

Heavenly Flyball

A tribute to my dog Ennie

Here on earth we have a dog sport called 'Flyball'. It is played all around the world and is very, very, popular with all dog breeds as it has of course A BALL involved. In heaven though it is called 'Heavenly Flyball', and while being similar it is often quite different. I mean quite different! The main similarities are: a Ball and 6 dogs in each team. Now as you can imagine there are literally thousands of Heavenly Flyball teams. How Jesus keeps track of what's going on, where they are, who's in charge is a mystery to Father. Holy Spirit just smiles. I suspect she has a finger in the 'pie' so to speak. Anyway, I just want to focus mainly on a fairly new team named "The Dunnos". They had only 5 in the team for a long time, but now the newest member has arrived, Ennie (a Border Collie). She arrived on the 22nd May 2023, on a beautiful sunny day, both on earth and in heaven. The rest of the team were so excited that they held a welcome party for her. All sorts of favourite 'bickies' and 'treats' were provided. It was a lot of FUN of course. In case you do not know, FUN is the main activity in heaven. As the saying goes, "on earth as in heaven."

The other members of the team are: Char (small Doberman/Labrador X), Mini (large Irish Wolfhound X), Mia (large poodle), Russ (large Golden Retriever Labrador X), and Jo-Jo (miniature Poodle). Now when dogs arrive in heaven, training has to start in earnest, as many dogs had developed bad habits on earth like: (Russ) keeping the ball and chewing it to death, Jo-Jo (only interested in cocking his leg...a very bad habit), Mia (too interested in prancing around), Mini-the Moucher (too much barking 'n causing general havoc). Char-cha, (Just liked digging the beach up and swimming!) And now Ennie (dropping the ball and not bringing it back). So you can see, this presents Jesus with a lot of work to do...if they are going to perform as a team. One of the problems is Father just pops down from his throne and gives them treats.. any time he likes! When Jesus scolds him, Father just says "They're MY dogs" and walks back off to his throne. Holy Spirit is no help either. She's always singing and twirling around, which distracts the dogs no end at training. Added to that, she is always getting them to pee on her lemon trees!

I just want to give you a glimpse of what can happen at a Heavenly Flyball event. Firstly, an event in heaven is not defined the same as here. There is no specific time frame, because there is 'no time' in heaven. It's a bit like asking "When's your birthday?" The answer there maybe. "In spring" or just "later". Get the idea? There are rules, but most often the events are just conducted and anything can happen without penalty. Penalties are verboten in heaven. They regularly have at an 'event' what is called "Father's Time". This is a bit like "Macca's Time" at a Canberra Raiders NRL match, where if the Raiders score a try in the next 5 minutes you get a free Macca's meal! It happens like this: all the dogs are running over the hurdles and competing 'mostly' correctly, but when Father blows his whistle to signify the start of 'Father's Time', all dogs go ballistic and try to score as many points as they can in 5 minutes of heavenly time (only God knows how long that is) before the whistle is blown again. In this 'time period' dogs behave like at a Chinese Downhill ski race, where you can do whatever you like to win. Like for instance, a dog may do: "A high paw tackle" or a "tail grab" or an 'ankle bite'. At the end of this chaos, Father releases treats from higher up. These are only supposed to be meant for the winners, of course, but Father can never bear to see any of his dogs miss out. Jesus objects strongly to this activity, and Father always promises 'he will not do it again'.. but you know of course what will happen next time. The angels love these events and the

grandstands are always full with angels barracking for their favourite flyball team. It is a heavenly 'Blast', to say the least.

I think if you really want to know about Flyball, go and visit a Flyball website. It is a little too difficult to explain in one or even two paragraphs.

Now, have you ever heard of the 'Rainbow Bridge'? It is said to be a place just this side of heaven where a gate and a beautiful rainbow exists. It is also said that when an animal dies that has been especially close to someone here, that pet goes to Rainbow Bridge. There are meadows and hills where all our special friends can run and play together. There is plenty of food, water and sunshine. All the animals who have been ill and old are restored to health and vigour. Any who were injured or maimed are made whole and strong again just as you remember them in your dreams. They are happy and content, except for one small thing; they each miss someone very special to them who has been left behind. One day, for each of them, they sense something is different. They turn from their play and run with all their might towards you. For you have been spotted by those eager eyes. Their hearts are bursting with joy as they jump into your arms, kissing your face and maybe giving you a love scratch. The happy kisses rain upon your face; your hands once again caress the beloved head, and you look once more into the trusting eyes of your pet, so long from your life, but never from your heart. Then you cross the Rainbow Bridge together.

Finally, a story about a 10 year old boy and their family dog Toby, a Golden Retriever. Toby was with the family just before young Johnny was born, so there was never a day when he was without his faithful doggie friend. Toby was 11 years old when he developed cancer (like my dog Ennie). Within the next year it was clear that Toby was coming to the end of his life. The family decided that it was time to call the vet as Toby was now in pain. It was of course a very sad day for Johnny, and the family as Toby and he had been inseparable for as long as Johnny could remember. About a week after Toby's passing, the family were having breakfast together and Johnny said to his dad. "Dad, I had a dream last night about Toby" His dad put down his spoon and asked his son, "What was the dream about, son?" Johnny said "In the dream Toby was with Jesus and Toby looked as he did when he was about 4 years old, full of energy, bright eyes and golden. Jesus was patting him on the head and Toby had a ball in his mouth. I said to Jesus "What do dogs do in heaven?" Jesus knelt down, put his hand on my shoulder, smiled at me and said 'They RUN my son, they RUN!' Johnny's dad, who had been listening carefully to his son asked "How do you definitely know it was Toby?" His son replied, "I know because Jesus said 'He won't give me the ball back!'" I believe this is a true story because I know Johnny's dad.

And as my dear old friend David (who has gone over the Rainbow Bridge), would have said, "Well, the're you go Pete."