

CATHOLIC PARISH OF ST MARY'S MACLEAN



ST JOHNS CHURCH



ST MARYS CHURCH



ST JAMES CHURCH

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THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH, YEAR A: 28 DECEMBER 2025

Dear brothers and sisters, we celebrate this Sunday the feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph. In doing so, we are invited to reflect on the example of the Holy Family and “to imitate them in practicing the virtues of the family life and in the bonds of charity.”

As to the nature of the family in the plan of God, the Catholic Church says: “A man and a woman united in marriage form a family together with their children. God instituted the family and endowed it with its fundamental constitution. Marriage and the family are ordered to the good of the spouses and to the procreation and education of children. Members of the same family establish among themselves personal relationships and primary responsibilities. In Christ the family becomes the domestic church because it is a community of faith, of hope, and of charity” (*Compendium of the Catechism*, 456)

The Gospel, Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23, shows the many trials that Mary and Joseph underwent before and after the birth of Jesus. The Holy Family had to face many difficulties but remained together. What made them strong was their trust in God shown in their docility to his guidance. Mary and Joseph even before they came together had been very faithful to God. Now, as a family, they let themselves be guided by the word of God so that as a family, they may fulfill the mission God entrusted to them. God is with them always offering his guidance and help. Mary and Joseph are able to sense it when divine assistance is provided and they readily, with trusting abandonment to the mysterious will of God, obey it. The Holy Family shows us that holiness of a family consists in the presence of God in the family and in letting itself be directed by God’s word and by the Holy Spirit.

Here is what the Catholic Church teaches about the duties of parents toward their children: “Parents, in virtue of their participation in the fatherhood of God, have the first responsibility for the education of their children and they are the first heralds of the faith for them. They have the duty to love and respect their children as persons and as children of God and to provide, as far as is possible, for their physical and spiritual needs. They should select for them a suitable school and help them with prudent counsel in the choice of their profession and their state of life. In particular they have the mission of educating their children in the Christian faith.” (*Compendium of the Catechism*, 460)

The first reading, Sirach 3:2-6, 12-14, reminds us particularly about duties of children towards their parents. Children have the duty to respect and honour their parents. They have to support them in their old age, to show them sympathy and kindness. In the words of the *Compendium of the Catechism*, “Children owe respect (filial piety), gratitude, docility and obedience to their parents. In paying them respect and in fostering good relationships with their brothers and sisters, children contribute to the growth in harmony and holiness in family life in general. Adult children should give their parents material and moral support whenever they find themselves in situations of distress, sickness, loneliness, or old age.”

In the second reading, Colossians 3:12-21, St Paul suggests that divine or Christian love, *agape*, must always be present in all our family relationships. This love, which desires the good of the other, is shown in “sincere compassion, in kindness and humility, gentleness and patience” in bearing with one another, in forgiving, in being grateful to God and to one another, in teaching and advising one another in wisdom, and in praying together and for one another.

As we celebrate the feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph, let us pray for our families, living and dead, and for all families that they may let themselves be led by the word of God and the Holy Spirit.

Fr Roland

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON (*Iluka*)

The shepherds went in haste, and found Mary and Joseph and the Infant lying in a manger.

COLLECT

O God, who were pleased to give us the shining example of the Holy Family, graciously grant that we may imitate them in practising the virtues of family life and in the bonds of charity, and so, in the joy of your house, delight one day in eternal rewards. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

FIRST READING

Sirach 3:2-6. 12-14

A reading from the book of Ecclesiasticus.

The Lord honours the father in his children, and upholds the rights of a mother over her sons. Whoever respects his father is atoning for his sins, he who honours his mother is like someone amassing a fortune.

Whoever respects his father will be happy with children of his own, he shall be heard on the day when he prays. Long life comes to him who honours his father, he who sets his mother at ease is showing obedience to the Lord.

My son, support your father in his old age, do not grieve him during his life. Even if his mind should fail, show him sympathy, do not despise him in your health and strength; for kindness to a father shall not be forgotten but will serve as reparation for your sins.

The word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM *Ps 127:1-5. R. see v.1*

R. *Happy are those who fear the Lord and walk in his ways.*

1. O blessed are those who fear the Lord and walk in his ways!
By the labour of your hands you shall eat.
You will be happy and prosper. (R.)
2. Your wife like a fruitful vine
in the heart of your house;
your children like shoots of the olive,
around your table. (R.)
3. Indeed thus shall be blessed
the man who fears the Lord.
May the Lord bless you from Zion
all the days of your life! (R.)

SECOND READING

Colossians 3:12-21

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Colossians.

You are God's chosen race, his saints; he loves you and you should be clothed in sincere compassion, in kindness and humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with one another; forgive each other as soon as a quarrel begins. The Lord has forgiven you; now you must do the same. Over all these clothes, to keep them together and complete them, put on love. And may the peace of Christ reign in your hearts, because it is for this that you were called together as parts of one body. Always be thankful.

