

CATHOLIC PARISH OF ST MARY'S MACLEAN



ST JOHNS CHURCH



ST MARYS CHURCH



ST JAMES CHURCH

Parish Administrator: Father Roland Agrisola
2 McIntyres Lane Maclean NSW 2463
Email: office@stmarysparish.org.au

Postal: PO Box 19 MACLEAN NSW 2463
Tel: 02 66 451188 **ABN** 43 360 517 680
Web: stmarysparish.org.au

THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, YEAR A: 25 JANUARY 2026

There are certain news readers or presenters on the radio or TV one wants to switch off: something in the voice grates. Others, one could listen to endlessly: something about the tone is so attractive.

Jesus' voice must have sounded fascinating: something about it perfectly vocalised his attractive and fascinating personality. It gave true voice to who he was, and this is what proved so alluring to those four fishermen, two sets of two brothers. It is an extraordinary situation.

These men were running successful fishing operations, family businesses. But once Jesus passed by and *called* them, the Gospel says, *at once* they left their boats and followed him.

Immediately, they allowed this stranger to wrench them out of their place in society, in the commercial life of the Sea of Galilee. Without any further ado, they gave up their status as independent and settled businessmen and became dependent itinerants. How did this come about?

They were Jewish. Their Jewish scriptures and tradition would have prepared them, filled them with longing and expectation for the Messiah. They were in a state of readiness.

Then, hearing his voice, they realised that Jesus was the true vocalist of God, for whom they had been listening.

Irish author and mystic, John O'Donohue, once wrote, 'Something in us senses and knows how perfectly the contours of the soul fit the divine embrace.' *

Maybe Simon Peter, Andrew, James and John sensed that, in this Jesus, there was a Soul whose contours perfectly fitted the divine embrace. They were

prepared to risk everything, abandoning their livelihood, for the chance to have *their* souls contoured along the same lines.

And then, the call: 'Follow me... ', the call not to an isolated individual promising to save his soul, but to two brothers and then another two brothers. Immediately, a community was being formed and its task was to bring others into that Jesus-following community.

At some stage, you will hear his fascinating voice, and a decision will be required: a decision of faith. 'Come, follow me.' The faith required is not a peculiar sort of knowledge about this or that. 'Faith' is setting out on a journey in the hopeful conviction that *this* Jesus *is*

the person who wants to set me on the Way which is most life giving,
the person through whom I can receive divine mercy,
the person in whom I can share victory over death,
the person by whom I am called to participate in Divine life.

The Nazarene is calling.

Simon Peter, Andrew, James and John are also beckoning: 'Take the risk of joining us. Let us together follow the sound of that voice which reverberates throughout all creation, the sound of that voice which perfectly articulates Divine Truth and Beauty, the call of that voice sounded by Our Lord Jesus Christ.'

* John O'Donohue, *Divine Beauty: The Invisible Embrace*, Bantam Press, p.246.

Fr Michael Tate

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON (*Iluka*)

O sing a new song to the Lord; sing to the Lord, all the earth. In his presence are majesty and splendour, strength and honour in his holy place.

COLLECT

Almighty ever-living God, direct our actions according to your good pleasure, that in the name of your beloved Son we may abound in good works. 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*Isaiah 8:23 – 9:3*

A reading from the prophet Isaiah.

In days past the Lord humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in days to come he will confer glory on the Way of the Sea on the far side of Jordan, province of the nations.

The people that walked in darkness
has seen a great light;
on those who live in a land of deep shadow
a light has shone.
You have made their gladness greater,
you have made their joy increase,
they rejoice in your presence
as men rejoice at harvest time,
as men are happy when they are dividing the spoils.
For the yoke that was weighing on him,
the bar across his shoulders,
the rod of his oppressor,
these you break as on the day of Midian.

The word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM *Ps 26:1. 4. 13-14. R. v.1*

R. The Lord is my light and my salvation.

1. The Lord is my light and my help;
whom shall I fear?
The Lord is the stronghold of my life;
Before whom shall I shrink? (R.)
2. There is one thing I ask of the Lord,
for this I long,
to live in the house of the Lord,
all the days of my life,
to savour the sweetness of the Lord,
to behold his temple. (R.)
3. I am sure I shall see the Lord's goodness
in the land of the living.
Hope in him, hold firm and take heart.
Hope in the Lord! (R.)

SECOND READING*1 Corinthians 1:10-13, 17*

A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the Corinthians.

I appeal to you, brothers, for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ, to make up the differences between you, and instead of disagreeing among yourselves, to be united again in your belief and practice. From what Chloe's people have been telling me, my dear brothers, it is clear that there are serious differences among you. What I mean are all these slogans that you have, like: 'I am for Paul', 'I am for Apollos', 'I am for Cephas', 'I am for Christ'. Has Christ been parcelled out? Was it Paul that was crucified for you? Were you baptised in the name of Paul?

For Christ did not send me to baptise, but to preach the Good News, and not to preach that in the terms of philosophy in which the crucifixion of Christ cannot be expressed.

The word of the Lord.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!

Jesus preached the Good News of the kingdom and healed all who were sick.

Alleluia!

GOSPEL*Matthew 4:12-23*

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

Hearing that John had been arrested Jesus went back to Galilee, and leaving Nazareth he went and settled in Capernaum, a lakeside town on the borders of Zebulun and Naphtali. In this way the prophecy of Isaiah was to be fulfilled:

Land of Zebulun! Land of Naphtali!
Way of the sea on the far side of Jordan,
Galilee of the nations!
The people that lived in darkness
has seen a great light;
on those who dwell in the land and shadow of
death
a light has dawned.

