

Second Sunday of Easter

Prayers, Readings, Reflection and Song.

“I so enjoyed recording brief acts of worship to share with you over Holy Week, that I thought I would continue to do a little something each Sunday. For those who are able to listen in, I hope it offers some comfort, encouragement and a sense of being together despite the distance between us.” Rev Jonny



Be still, and draw yourself closer to the God who rests beside you, before you and within you.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
All Amen.

The Lord be with you
All and also with you.

Alleluia! Christ is risen!
All He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

The sun of righteousness has dawned with healing in his wings. Let us come to the light of Christ, confessing our sins in penitence and faith

**All God our Father,
long-suffering, full of grace and truth,
you create us from nothing and give us life.
You give your faithful people new life in the water
of baptism.
You do not turn your face from us, nor cast us aside.
We confess that we have sinned
against you and our neighbour.
We have wounded your love and marred your image in
us.
Restore us for the sake of your Son,
and bring us to heavenly joy,
in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen**

God promises us a place with him for ever and he has raised us to new life in Jesus Christ our Lord. May we know his forgiveness and peace and the freedom to serve him in newness of life.

All Amen

The Collect for the day

Let us pray that we may love one another as Christ has loved us.

Risen Christ,
for whom no door is locked, no entrance barred:
open the doors of our hearts,
that we may seek the good of others
and walk the joyful road of sacrifice and peace,
to the praise of God the Father.

All **Amen.**

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

The Gospel, John 20: 19-End

When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe."

A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut,

Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe." Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe."

Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.
All sing **Praise to you O Christ.**

Reflection

When he had said this, Jesus breathed on them and said to them, 'receive the Holy Spirit'.

Jesus breathed on them. Let's just think about that for a moment. It's astonishing really.

Do me a favour and just close your eyes. When we pray – sometimes we picture Jesus in our mind's eye. Maybe you can see a face appearing before you now. Whatever it might be.

We can get a sense of being in his presence. We might even – as those disciples did – want to reach out and touch him.

But imagine now, the person of Jesus being so close to you that you can feel his breath. A deep relaxing breath. Warming. Gentle. But so intimate. There is nothing more intimate than breath.

You can open your eyes again now – if you like.

As I read the scriptures I just couldn't get past this image of the Risen Jesus breathing on his friends.

How are we to understand it?

First, I suppose, it confirms the resurrection. This is the same man, standing before them in the upper room, who days ago hung above them on the cross. This is Jesus. He truly did die, and he truly has risen. Not as a spirit, or a ghost or a vision – but as a walking, talking, bleeding, breathing ever-living man – raised from the dead by God. It is this that Thomas couldn't at first accept – the true resurrected humanity of Jesus. But that is who we are all called to put our trust and faith in – the fully dead and fully risen Jesus. Alive not only by his flesh, but by the air he breathes.

Second. It is phenomenally intimate. As I asked you to imagine earlier – the breath of another person on your skin is something we don't feel very often. In these times of social distancing, it might even be considered an arrestable offence! It requires an invasion of personal space and no mistake. To have someone that close to you – voluntarily – requires a lot of trust and vulnerability.

And yet we know how wonderful feeling the breath of another person can be. When my daughters were first born – they used to sleep so deeply – O happy days! – you would have to keep on checking on them, putting your face so close to theirs to be close enough to feel the tiniest waft of their breath. Only then would you be content. They are alive. It's OK. But it is also a special moment between the two of you. An intimate reminder of the preciousness of new life.

At the other end of the spectrum, it is the *last breath* which marks a person's passage from life through into death. 'He breathed his last', as Mark says of Jesus in his Passion Narrative. Breath is a proof of life.

So the breath of Jesus is a proof for the doubters. It is also a reminder of the closeness and intimacy which Jesus had had and always will have with those who love and follow him.

And the breath of Jesus is also so much more than that. It is the power of all creation.

This is John's gospel we are reading from. The Gospel that starts with the great words of cosmic incarnation – 'In the beginning was the Word' was the Logos;

was the Christ. 'Remember Genesis, where it all began', says John, 'well Jesus the Christ was there even then. He was part of the plan from the very beginning – he was at one with God before the beginning began.'

And how does that creation begin? With breath. The Hebrew word is Ruach. The Holy Spirit. The Holy Breath. Hovering over the dark and formless void of water. The whole potential of life and creation hovers over the chaos beneath, ready to set created order into being. In Hebrew that word Ruach means the same thing: Spirit or breath. We hear it again in Genesis chapter 2: 'Then the Lord God formed Adam from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.'

The breath of God was the divine spark that made all humanity possible.

That is what John is saying. At the very beginning – when God breathed upon the face of the chaos, and into the nostrils of man – Jesus Christ was in that moment.

And now, following his incarnation, his earthly life, his death and now his resurrection, Jesus Christ is present at this very moment of the new creation. The moment that his followers see and believe and proclaim 'My Lord and my God' – Jesus blesses this moment with his breath. He was there before it all began. He is there – in the flesh – for the moment of new creation – and he will be there at the end of all things, when heaven and earth are as one.

What a phenomenally powerful moment that must have been. The breath of Jesus affirming the resurrection. The breath of Jesus proclaiming his love. The eternal breath of God, forever making all things new; filling the stifled air of that cramped upper room; propelling the disciples forever onwards on their journey of faith. Amen.

Song

Be still and know that I am God,
Be still and know that I am God,
Be still and know that I am God.

I am the Lord that healeth thee,
I am the Lord that healeth thee,
I am the Lord that healeth thee.

In thee, O Lord, I put my trust,
In thee, O Lord, I put my trust,
In thee, O Lord, I put my trust.

Be Still and Know 10

1. Be still and know that I am
2. The Lord Al - migh - ty is our
3. The God of Ja - cob is our

God, be still and know that I am
God, the Lord Al - migh - ty is our
rock, the God of Ja - cob is our

God, be still and know that I am God.
God, the Lord Al - migh - ty is our God.
rock, the God of Ja - cob is our rock.

Prayers of Intercession

Pray for one another – those in our church community

Pray for the Parish, the Island and the World

Pray for the sick, the isolated, the anxious and depressed

Pray for the dying, and those who mourn

Pray for yourselves, and for your own needs

Lord in your mercy

All Hear our prayer

The Intercessions may end as follows

Merciful Father

All Accept these prayers

for the sake of your son,

our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen

The Peace

The risen Christ came and stood among his disciples and said, 'Peace be with you.'

Then were they glad when they saw the Lord. Alleluia.

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

All and also with you.

Let us pray with confidence, as our Saviour taught us

All Our Father

who art in heaven,

hallowed be thy name,

thy kingdom come,

thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread;

and forgive us our trespasses

as we forgive those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory

For ever and ever. Amen.

The Blessing.

God the Father,
by whose glory Christ was raised from the dead,
strengthen you to walk with him in his risen life;
and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son and
the Holy Spirit be among you and remain with you always

All **Amen.**

Go in the peace of Christ. Alleluia! Alleluia!

All **Thanks be to God. Alleluia! Alleluia!**



EASTER