**Homily for the 3rd Sunday of Easter***Rev. Francis D. Kim*

A famous German pastor, Christoph once said that 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.

Jesus truly died. The Roman soldiers who nailed Him the the cross attested to that fact when they took His body down and placed it in a tomb. But, it was just beginning. Two days later the tome was empty, and shortly afterward Jesus appeared numerous times to His followers.

We have another appearance of the Risen Christ in today’s Gospel. He appears to the disciples, and His first words are “Peace be with you!”

He gives them His peace because they were in turmoil, confusion, and guilt. These disciples had abandoned Him and denied Him despite their strong claim that they would do otherwise. They knew that they betrayed their Master. They were sorry, but they couldn’t turn back the clock.

Jesus knows of their repentance. He comes now and says, “Peace be with you!” to let them know that they were forgiven. That was why their fear turned to joy. They were forgiven!

This is the message of Jesus at every Mass today and in all our sacraments. It is the message of forgiveness that comes with repentance. Forgiveness and repentance go together.

No matter what we have done, whatever our past, however horrible the things we did, our repentance can bring new life, healing, forgiveness, and peace. We can become a new creation.

Then, there is, of course, His presence, His real presence. “It is I myself.” Today, Jesus is truly among us through His Holy Spirit when we pray and when we gather with fellow Christians in faith. He is present in the Eucharist as the most vivid way He would remain with us.

The presence of Jesus is a wonderful gift. He comes to each one of us in the Eucharist with the particular graces that individual needs for his or her life.

And, finally, besides His peace and His real presence, there is also His mission. Risen Lord sent the disciples to be witnesses of this new way of life. Jesus also sends us to witness to the same truth.

Before Easter, we are all used to making Lenten resolutions, what we will give up, what penance we will try to perform. Why not make some Easter resolutions such as sharing the peace and the presence of Christ with others or at least with one other person?

The Resurrection of Jesus was the first sign and the guarantee of the huge harvest that was to follow, the harvest of forgiveness and peace He brings, the harvest of His presence in so many human lives, the harvest of mission as we try to share something of Christ with others.

The story of Easter was not finished with the Ascension of Jesus. Now, we are part of the Easter story! Because He is alive, and He is with us now.