

In the Name of God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

Intro



Dizzy Dean – otherwise known as Jay Hanna Dean (but nobody called him that) – was the ace pitcher of the Gashouse Gang – the St. Louis Cardinals of the 1930's and 40's.

He was the last National League pitcher to win 30 games in a season in 1934.

That year **Dizzy** bragged that he and his brother **Daffy** – well, really Paul – could win 45 games in a season – they ended up winning 49.

He was well known for his lovable antics on and off the baseball field, and as a broadcaster, was famous for his butchering of the English language – including describing how a player “*slud into third.*”

In Game 4 of the 1934 World Series against the Detroit Tigers, Dean was sent to first base as a pinch runner.

- The next batter hit a potential double play ground ball.
- As he ran to second base, **Dizzy** was hit in the head by the throw, knocking him unconscious.
- The next day the sports-section headline read, "X-rays of Dean's head reveals nothing..."

Unfortunately, **Dizzy Dean's** pitching career was cut short by injury.

While pitching in the 1937 All Star Game, **Dizzy** was struck on the foot by a line drive resulting in a fractured toe.

When told his big toe was fractured, **Dizzy** is said to have responded, “*Fractured, hell, the damn thing’s broken!*”

Dizzy tried to come back too soon from his injury, and as a result, changed his pitching motion to avoid landing as hard on his sore toe – which affected his mechanics – and as a result he hurt his arm, losing his great fastball – and while he pitched another four years, he was never the same.

I. The Body of Christ

A. So, why this long commentary on the life of **Dizzy Dean** in the end of January, with the Superbowl peeking over the horizon, and Major League Baseball mired in a labor dispute that threatens the opening of Spring Training?

1. Well, I believe that if St. Paul had known the story of **Dizzy Dean** and his **toe**, he definitely would have included it in his letter to the Corinthians.

2. It is a perfect example of the point he is trying to make about the PARTS OF THE BODY in our NT reading today.

3. Last week, we heard St. Paul talk about the various gifts given by the Holy Spirit to each of us to help carry out our ministry.

4. As I said last week, each of us has been given something special by God for the carrying out of God’s work.

5. But we can’t go running off willy-nilly on our own doing our own thing – St. Paul says that we have to work together – like the parts of the body.

B. Listen to what we just head read:

- “*For just as the Body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body though many, are one body, so it is with Christ.*”

1. For St. Paul, the Church is a **living organism** consisting of many functioning members, who together make one Spiritual Body – the Body of Christ.

2. Paul says that just as each member of the body has its own role to play for the body as a whole, so it is with each of us in the Body of Christ.

3. We each have our own unique individual gifts and skills to help the Body of Christ to function.

4. That means we are NOT all the same – in fact, each of us is very different and approaches things in different ways – each with our own GIFTS and SKILLS.

5. And like the human body, Paul says, we come together in the Body of Christ that each may do their part **working in concert** with the other parts of the body to accomplish the work we are given to do.

C. WE are the Body of Christ.

1. WE are the activity and the presence of Christ in this world.

2. WE are the Body of Christ – the Church.

3. The Church is not a Building – WE are the Church.

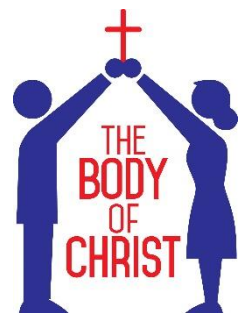
4. As one of my heroes, Bishop Bill Burrill, was fond of saying, “You don’t GO to Church – You ARE the Church.”

5. The old saying is true – if you look at the word CHURCH – and you take the **CH** on either end off – for Christ is all round us – there **UR** – right in the middle.

6. And the same is true for us – right here at 1251 Las Posas Rd today

7. The Church **IS US** – all of us – WE are the Body of Christ.

8. And no one else is going to be the church for us.

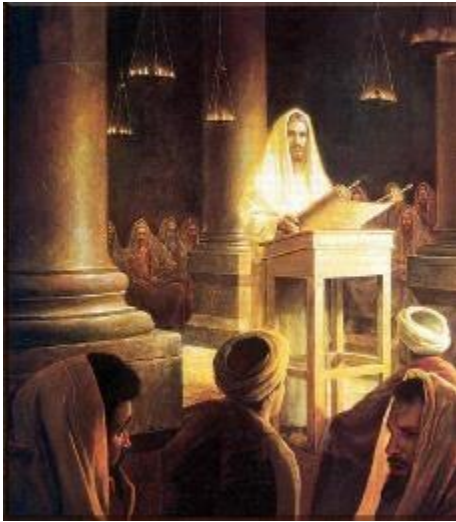


9. So then, we might ask “Then what are we to do?”
- And the answer is right there in our Gospel Reading.

II. Jesus’ Job Description

A. As the story opens, Jesus has begun his ministry and is travelling from town to town teaching and bringing the love of God to all he meets.

