



DIAKONIA World Federation
Monthly Prayer for April 2024

In April, we enter the season of Easter. We will hear again the great gospel stories of the resurrection appearances. The women will encounter the empty tomb and the angels. Two disciples will run to see the good news. Later, they will huddle with other disciples, in an upper room, locked up and afraid, but divine words of peace and a new spirit will transcend their fear. Thomas will demand proof and eventually, kneel in a confession of faith. Two lonely followers will walk the road to Emmaus and be surprised by revelations of God's presence in relationship, scripture, and sacrament. Empty nets and empty spirits will be cast on the other side and life will be filled to abundance.

In a world of too many crucifixions, we need these ancient witnesses that, despite the loss and grief, wars and environmental destruction, and the temptation to despair, point us to Easter hope.

Prayer

God of Easter, roll away the stone of sadness, turn our mourning into dancing.
God of Resurrection, race with us to the site of new life, turn our crying into mirth.
God of the Empty Tomb, help us to see angels who turn our grief into joy.

You come to us, even through our closed doors,
through our private and personal locked hearts,
through our public and systemic barriers,
through our ecclesial and spiritual defences,
and you say, "Peace be with you."

You come to us and say, "Do not doubt but believe."
in a moment of wise counsel or the presence of deep listening,
in the passion of environmental activists or anti-racism heroes,
in the caring of front-line workers or shelter staff,
in the breathing of fresh spring air or the winding of a river,
in the colours from an artist or the magic lines from a poet.

God who walks with us, journey with us this day.

May we move knowing you are beside us.

God who is revealed in the scriptures, open our hearts and minds to your word.

May we be able to say, "Were not our hearts burning within us?"

God who is known in the breaking of the bread,

let the ordinary moments of this day become extraordinary sacredness.

Stay with us, O Holy One, as guest in our hearts.

Stay with us as hospitable and inclusive host.

It can feel like our nets are empty.

So, break into

our labouring and busy-ness,

our ordinary routines and our distractions,
and teach us to cast nets on the other side,
to marvel at the miraculously untorn nets in our lives,
to give thanks for the breakfast-on-the-beach abundance in our creation,
to see daybreak and the dawning of the new in our world, and
to live with grace and gratitude.

Like a woman running with the good news of the empty tomb,
surprise us with joy.

Like the disciples receiving the Holy Spirit,
gift us with peace.

Like Thomas, filled with doubt,
fill us with faith.

Like the travelers walking on the Emmaus Road,
open our eyes.

Like the fishers pulling empty nets,
help us to perceive abundance of life.

Ted Dodd, President, DIAKONIA of the Americas and the Caribbean