

Fr. Nick Dant's Homily, Saint Matthew Catholic Church, Indianapolis
Second Sunday of Easter, April 10-11, 2021, Octave Day of Easter, Cycle B

We hear from the First Letter of John on this Octave Day of Easter: "...whoever is begotten by God conquers the world." Through Baptism we are all begotten by God! Through Baptism we went down into the tomb with Jesus and with Him rose to new life. In and by Jesus we have conquered the world, in other words we have conquered death and sin, and live now in the Resurrected life of Jesus. Death has no hold over us. In Baptism the Risen Lord breathed His Spirit upon and created us anew.

In the gospel passage we have from John this weekend, we read that the Risen Jesus makes His presence known to his disciples on that Sunday evening of His Resurrection. We are told the disciples are created anew by the divine breath: "Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, 'Peace be with you'... And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "receive the Holy Spirit." The Lord breathes forth the same breath that created us all in the first place! In the second creation story from Genesis we read: "Then the Lord God formed the man out of the dust of the ground and blew into his nostrils the breath of life and the man became a living being." The breath – Spirit of God brought about the first creation, the breath – Spirit of God brings about the recreation – Resurrection and New Life.

As disciples of Jesus we are now empowered by the Risen one with his new life! We are a new creation, and Jesus commissions us with His own divine mission – the ministry of reconciliation, the ministry of proclaiming Divine Mercy. Jesus says: "As the Father has sent me, so I send you...Whose sins you retain are retained." And Jesus is not only speaking to those disciples in the upper room 2,000 years ago, He is speaking to you and me today!

Sister Faustina Kowalska realized that Jesus was speaking to Christians of all times, ages, and places. In her "Prayer to be Merciful," She wrote: ***Help me, O Lord, that my eyes be merciful, so that I may never suspect or judge from appearances, but look for what is beautiful in my neighbors' souls and come to their rescue.*** Divine Mercy Sunday reminds of our commission we have from Jesus, and to pray for God's compassion and forgiveness, and to be about the ministry of extending mercy and compassion to others.

The Apostle Thomas would not believe in the Risen Jesus, or accept the ministry of reconciliation unless he had seen with his own eyes and touched the Risen Jesus with his own hands. The Risen Lord tells Thomas: ***Have you come to believe because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and believe.*** In other words, Jesus breathes His new Life in all disciples down through the ages – whether they have seen the Risen One physically or not. All disciples are blessed with the same mission that was entrusted to the earliest disciples – all who live in the Risen One are commissioned – sent forth – to proclaim the forgiveness of sins. The First Letter of John says: "...the victory that conquers the world is our faith." It is not by sight, but by faith that we are made a new creation, and sent forth to proclaim and offer Divine Mercy.