

A perhaps over-used comedy device is the “Good News/Bad News” trope. This is where a character relays two pieces of news to someone else, starting with the line: “I have some good news and some bad news”, and continuing with “The good news is...”, and “The bad news is...” What’s funny is the big difference between the good news and the bad news, or else because each character has a different perspective on what’s ‘good’ and what’s ‘bad’. In a lot of cases, the good news is good for one character and bad for the other; or else there isn’t any good news, or the good news is sort of irrelevant.

I suppose an example is in order.

*A doctor walks in and tells the patient: “I’ve got good news and bad news. The tests show that you only have 24 hours to live.” The patient asks, “Then what is the good news.” To which the doctor responds: “That was the good news. The bad news is I forgot to call you yesterday.”*

Nonetheless, it often seems that what is or isn’t good news can often be in the eye of the beholder - what may seem good to one person seems not-so-good to another. I suppose that it may be because in many cases the grass always appears greener on the other side of the fence.

In today’s First Reading, we hear of the restoration of the people of Israel to the city of Jerusalem. They have been in exile in Babylon for 70 years. The king of Persia has just overthrown Babylon, and sent the Jewish people back to Israel to rebuild their temple. In today’s passage, the people hear the reading of the Law of Moses. It is good news, and many weep - because they realize that God has remained faithful to His promises: even to fulfilling the prophecy to return the people from Babylon after 70 years.

In the Second Reading, St. Paul uses the example of the human body to describe the hierarchical roles of individuals within the

Church. In a sense, everybody doesn't get to be the eye or the ear, and while the foot might stink ... try getting around without one. The good news is that everyone has a role - provided we recognize in humility our place within the Will of the Father, and work together under the direction and inspiration of the Holy Spirit whom we all received at Baptism. Paul even goes so far as to say that

*[we are] Christ's body, and individually parts of it.*

And finally, in today's Gospel, we hear of Jesus reading from the Prophet Isaiah in the synagogue. He speaks of "*a year acceptable to the Lord*" which is often translated "*a year of favor*" alluding to the mighty works and miracles described in the prophecy. The word rendered as "*glad tidings*" is the Greek word *evangelizo* - which is sometimes translated as "*good news*" but often is translated as Gospel and is the root of the English verb *evangelize*.

The Gospel really is Good News - if we accept it, and surrender our hearts to the Will of the Father through Jesus Christ. We must be willing to accept the grace and mercy that are poured out on us through the Sacraments by the Holy Spirit. If we oppose God's will, and seek our own will instead - then the Good News - the Gospel - can seem like "bad news" at those times.

As we approach this altar to receive the Sacred Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ; let us pray for a deeper surrender to the Word of God in the Person of Jesus Christ. Let us ask for an openness to the grace and mercy of God the Father poured out on us in the Holy Spirit through the sacraments. Let us engage the graces we receive so as to transform ourselves so that we might be a Light to the World ... and go forth from this place to evangelize - that is, spread the Good News of Jesus Christ ... out in the world.