

Prayer Service for Mercy  
Sisters and Associates,  
Easter Sunday, 2008.

He is risen  
from the dead  
and now he is  
going before  
you to Galilee;  
it is there you  
will see him

(Matt 28:6-7)

*Sunrise over the Sea of Galilee. © Peter Cowan, 2007. Used with Permission.*

## Invitation to Prayer

**Leader:** Alleluia, alleluia, Christ is risen from the dead; we offer a joyful prayer of thanksgiving to God, Alleluia.

**All:** Christ is indeed risen from and the tomb which has become the womb from which we are born anew, alleluia, alleluia.

**Leader:** Our hearts are burning with joy and a desire to celebrate this wonderful news in praise, thanksgiving and humility, alleluia, alleluia.

**All:** In offering our prayers of praise and thanksgiving for Christ's triumph over death we remember that resurrection is now a free gift and an on-going reality for us, alleluia.

**Leader:** We are now Christ's risen body called to live a new life in our homes, places of work and parishes, alleluia.

**All:** Today, Christ is inviting us to return, renewed, to our Galilee: to live, love and work as a people gifted with resurrection. In faith we embrace this gift as an invitation to a new level in life-giving discipleship. Alleluia, alleluia.

**Doxology:** Glory and praise to our God who raised Jesus from the dead and offers the same gift to all who believe. In thanksgiving and as a renewal of our Baptismal Promises we re-commit ourselves to form a new springtime of faith, hope and love in Mercy for one another and for our world. Amen, alleluia.

**Hymn:** Sing to the Mountains (Bob Dufford, SJ. based on Ps 117(118). **OR:** Hymn of choice.

**Ant:** Alleluia, alleluia, Jesus Christ is risen and he is going before you to your Galilee. Now that you have been renewed, return quickly. There he will greet you, alleluia, alleluia.



## Psalm 118: 1-3; 8-9; 14; 16-17; 19-24

O give thanks to our God, whose love and goodness endures for ever!  
Let Israel say, "God's steadfast love endures for ever."  
Let the house of Aaron say, "God's steadfast love endures for ever."

It is better to take refuge in God than to put confidence in humankind.  
It is better to take refuge in God than to put confidence in earthly sovereignty.  
God is my strength, my song and my salvation.

The right hand of the God is exalted; the right hand of the God triumphed valiantly!"  
I shall rejoice and live, and give thanks for the mighty deeds of our God.  
Our God has opened the gates of righteousness that we may enter and give thanks.

I thank you God, you have answered me and become my salvation.  
The stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner.  
This is God's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes.  
This is the day which our God has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.

**Doxology:** Glory and praise to our God who raised Jesus from the dead and offers the same gift to all who believe. In thanksgiving and as a renewal of our Baptismal Promises we re-commit ourselves to form a new springtime of faith, hope and love in Mercy for one another and for our world. Amen, alleluia.

**Ant:** Alleluia, alleluia, Jesus Christ is risen and he is going before you to your Galilee. Now that you have been renewed, return quickly. There he will greet you, alleluia, alleluia.

## Scripture Reading Matt 28:1-10

*Now after the Sabbath, toward the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Mag'dalene and the other Mary went to see the sepulchre.*

*And all at once there was a great earthquake; for an angel of God descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone, and sat upon it.*

*The face of the angel, who was robed in snow white clothes, shone like brightest lightening.*

*The guards were shaken, so frightened that they became like dead people.*

*But the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid; for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified.*

*He is not here; he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay.*

*Then go quickly and tell the disciples that he has risen from the dead, and he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him. Now, I have told you."*

*Filled with awe and great joy, the women came quickly away from the tomb, and ran to tell the disciples.*

*And there coming to meet them, was Jesus. 'Greetings' he said. And the women came up and, falling down before him, clasped his feet.*

*Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid; go and tell my brethren to go to Galilee, and they will see me there."*



## Reflection

What a dramatic and theatrical scene – a challenge to third millennium Hollywood!

The garden tomb  
the grieving women  
the glittering angel  
the staged position  
the calming and up-lifting words  
the miraculous news  
the liberating invitation and the global commission.

Life-giving God, you took centre stage on that first Easter Morning. You demonstrated that you were the original, only and ultimate 'garden manager'.

Those who had crucified Jesus had but temporary and transient control.  
It would pass.  
They would pass too.

You were focused on the future.  
You looked through the long lens!

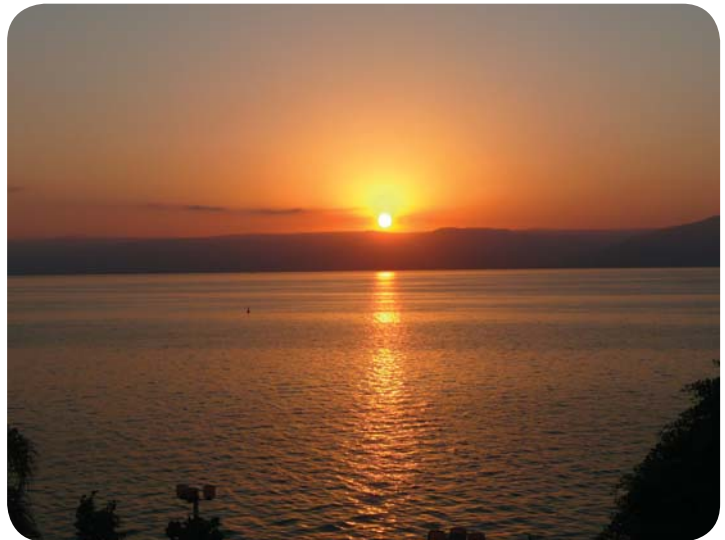
They had focused on themselves  
on power  
wealth, and  
popularity with state officials and the aristocracy.

