

HOMILY – PENTECOST - YEAR C

Based on St John 20: 19-23 | by Rt Rev'd Dr Geoffrey S Robinson CJ

NOVA VITA LISTER R. PEACE, 1914
In moderate time

1 Breathe on me, Breath of God, Fill me with life a - new, That I may
2 Breathe on me, Breath of God, Un - til my heart is pure, Un - til with
love what thou dost love, And do what thou wouldst do.
thee I will one will, To do or to en - dure. A - men.

3 Breathe on me, Breath of God,
Till I am wholly thine,
Till all this earthly part of me
Glows with thy fire divine.

4 Breathe on me, Breath of God,
So shall I never die;
But live with thee the perfect life
Of thine eternity. Amen.

EDWIN HATCH, 1878

May I speak in the name of God, who is +Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.



I wonder what you thought about the opening hymn this morning and in particular, the first line –

‘Breathe on me Breath of God’.

Well, I think that they are beautiful words enhanced all the more by the melody named ‘Nova Vita’.

Well thinking about God's Breath, reminded me about the tale of a young girl named Cindy. – One day, Cindy's mother looked out of the kitchen window and noticed her daughter 'playing church' with their cat.

She had the cat sitting quietly whilst she preached to it. -
Cindy's mother smiled and went about her work.

Then, a while later Cindy's mother heard loud meowing's and hissing and so ran back to the open window, only to see Cindy blowing into the cat's face and then dunking the cat into the swimming pool. Cindy's mother called out, 'Cindy! Stop that!'

Cindy looked up at her mother and said, "But, Mum, I have to baptize her."

Cindy's mother responded, 'Cats don't like people blowing at them and plunging them into water! Stop it!'

Cindy said, 'Well, she should have thought about that before she joined my church.'

I suppose Cindy was only copying what she had heard in Sacred Scripture and actions seen many times in church. After all, when the priest, was baptising young children, he would say: 'Receive the Holy Spirit'.

Now in today's Gospel, we heard how Jesus said to His first Apostles, "*As the Father has sent me, so I send you,*" then Jesus breathed on those apostles, 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.”

I always like to imagine that when Jesus breathed on his disciples, he was thinking back to the creation story in Book of Genesis. God formed Adam from the dust, and then breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. As the Father did at the beginning, so His Son did to those first disciples.

And this is exactly what the Holy Spirit does to us at our baptism, when we are made new creations in Christ. We are no longer merely just the dust which we will return to when we die. We are, through God’s Holy Spirit, brothers and sisters in Christ, who will live forever with our Crucified and Risen Lord.

In our baptisms, we were given the new life of the Risen Christ immediately. This new life doesn’t begin in heaven. It begins here on earth, through the gift of the Holy Spirit, given to us at our baptisms.

You see, it is not enough for Jesus that he conquered death, through the great triumphant Resurrection on Easter Day. Now he wants to breathe this new life into you and I; he wants to share that new life with us. And then? Then he wants us to go out and share that new life with others. To share that new life with a world that is suffocated by anxiety, hatred and fear. He wants to breathe new life into this world through us. –

“As the Father has sent me, so I send you.”

Jesus wants us to go out into a world in the grip of death and breathe new life into it. Our world does needs that new life, doesn't it? The Rip-off Merchants and Scammers needs it! The Present Generation needs it! And dare I say that even the Church needs it!

If we wonder where the New Life will come from, it will come from us, because we are the ones continuing Jesus' mission. We are now the Body of Christ in the world. We are God's plan to bring new life into this dying world, until the day that God's Blessed Son returns again.

Our words, our deeds, our hope, our faith, our love, our witness in our daily lives, our acts of love to others. If all of this is done in Jesus' Name, God's Holy Spirit will begin to act and continue His work in us.

This then is how the world catches a glimpse of our Risen Lord, and we will begin to understand just what it means to be one of Christ's apostles.

Let me finish, not by asking you to follow the example of Cindy and her cat, but by returning to a verse of the Opening Hymn this morning-

Breathe on me, Breath of God,
Till I am wholly Thine,
Till all this earthly part of me
Glows with thy fire divine.

So let this message of Pentecost begin to glow in our hearts, making us Apostles of our Most High God – For that is what we are! **Amen.**