evangelism committee. Did you notice that he also didn't say assemble in a church

building to make it a real experience? Did you ever notice that he didn't appoint a pastor to do it? And, have you ever noticed that Jesus didn't select some of the disciples and not others.

Jesus appointed them all, and, some of them doubted! Even then and there, Jesus appoints the doubters and the believers alike to proclaim the Good News. Jesus appoints all of us to this task of making people followers of the WAY, bringing them to the font, leading by faithful example and teaching them...all of us are appointed.

You are appointed.

I am appointed...  
...to be and make followers of Jesus.

Now, there just are times when I just wish that this didn't have to be at the top of my list. Do you know I really wish this today? Since 2020 started, there were days I truly asked God if I was up to doing this. I'm certain that you in your lives are asking God the same some days. But, then I think about

the fact that Jesus promised not to leave me, to help me to do the hard work but to also grant me comfort and hope. And, who doesn't want comfort, empathy, love, and certainty in hope? Of course we all do. We all want that security blanket of Christ's promises.

When I was in high school, I called a friend on the phone, who I knew was suspicious of all that church stuff. I remember him saying, "If there is a God, than he should be fired. Just look at the mess our world is in!" You know, the world was a mess then, too; maybe in a different way, but still a mess. That day, when I called him, it sounded like he wasn't himself. I asked, "What's wrong Terry?"

He said, "I'm not sure this is all worth it. I want to die and I think I just might do it."

I remember that wave of sudden anxiety welling up to the top of my head. I was 16 years old, what did I know what to do? How was I going to help? I remember quickly sending a prayer, asking God to help me with the words that

would help my friend. After a few seconds of silence, I found myself say, “God loves you and so do I. You must really be hurting right now. Can I help?”

Today, my friend Terry is a crisis counselor. He also is a believer in Christ. How thankful I was for my security blanket at that moment, knowing that Christ kept his promise of being with me and helping me to be the Good News for Terry. Because of that, Terry was able to find those same promises through a friend.

I am appointed. So are you and Jesus will help us to speak of his name in this world with intention and compassion, a world that indeed *is* really messed up, despite the goodness God created it to be. Is it difficult? Of course! The work of the Gospel is indeed difficult and now, more than ever, people are in need to know the love of God through Jesus.

Someone you know and love needs to know the love and care of God. Perhaps that someone needs you today to

help them and maybe it is you. If you find, like my friend Terry from my high school days, is in distress during these lonely and troubling times in our world, please get them help. Maybe it's even you. God, who is holy and triune, longs to comfort you if you are in distress.

You can get help by going to [www.suicidepreventionhotline.org](http://www.suicidepreventionhotline.org). The phone number is: 800-273-TALK (8255). Also, the pastors at St. John's have resources that they can provide you for local professionals as well as lend an empathetic ear and prayer. Your mental health is important and if you are hurting, it's not only okay to get help, it's godly to do so.

And for the rest of us appointed ones, how are you appointed to help people see the promise of Christ that blessed promise that he will be with them to the end of the age? In what ways are you responding to the promise for the sake of others from the baptismal font to now? It may be making a prayer shawl or masks to protect the vulnerable. It may be serving a meal at Community Table at this time of

great need. It may be doing the inner work on racial justice or advocating for the poor. These examples are witness to the powerful message of the Gospel – to love the neighbor and to speak the transforming love of God through Christ’s Holy Spirit. I invite you today to consider new ways of doing this in a Covid 19 world.

Today, we celebrate the gift of life that helps propel us as the Body of Christ into the world. That great gift is the Sacrament of Holy Communion. As today Christ has us eat and drink of his sacrifice, his own Body and Blood, we are recreated as Christ’s Body, forgiven, set free – free to go and be Christ for others. We do not simply eat and drink for ourselves, although we are given those gifts for ourselves, but we also eat a fellowship of believers in this space and time, the church. Yes, we cannot be together quite yet as we would wish, but this virtual body is a real body. We are assembled now as appointed children of God.

May you know the “Great Comfort” of the One who is

there to help you until the end of all time. It is your security blanket. Trust in it. Know it is there. For, that comfort will never leave you, even to the end of the age. Amen.