Let the message of Christ, in all its richness, find a home with you. Teach each other, and advise each other, in all wisdom. With gratitude in your hearts sing psalms and hymns and inspired songs to God; and never say or do anything except in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Wives, give way to your husbands, as you should in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives and treat them with gentleness. Children, be obedient to your parents always, because that is what will please the Lord. Parents, never drive your children to resentment or you will make them feel frustrated.

The word of the Lord.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!

May the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, and the fullness of his message live within you.

Alleluia!

GOSPEL

Matthew 2:13-15. 19-23

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

After the wise men had left, the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, 'Get up, take the child and his mother with you, and escape into Egypt, and stay there until I tell you, because Herod intends to search for the child and do away with him.' So Joseph got up and, taking the child and his mother with him, left that night for Egypt, where he stayed until Herod was dead. This was to fulfil what the Lord had spoken through the prophet:

I called my son out of Egypt.

After Herod's death, the angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, 'Get up, take the child and his mother with you and go back to the land of Israel, for those who wanted to kill the child are dead.' So Joseph got up and, taking the child and his mother with him, went back to the land of Israel. But when he learnt that Archelaus had succeeded his father Herod as ruler of Judaea he was afraid to go there, and being warned in a dream he left for the region of Galilee. There he settled in a town called Nazareth. In this way the words spoken through the prophets were to be fulfilled: He will be called a Nazarene.

The Gospel of the Lord.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

We offer you, Lord, the sacrifice of conciliation, humbly asking that, through the intercession of the Virgin Mother of God and Saint Joseph, you may establish our families firmly in your grace and your peace. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

PREFACE; EUCHARISTIC PRAYER I

COMMUNION ANTIPHON (*Iluka*)

Our God has appeared on the earth, and lived among us.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Bring those you refresh with this heavenly Sacrament, most merciful Father, to imitate constantly the example of the Holy Family, so that, after the trials of this world, we may share their company for ever. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

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SCRIPTURE COMMENTARY

The Book of Sirach (or Ecclesiasticus) belongs to ancient Israel's wisdom tradition. Unlike the prophets who either call the people back to the religious traditions from which they have strayed or console and encourage them to be faithful in the face of overwhelming suffering, the wisdom tradition is a collection of insights gleaned from the successful living of life. It is instruction that provides a glimpse into a way of living that has brought happiness in the past, but it describes it in order to encourage similar behaviour that will bring corresponding happiness in the present or future. The reading for today is instruction about family life, identifying the kind of living that will result in family harmony.

This psalm is clearly descriptive instruction that teaches, rather than an address directed to God in praise or thanksgiving. It contains themes and vocabulary associated with the wisdom tradition: reward and punishment; happy or blessed; ways or path. The distinguishing characteristic of this tradition is fear of the Lord, which denotes profound awe and amazement before the tremendous marvels of God. The blessings promised are both material good fortune and a large and extended family. The final statement is less a prayer than an exclamation: 'Peace upon Israel!' Peace, shalom, is fullness of messianic blessings. This includes personal contentment, harmony with others and the rest of creation, adequate material resources.

Paul insists that Christians are God's chosen people, holy, and beloved. Therefore, they should act

accordingly. This moving characterisation is followed by a very demanding program of behaviour. The virtues are all directed toward others, requiring unselfish sensitivity, particularly love, the highest of all virtues. The Christians are urged to open themselves to the transforming power of the word of Christ, to instruct and advise each other, and to join in praising God. The final directives reflect the patriarchal household codes prevalent in the Greco-Roman world of the time. The Christian virtues, when practised within the context of the family, appear to have transformed the patriarchal social customs of the day. In Christ, the relationships between man and woman and child have been radically altered.

The Holy Family's flight into Egypt, precipitated by the hatred of Herod, recalls Joseph's escape to that same land because of the hatred of his brothers. Both the Holy Family and the family of Jacob/Israel remained in Egypt until the death of a ruler persuaded them to return to their land of origin. Finally, just as Israel returned to the land of its ancestors, there to be shaped into the 'people of God', so Jesus returns to his homeland, there to establish the reign of God. This reading emphasises the early Christians' belief in the active presence of God in the events of the life of Jesus. It was God who directed Joseph and who saw to the safety of the child. © Dianne Bergant CSA

Prayer to the Holy Family

Dear Lord,

Bless our family. Be so kind as to give us the unity, peace, and mutual love that You found in Your own family in the little town of Nazareth.

Saint Joseph, pray for the head of our family. Obtain for him the strength, the wisdom, and the prudence he needs to support and direct those under his care.

Mother Mary, pray for the mother of our family. Help her to be pure and kind, gentle and self-sacrificing. For the more she resembles you, the better will our family be.

Lord Jesus, bless the children of our family. Help them to be obedient and devoted to their parents. Make them more and more like You. Let them grow, as You did, in wisdom and strength and grace before God and man.

Holy Family of Nazareth, by your intercession, love, and holy example, make our family and home more and more like Yours, until we are all one family, happy and at peace in our true home with You. Amen.



