**Friday (1st Epistle of Clement)**

Let us focus on the Father and Creator of the entire cosmos and appreciate the outstanding excellence of his gifts of peace and goodwill. Let us contemplate God with our mind and with the eyes of our soul gaze on his patient purpose. Let us consider the extraordinary absence of anger in his dealings with all his creation.

**Scripture (Ezekiel 18:21-23)**

***If the wicked abandon all the sins they have committed, respect my laws and are law-abiding and upright, they will most certainly live; they will not die. None of the crimes committed will be remembered against them from then on; they will certainly live because of their upright actions. Would I take pleasure in the death of the wicked—declares the Lord Yahweh—and not prefer to see them their wickedness and live?***

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 3rd Week of Easter

**One more step for God, a giant leap for mankind**

***Before Jesus appears to the Eleven in person, (Lk. 24:25-48), they have heard from two other sources that he was alive. When the women tell them, they dismiss the story as***

***nonsense; when the two disciples who have just returned from Emmaus are telling them what had happened, the lack of joy or celebration in the phrase the apostles “were still talking about all this” suggests that they were having some difficulty in believing what they were hearing.***

***One important feature of the two disciples’ journey to Emmaus had been the long explanation of scripture to show how Jesus had been ‘destined to suffer before he entered his glory’. The angel also told the women that what had happened was not a disaster but was destined to happen. Clearly, the resurrection appearances are far more than an ‘everything’s alright now’ moment; when it is revealed as a remarkable step along a path which already exists, the resurrection becomes a source of joy and a great deepening of faith. It also changes lives.***

***When Jesus appears to the eleven and other disciples, they too have to been taken on the same journey. Their initial reaction of alarm is understandable: the most likely explanation for this sudden appearance - that they are seeing a ghost - is the only one which fits in with their own experience, (they seem to have been completely unable to fit the reports they had heard into anything they could make sense of.) As on the road to Emmaus, Jesus now leads them to a deeper understanding that his resurrection was far more than an extraordinary but isolated event , and that the crucifixion was not a calamity which Jesus has somehow ‘fixed’ by rising from the dead. What he teaches them is that all of the events which had so shaken them were the way in which God would act, through Jesus, in order to allow us to come to true repentance through the forgiveness of sins, which will begin in Jerusalem and spread to all nations. Whatever this means, it is part of a much bigger story, and it is for the whole world.***

***When Peter speaks to the excited crowd, (Acts 3:13-19), they excited and bewildered because they have seen the two apostles cure a lame man, which is beyond their understanding.*** ***Peter explains they are acting in the name of Jesus, i.e acting with the full authority of, and having the same power as, the person in whose name they are acting. He is with them, not as a memory or as an inspirational role model! Now that he has got their attention, Peter takes the people on the same journey which Jesus had taken the eleven on, although he is more pointed: he gives a blow by blow account of how they had betrayed the Holy One of God and handed him over to Pilate. When Peter says they had no idea what they were doing, he is not so much excusing them as describing how far they were from God, i.e their sinfulness.***

***When the author of 1 John (2:1-5) explains that we, as sinners, have an advocate in Jesus, he is inviting us into the new relationship which God had planned all along. When Jesus became one of us, he joined us as we were: sinful, i.e unable to accept God. Our rejection of him would not, therefore, come as a surprise to God – it was always going to happen because we are so limited by fears, self-seeking drives and unwillingness to be open to God. The resurrection allows God to be with us in this state, but enables us to repent: Jesus is with us enabling us to go beyond these limits, (sin) and to turn to God by living in his way, (keeping his commands). It allows a new life.*** Martin Bennett

**Monday (Julian of Norwich)**

I saw that God never began to love mankind. For just as we are destined to come to endless joy, and to crown God’s delight in his work, so man in God’s thought has always been known and loved. From him we come, in him we are enfolded, to him we return, and this by the foreseeing purpose of the blessed Trinity since before time was. In this endless love we are led and looked after by God and never shall be lost.

**Scripture (Acts 3:13-15)**

***Peter said to the people: “It is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our ancestors, who has glorified his servant Jesus, who you handed over and then disowned in the presence of Pilate. It was you who demanded the reprieve of a murderer while you killed the prince of life. God, however, raised him from the dead, and to that fact we are the witnesses. Now I know that neither you nor your leaders had any idea what you were really doing; this was the way God carried out what he had foretold, when he said through all his prophets that his Christ would suffer. Now you must repent and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out.”***

**Tuesday (Cardinal Basil Hume)**

The honest and humble acceptance of our frailty liberates us from pretence, from the effort of seeking to impress others and to justify ourselves. We can be truthful with ourselves and with others. We can welcome into our lives the saving and healing power of Christ. God’s love is manifested in Jesus Christ. It is a love that is merciful, that is, one that understands our weakness.

