

**MONDAY**  
**16 NOVEMBER**  
**Revelation 1:1-4; 2:1-5**  
**Psalm 1**  
**Luke 18:35-end**

**TUESDAY**  
**17 NOVEMBER**  
**Revelation 3:1-6.**  
**14-end**  
**Psalm 15**  
**Luke 19:1-10**

**WEDNESDAY**  
**18 NOVEMBER**  
**Revelation 4**  
**Psalm 150**  
**Luke 19:11-28**

**THURSDAY**  
**19 NOVEMBER**  
**Revelation 5:1-10**  
**Psalm 149:1-5**  
**Luke 19:41-44**

**FRIDAY**  
**20 NOVEMBER**  
**Revelation 10:8-end**  
**Psalm 119:65-72**  
**Luke 19:45-end**

**SATURDAY**  
**21 NOVEMBER**  
**Revelation 11:4-12**  
**Psalm 144:1-9**  
**Luke 20:27-40**

## REFLECTION

There are times, especially towards the end of the Church's year, when it is hard to discern a theme or pattern in the lectionary readings. This week's readings from Revelation, the Psalms, and Luke's Gospel range across a number of topics, including how to lead a righteous life, God seeing our works and finding us wanting, repentance, Jesus' sacrifice, the glory of God, healing and Jesus' entry in to Jerusalem with prophecies of its destruction. The week (on Wednesday) includes one of Jesus' most troubling parables, which seems totally at odds with our notions of Christian social justice, and (on Saturday) some confusing teaching about marriage and resurrection.

Perhaps this lack of clarity mirrors our own lives. At times, it can seem as if nothing much makes sense, as if we are surrounded by conflicting demands and loyalties. We struggle to discern what is important, and find it hard to see where God is in all this. Just as we wrestle with the meaning of this week's readings, and try to gain an understanding of what God is seeking to teach us, so we wrestle with our everyday lives, trying to find a coherent way of living holy lives.

PRAYER

God of wisdom and truth,  
 you give us the scriptures to teach us your ways.  
 Help us to discern their meaning,  
 and to apply them wisely in our everyday lives,  
 that in following you in our daily living we may glorify you,  
 and draw others to know and love you.



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## THE CHURCH FATHERS

### PART III – BIBLICAL TRUTH AND HERESY

*Richard Gunning concludes his series about the Church Fathers.*

Irenaeus (c. 130-200) hailed from Smyrna in Turkey and became Bishop of Lyons in France. He wrote that he had heard Polycarp preach. Irenaeus was one of the earliest of the Fathers to regard all four Gospels as "the truth" and in his writings he quoted extensively from them and the letters of St Paul. In the Church, Irenaeus wrote, the apostles lodged the truth, as in a bank: "all the rest are thieves and robbers". His best-known work was *Against Heresies*, an attack on Gnosticism. In contrast with the Gnostics, Irenaeus believed in the unity and the goodness of God, and referred to Jesus and the Holy Spirit as the "hands of God".

Clement of Alexandria (c. 150-215) was born of pagan parents but as a young man converted to Christianity. He travelled widely and in AD 180 reached Alexandria where he began teaching at the city's Catechetical School. Clement's writings draw heavily on Stoic philosophy and, in great contrast to his contemporary Tertullian, he argued for the equality of the sexes. Christ is neither male nor female, Clement suggested, and God the Father has both male and female aspects. He likened the body and blood of the Eucharist to milk from the breast. As for martyrdom, Clement taught that while all good Christians should be unafraid of death, they should not actively seek a martyr's death. To do this was not to pay sufficient respect to God's gift of life.

Origen (c. 185-255) was another Father never proclaimed a saint, possibly because of his much-publicised self-castration, having allegedly taken a verse in Matthew's Gospel literally: "there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven". Nevertheless, Origen, who wrote more than two thousand works in Greek, was probably the most important scholar and theologian of the era leading up to the First Council of Nicaea in AD 325. It was called by Constantine, the first Roman Emperor to convert to Christianity, and attended by 220 bishops.

# LIVE the WORD

SUSTAINING YOU THROUGH THE WEEK

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 and  
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St Irenaeus, architectural details of Eglise de la Madeleine, Paris Zvonimir Atletic / Shutterstock.com

Second week before Advent

Monday 16 November to Saturday 21 November 2020

WEEK