You concentrated on the bullied proletariat  
the poor  
and the powerless.

Their centre had been status, safety and the 'sanctuary'.  
You kept your spotlight on the subjugated, spurned, and the snubbed.

They had been blinded by their own brokenness and need for approval.  
You were relaxed, creative and genuine in your caring.  
For them death was the end.  
For you it was the seed from which sprung new life  
– **resurrection** –  
an on-going and life-giving gift to all who believed.

On that first Easter Sunday you created a new global public company.  
You called it RESURRECTION.



You commissioned the women to introduce it to your board of directors and to announce it to the world.

You balanced the scales between would be controllers and those they would seek to make them dependents.  
You abolished control by giving one shares to each member.  
You directed them to trade in the name of the Trinity.

Your company would not condone bullying or putting people down.  
It would concentrate on liberating and on building people up.  
It would not be about competition, seeking accolades or attracting human attention.  
It would rather, be an invitation to the ordinary as envisaged by you at the moment of creation in the first garden - that first and perfect 'Galilee'.

It was a call to learn the fundamental values which you outlined in that primary 'stock-exchange' - Eden.

On this Easter Day, O Compassionate and Loving God, please grant me the grace to start to trade afresh with my share.

Give me the courage to be Spirit-centred, just and merciful in my trading,  
not only with those in the public eye,  
**but more importantly with those who share my home and my table.**

Help me to look through your long lens  
and to recognise that I am only your instrument.  
You are the Master Trader.

Then, when you decide that my trading days are over, grant that I may deserve to leave my Galilee, and join my Resurrected Redeemer in your Garden so that we can, with you, Mary and all the saints, celebrate our mutual blessings and new life eternally. Amen.



## Intercessions:

*On this day when we celebrate our Christian faith in the Resurrection we give thanks for the gift of faith, Christ's renewed invitation to us to respond to new global needs and our new hope in an eternal springtime:*

Jesus, you responded to the frightened women by turning the tomb into a womb when, in the person of an angel whose face shone like lightning, you brought them the news of your resurrection; and sent them out to proclaim the Good News. Give us the grace of purity of intention in all our relationships and enable us to be your Good News particularly in our own Galilee.

**Resp: Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.**

Jesus, you responded to the pain and brokenness of the two disciples on the Emmaus Road by bringing fire to their hearts when you revealed yourself resurrected during the breaking of bread. Give us the grace to recognise you present with us not only in the Eucharist but every time we offer a 'comfortable cup' of tea to our needy sisters and brothers, or share a meal with one another. **Resp:**

Jesus, you brought the great joy of a new springtime to the lives of your disciples in the Upper Room when you appeared to them on Easter Sunday evening, shared fish with them and commissioned them as proclaimers of the Good News and the forgiveness of sins. Give us the grace to share that springtime with others through our ministries of witness, proclamation and reconciliation. **Resp:**

Jesus, you affirmed the faith of all those like ourselves who did not see your resurrected person on the first Easter Sunday when you spoke with Thomas eight days later. Give us the grace to believe that you are present with us when our faith is tested through unexpected bereavement, the dysfunctional behaviours and reactions of our broken sisters and brothers, natural disasters, betrayals, loss of property, employment or a precious relationship. **Resp:**

Jesus, your demonstrated to your discipleship that you had transcended the tomb and transformed it into the womb from which the Church would grow, when, after leading them on to the mountain,

you authorised them to take the news of your resurrection 'to the ends of the earth'. Give us the grace to hear that commission anew in our day and to become re-creators of a new springtime in your Church. **Resp:**

**Together:** Glory and praise to our God who raised Jesus from the dead and offers the same gift to all who believe. In thanksgiving and as a renewal of our Baptismal Promises we re-commit ourselves to form a new springtime of faith, hope and love in Mercy for one another and for our world. Amen, alleluia.


## Concluding Prayer:

God of all hope and joy, we give thanks for this special day on which we celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus from the tomb; for the joy that it brings to our hearts and lives; for the challenges that it presents to us in terms of how we live, communicate, act, work, relax believe and trust. We thank you, too, for the wonderful peace and sense of celebration which this heavenly springtime brings to our relationships, our lives and our world. We ask you to accept our thanks and our praise in partnership with Jesus who has become our Redeemer, and the Holy Spirit who draws us to Jesus, and sustains us in renewed faith, hope and love. Amen, alleluia, alleluia.

## Blessing:

May the Risen and Life-giving Christ, bless us with the grace of a new appreciation of the Resurrection so that we may inspire hope in the darkest, most neglected and broken parts of our world throughout this third millennium. Amen

May the Risen Christ, who is living among us now, renew our belief in our own resurrection, and call us afresh to experience the joy of this new springtime in faith hope and love. Amen

Provident God, in celebration with the Risen Christ and the Holy Spirit we ask you to Send, afresh, your special Easter Blessing of Resurrection  on each member of our Mercy Family, and through us on all your people. Amen, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

