**Homily for 3rd Sunday of Easter**(5/5/2019)

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Do you know that the same power that raised Christ from the dead is available to you and me today? The moment we receive Jesus as Savior, the Holy Spirit comes into our hearts. He gives us supernatural power to overcome temptations, to smile through tears, to experience joy despite life’s burdens and trials. The Holy Spirit will raise us out of our spiritual lifelessness and transform us.

In fact, imagine what a difference it would make if people understood that Christ is risen and the Holy Spirit has been given!

What a transformation would take place in our families! What a reversal there would be in our death culture. What a lessening of tensions we would see between individuals, groups, and even nations! And, what new purpose and power we would experience if we caught the wonder of the biblical truth that Jesus is alive!

What a glorious hope we have because Jesus is alive! But, it is not enough to celebrate Easter by saying, “Christ is risen.” It is useless to proclaim this unless we can also say that we have died with Him and that we have also risen with Him.

The Gospel story today is very dramatic. It is wonderful to imagine that Jesus calls Peter to leave his fishing and to follow Him again after His Resurrection, the same way He first called him. The Risen Christ gave Peter exactly that, the gift of the second chance!

Peter and the disciples decided they were going to return to fishing, their former life. It seem that their belief in the Resurrection had not yet taken hold on their lives. They thought that everything had finished in tragedy, and none of them were expecting to see the Risen Lord.

They were very depressed. They didn’t know what to do for the future after this tragedy. They were just going back to normal life. They knew as if nothing had really changed in their lives. There was no hope anymore. Just back to their work.

They needed a second chance for their new life with Risen Christ. That was what Jesus gave them and us in the Gospel today. A second chance!

Let’s focus on two moments in this Gospel: the meal and the mission. First, there is a meal. They have a meal with Risen Christ on the seashore. It must reminded them of many meals they shared with Jesus in His earthly life, the meal on the mountainside after the multiplication of loaves, the meal with tax collectors and sinners, and the Passover meal, of course, that was Last Supper.

Now, here they were together with the Risen Lord and have a meal again. Here was a second chance to renew their union with Christ! At every Mass, we also renew our union with Christ. We need the Eucharistic meal to renew our identity as followers of Jesus, to be close to Him, and to remember who we are.

Each Mass is always a second chance to remember and revive our identity as disciples. That was what Jesus did for Peter at the seashore. And, that is what He does for us at every Mass: Holy meal and union with Christ.

And, second, there is the mission. By looking back to the first miracle of the great catch of fish, we can recognize the significance of Jesus repeating this miracle again after Resurrection for His disciples. The first miracle of catching fish took place at the beginning of Jesus’ ministry in Galilee when the Lord called Peter to leave all and follow Him.

Jesus then spoke to Peter and gave him a new calling and mission: from now on he would be ‘catching people’ for the kingdom of God. Jesus repeats this miracle for Peter to remind him that he must continue his mission of ‘catching people.’

Then, Jesus takes Peter aside and asks the threefold question, “Do you love me?” to reverse Peter’s threefold denial. A wonderful forgiveness is happening here. Notice that each time Jesus asks, “Do you love me?” and Peter answers, “I do,” the Lord responds by saying, “Feed my sheep.” Peter would show his love by actions of love by caring for God’s people.

When Jesus asked Peter, “Do you love me more than these?”, He may have pointed to the boats, nets, and other fishing companions. He may have challenged Peter to let go of his career as a fisherman for the task of caring for people. Peter now humbly responds, “You know I love you.” Then, Peter decides to do his mission for the rest of his life.

Like Peter, we show our love for the Lord not what we say, but by actions of love by caring for God’s people, a family, children, a spouse, an aging parent, the sick, the needy, people at work, those for whom the Lord is calling us to care now.

Jesus is saying to Peter and to us, “Show me your love by action.” That was the mission Jesus gave Peter on the seashore. That is what the Lord gives us at each Mass in our own lives. Each Mass is a second chance for us to renew our faith to follow Jesus Christ.

In this seashore appearance of Christ, we have the meal for remembrance of Him and the mission to be witness of His love. Jesus asks us, “Do you love me?” And, He is waiting for our response.

The story of Easter continues in our lives, and now, we are part of this story! Every God’s promise without exception will be fulfilled in our lives.