**Scripture (Luke 24: 36, 40-47)**

***They were still talking about all this when Jesus himself stood among them and said to the “Peace be with you!” In a state of alarm and fright, they thought they were seeing a ghost. But he said, “ Why are you so agitated, and why are these doubts rising in your hearts? Look at my hands and my feet, yes it is I indeed.” Then he told them ‘This is what I meant when I said, while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses, in the Prophets and in the Psalms, was destined to be fulfilled.’ He opened their minds to understand the scriptures, and he said to them, ‘So it is written that the Christ would suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that, in his name, repentance for the forgiveness of sins would be preached to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witness to this.’***

**Wednesday (Meister Eckhart)**

Whoever knows the ways of God should always be mindful of the fact that God, who is faithful and loving, has led us from a sinful life into a godly one, thus making friends of us who were previously enemies. God willingly endures all the harm and shame which all our sins have ever inflicted upon him, as he has already done for many years, in order that we should come to a deep knowledge of his love and in order that our love and our gratitude should increase and our zeal grow more intense, which often happens when we have repented of our sins. And thus our Lord intends to teach us of his great mercy, urging us to great and true humility and devotion. For, when repentance is renewed, then love too is renewed and grows strong.

**Scripture (Psalm 32:1-2,5,11)**

***How blessed are those whose offence is forgiven, whose sin is blotted out. How blessed are those to whom Yahweh imputes no guilt, whose spirit harbours no deceit. I made my sin known to you, did not conceal my guilt. I said ‘I shall confess my guilt to Yahweh.’ And you, for your part, took away my guilt, forgave my sin. Rejoice in Yahweh, exult all you upright, shout for joy, you honest of heart.***

**Thursday (Teillhard de Chardin)**

God cannot ordain that a fallen world in the process of rising again should avoid shocks and diminishments. But God will make it good by making evil itself serve the higher good of His faithful. Like an artist making use of a fault or an impurity in the stone he is sculpting so as to produce more exquisite lines or a more beautiful tone, God, without sparing us the partial deaths, nor the final death, transfigures them by integrating them into a better plan—*providing we trust lovingly in Him.*  Not only our unavoidable ills but our faults, even our most deliberate one, can be embraced in that transformation, provided always we repent of them.

**Scripture (1John 2:1-3,5-6)**

***My, children, I am writing this to prevent you from sinning; but if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the upright. He is the sacrifice to expiate our sins, and not only ours, but also of the whole world. We can be sure that we know God only by keeping his commandments. Anyone who does keep his word, in such a one God’s love truly reaches its perfection. This is the proof that we are in God. Whoever claims to remain in such a person must act as he acted.***

3rd Week of Easter

**One more step for God, a giant leap for mankind**

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3rd Week of Easter

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***It is worth putting yourself in the company of Jesus’ friends on the evening of Easter Sunday. (Luke 24:35-48). The atmosphere in the room seemed to be moving from fearful and despondent to bewildered, with the incredible tale of the two disciples returning from Emmaus, that they had walked and eaten with Jesus, adding more confusion to the strange tale of the women returning from the empty tomb, and Peter’s amazement at what he had seen. The lack of joy or celebration in the phrase ‘they were still talking about all this’ suggests they were having some difficulty in believing what they were hearing, so it seems a little unfair when Jesus appears and asks, ‘Why are you so agitated? Why these doubts?’.***

***The question lays out the starting point of the first witnesses when the Resurrection was first revealed to them, and allows us to follow their journey to a new understanding They were at the limits of their understanding – the only logical explanation was that they were seeing a ghost – but Jesus takes them two large steps beyond this. He firstly establishes that it is he – the crucified one – standing in their midst as flesh and bone, and ready to eat. Then, the more significant step, he opens their minds to show that this suffering, death and resurrection was part of God’s plans that had come to fulfilment in him, so that repentance for the forgiveness of sins could be preached – by them.***

***As Peter explains this repentance is the appropriate response to the love God had shown in Jesus. It is worth putting yourself in the crowd to the crowd of people who had come running to him and John after they had cured the lame beggar, (Acts 3:13-19)***