ONLINE GIVING

Internet donations to assist our parish are always welcome. Details for donating online via Electronic Funds Transfer BSB: 032582 Account Number: 810033 [Surname, parish envelope no]

PRAYER REQUESTS

Prayers for the Sick: Janice Taylor, Miriam Scherger, Tony Murphy, Kathy Leseberg, Ava Blay, Mark Thurbon, Alma Bailey, Mary Wiseman, Sue Gravalin, Ron Weekes, Margaret Donges, Pam Lewis, Matthew & Paul Gallagher, Chris Naismith, Trevor Nicolai, Graham Courte, Peter Burns, Matthew Tierney, Matt Mohorovic, Sharon Grayson, Dennis Cathedral, Allan Dick. **Recently Deceased:** Patrick Cassidy, Fotka Mijic, Donna Ellis. **Anniversary:** Anthony Ricaplaza, Ron Crittenden, Norman Young, Pat Shortt. **Pray for:** Ruben Rollon, Edith Young, Mary Shortt, Anmary Wood, Kerry Jones, John Drum, Kristen Rooke, Marcus Sims. All the suffering souls in Purgatory especially the dec'd members of F.O.S.S.

MASS TIMES:

Sunday Masses: Yamba: 5:30pm (SAT); Maclean: 8:30am (SUN); Iluka: 10:30am (SUN).

Weekday Masses: Wednesday, 9:30am: Yamba; Thursday, 10:00am: Iluka; Friday, 12:00nn, Maclean; First Saturday: 11:30am, Maclean.

RECONCILIATION TIMES

Saturday, 11:00am, Maclean; 5:00pm, Yamba
Sunday, 8:00am, Maclean
Wednesday, 10:00am, Yamba
Thursday, 10:30am, Iluka

EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION:

First Wednesday: 10:00am, Yamba
First Saturday: 12:00pm, Maclean

MINISTRY ROSTER: 3/4 JANUARY 2025

Readers: Yamba: M Dee/B Montgomery; Maclean: L Senz/C Newton; Iluka: C Nilon. **Commentators:** Yamba: F Robertson, Maclean: R Wiseman, Iluka: I Durham. **E Communion:** Maclean: J de Roos. **Count team:** Neander.

READINGS: 3/4 JANUARY 2025

First: Isaiah 60:1-6; **Second:** Ephesians 3:2-3. 5-6; **Gospel:** Matthew 2:1-12.

NEWS & EVENTS

Emergency contact: In case of emergency outside of parish office hours, contact Fr Roland 0401 508 812.

Fr Roland's annual leave: Please note Fr Roland will be on annual leave from December 29 for 4 weeks. During this time, visiting priest, Fr Proencio Bognay will be assisting with weekday and weekend Masses.

Mass Change: Weekday Mass on Thursday, January 1 will be celebrated at St Mary's, Maclean at 10:00am. There will be no Mass in Iluka on this day.

First Saturday Devotion: Next Saturday, 3 January, the first Saturday devotion at St Mary's Maclean will begin at 11:00am with the praying of the Rosary, followed by Mass and Eucharistic Adoration and Benediction.

Baptisms: Welcome to the family of God, Oscar, Tommy and Parker, who are being baptised in our parish this weekend.

Parish bulletin online: Our bulletin is now uploaded weekly to our website <http://stmarysparish.org.au>

POSPONED Renovation work to St James

Church: Further updates will be provided as more details become available.

St Vincent de Paul – Christmas Closure Notice:

Maclean Conference – Office will close midday, 12 December and reopen at 11am, 23 January.

Yamba Conference – Last day of assistance will be Friday, 19 December (distributing Christmas hampers). General assistance calls will resume from 6 January. Please phone 0498 960 630 for help.

Emergency contact during closure - For urgent assistance, please call **13 18 12**. This number will direct you to the appropriate area for support.

Parish Secretary position: With Lucia and her family relocating to Sydney in mid-January, our parish is seeking a new Parish Secretary. This is a permanent part-time role, hours negotiable, and is based at the Maclean Parish Office. For more information, speak to Fr Roland or Lucia E: office@stmarysparish.org.au P: 02 6645 1188.

Schools' Newsletter: Diocese of Lismore Catholic Schools is pleased to present the latest edition of its newsletter; copies are available at each Church. To stay up to date with the latest in Catholic education, please use this link: <https://bit.ly/492bBr3>.

Did You Know? – 1st & 2nd Collections: The First Collection supports our priests and the clergy of the Diocese. The Second Collection contributes to the upkeep and running of our parish, including expenses such as electricity, insurance, building maintenance, and church equipment. A sincere thank you to all who continue to support our parish through planned giving and weekly collections. Your generosity sustains the mission and pastoral life of our parish community.

Safeguarding: If you or a person close to you has been abused by someone working or ministering within the Diocese of Lismore, we ask you to contact us. We will listen to you respectfully: offer support and discuss options you have available to you. Contact the Safeguarding Office – Phone: (02) 66219444 or Email: safeguarding@lismore.catholic.org.au