1. Word has no doubt preceded him to his home town, for we read that “all were speaking well of him.”



2. So you can imagine the anticipation when Jesus stands to read from the Prophet Isaiah in his home-town synagogue.

3. Jesus takes the Scroll of Isaiah and read: “*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
- because He has anointed me to bring
good news to the poor.
-He has sent me to proclaim release to
the captives and recovery of sight to the blind,*

*- to let the oppressed go free,
- to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”*

4. And he closed the Scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down to teach.

5. Everyone in the synagogue turned to Him for His explanation of the text.

6. And he began to say to them: “Today, this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”

7. Jesus takes this passage as his **job description** – if you will.

8. Unlike Mark, who puts this story at the end of Jesus’ time in Galilee, Luke puts this story at the very beginning.

9. Everything that follows in Jesus' ministry from here on can be seen and heard as his living out this call.

B. And as Jesus followers – this is our **job description** too.

1. WE TOO are called to

- preach good news to the poor
- to proclaim release to the captives
- to bring recovery of sight to the blind
- to free those who are oppressed
- and to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.

2. But not simply to those who are literally poor, captive, blind and oppressed – but also to those who are **spiritually** poor, spiritually captive, spiritually blind, and spiritually oppressed as well.

3. WE too are called to share with those who have not heard the good news of God in Christ.

4. WE too are called to release those who are held **captive** by alcohol, drugs, loneliness, depression and so much more.

5. WE too are called to HEAL people whose greed and pride and uncaring make them **blind** to God's call to serve those in need.

6. WE too are called to SET FREE those **oppressed** by the “isms” of others: racism, classism, sexism, ageism, homophobia, and all the other wrongs of our society.

7. We too are called to **proclaim** God's extravagant abundant love for all God's people.

8. In other words, WE TOO are to respond to **Jesus' Job Description** and pick up right where he left off.

9. THAT'S what we have been given our GIFTS for – and THAT'S what we are to do with them.

III. St. Columba's – the Body of Christ

A. So how are we doing?

1. How are we as a parish and as individuals responding to **Jesus' Job Description?**

2. Next week, is our Annual Meeting – our opportunity to check in and SEE how we are doing – a **progress report**, if you will.

3. So let's take a sneak peek and see what we can see.

B. We as a congregation **respond** to Jesus' job description through our work and ministry.

1. Project Hope and our new St. Columba's Pantry provide food to low income families and Seniors.

2. Through the **Threshold Project** we strive to share the Good News of Jesus, and St. Columba's.

3. In our **Inreach**, we strengthen ourselves to be the loving community we are, that we may better welcome those who God sends us.

4. In the **Stewardship** of our facilities we make God known by our very presence to the groups who use them.

5. And most importantly, through our **Worship**, we provide quality services that make it possible for us to renew and strengthen our relationship with God.

6. And we strive for new and meaningful ways to complement our Sunday morning services with such things as our Iona/Taize worship and our new *Lectio Divina* offerings.

C. So, all in all we aren't doing such a bad job – especially in a time of COVID that makes things all the more difficult to come together, while at the same time creating all more and more needs.

1. We need to find new and different ways so that we can assist those in need.

2. And we also need to find more ways of accomplishing this work even as our work force thins – we are striving to live out Jesus’ Job Description in our community, but when you look around it is the same familiar faces doing much of the work – and they’re starting to get tired.

3. While doing great things, the FOOD MINISTRY needs help, so we can spread out the responsibilities and the work load.

4. Not your thing, fine – the SCHOOL BOARD needs Board Members to help support our Director and the needs of the school.

5. The ALTAR GUILD and the FLOWER GUILD, both of who do so much that we take for granted to make our worship possible every Sunday morning, are desperate for help.

6. The THRESHOLD PROJECT is down to TWO members (and one of them is me) – as COVID begins to abate this is a great time to work on getting our name and our work out to the community – we need your help.

7. And please **don’t wait to be asked** – step up and say, “How can I help?” or “I’d be interested in knowing more about that.”

C. The work is out there – Jesus’ Job Description beckons us to use our gifts – especially in this time of COVID.

1. We need to find new and different ways that we can assist those who are in need – and the people who can help to make it happen.

2. We need to work harder than ever to bring God’s love to those who need it and invite those we know – and even those we don’t – to join us in a relationship with the God who made us, and loves us, and wants to be with us.

3. We need to make ourselves known – hundreds of people drive by us every day – dozens bring their children to our school – how do we reach them – how do we help them to take the risk and cross that **threshold**?

- How do we get the message of God's love and St. Columba's out into our community and among our friends and neighbors?

4. And we need to use our financial resources – those gifts YOU entrust to our care – to keep the doors open, and the lights on, so we can be here when we are needed?

5. All of these are part of the on-going profound questions that we need to answer as we strive to follow Jesus **job description** and ours.

6. And may we never grow tired of ASKING those questions and RESPONDING to solve them – as we work to proclaim God's love and follow in God's service.

Conclusion

These are just some of the ways that we as the BODY OF CHRIST in this place and time use our GIFTS to RESPOND to Jesus Job Description, and there are many, many more.

As we continue to work to answer Jesus' call to love God and to share God's love in our broken and hurting world, I am confident that God will continue to bless our faithfulness and guide us into the future.

I close today with these thoughts by the Indian poet – Rabindranath Tagore

That we might apply them to our call to work together as that part of the Body of Christ called St. Columba's:

*“I slept, and dreamt that life was joy.
I awoke, and saw that life was service.
I acted, and behold, service was joy.”*

Let Us Pray

Give us grace, O Lord, to answer readily the call of our Savior Jesus Christ, and to proclaim to all people the good news of his salvation, that we and the whole world may perceive the glory of His marvelous works: who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. AMEN.