From that moment Jesus began his preaching with the message, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is close at hand.' As he was walking by the Sea of Galilee he saw two brothers, Simon, who was called Peter, and his brother Andrew; they were making a cast in the lake with their net, for they were fishermen. And he said to them, 'Follow me and I will make you fishers of men.' And they left their nets at once and followed him.

Going on from there he saw another pair of brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John; they were in their boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets, and he called them. At once, leaving the boat and their father, they followed him.

He went round the whole of Galilee teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the Good News of the kingdom and curing all kinds of diseases and sickness among the people.

The Gospel of the Lord.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Accept our offerings, O Lord, we pray, and in sanctifying them grant that they may profit us for salvation. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

PREFACE; EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

COMMUNION ANTIPHON (*Iluka*)

Look toward the Lord and be radiant; let your faces not be abashed.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Grant, we pray, almighty God, that, receiving the grace by which you bring us to new life, we may always glory in your gift. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

© The scriptural quotations are taken from the Jerusalem Bible, published and copyright 1966, 1967 and 1968 by Darton Longman and Todd Ltd and Doubleday & Co Inc, and used by permission of the publishers. The English translation of the Psalm Responses, the Alleluia and Gospel Verses, and the Lenten Gospel Acclamations, and the Titles, Summaries, and Conclusion of the Readings, from the Lectionary for Mass © 1997, 1981, 1968, International Committee on English in the Liturgy, Inc. All rights reserved. The prayers are from the English Translation of the Roman Missal © 2010 International Committee on English in the Liturgy Inc. (ICEL). All rights reserved.

SCRIPTURE COMMENTARY

All three Synoptic gospels place a summary statement of Jesus' message at the beginning of his public career (Matt 4:12-17; Mark 1:14-15; Luke 4:14-15). Before giving the content of the preaching (in v 17) Matthew, uniquely, prefaces it with a long comment (4:12-16) showing how Jesus' geographical movements – from Nazareth in the Galilean hinterland to Capernaum by the lakeside – fulfil a prophecy from Isaiah.

Very appropriately, this passage (Isa 8:23 – 9:3) forms today's First Reading. In the original occupation of the land of Canaan by the Israelites after their exodus from Egypt, the tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali settled in the northernmost portion of Palestine west of the Lake of Galilee. Here they had to eke out a rather precarious existence alongside non-Israelite neighbours. In this sense they were 'a people who walked in darkness'. Now, in an oracle of salvation, the prophet assures Zebulun and Naphtali that their region (Galilee), long known as a region of darkness, is going to become a region of glorious light when Israel's God moves to set them free.

Matthew, of course, never misses a chance to point to the fulfilment of Scripture – and therefore of God's saving plan – in all the details of Jesus' life.

Today's Gospel (Matt 4:12-23) begins by telling us that the era of John the Baptist's ministry has come to an end with his arrest. That of Jesus replaces it as he moves from his hometown, Nazareth, down to the lakeshore city of Capernaum. His sojourn, then, by the 'sea' in the shape of the Sea of Galilee is enough for Matthew to see the fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy. The appearance of Jesus in this region and his ministry will

be the great and glorious 'light' that is to shine in the region of those who walk in darkness and the shadow of death (Matthew gets the evocative phrase 'shadow of death' from the Greek translation [LXX] of Isaiah).

Jesus' ministry will be primarily to 'the lost sheep of the house of Israel' (15:24). But Galilee still retained its admixture of non-Jews and was in this sense 'Galilee of the Gentiles'. This means that Matthew probably wants us to see Jesus' ministry in this region as anticipatory of the mission to the nations of the world on which, after his resurrection, he will send his disciples (28:19-20). The 'great light' which the Galilean Gentile people who sit in darkness and the shadow of death are now to see will one day go out to the entire world. So the Isaiah text provides a script, not only for the ministry of Jesus, but for that of the Church as well.

Following this indication of scriptural fulfilment, the Gospel gives us a summary of Jesus' message: 'Repent, the Kingdom of Heaven is close at hand.' On the lips of Jesus, 'Repent' means something far more than simple sorrow for sins. The Greek word literally refers to a 'change of mind' – not so much in an intellectual sense but in a sense of transformation of attitude at a deep personal level. Full biblical repentance means being prepared to look at one's life and one's hopes for the future in a totally new way, one open and receptive to the – usually surprising – action of God. When Jesus preached the onset of the Kingdom he was tapping into fairly conventional expectation amongst people of his time. There was a widespread belief that Israel had somehow fallen out of the hand of God and lay in helpless bondage to evil spirits and malign influences. The oppressive military occupation of the country by the Romans was seen as one manifestation of this. People longed for a time when, as in the Exodus and again at the time of the Exile, there would be a reassertion of God's rule, bringing in the messianic age. For Jesus what was central about the Kingdom or Rule of God was a transformed relationship with God. Prior to political and economic freedom was a divine reclaiming of the people's hearts. But to see the Kingdom in this way meant a change of heart, a change of expectation: hence the summons, 'Repent', before the proclamation of the Kingdom.

The Kingdom was, then, about the gathering of a renewed and transformed Israel – a community in which God could truly dwell ('Emmanuel'). So, as his first public act, Jesus begins to gather this renewed Israel by calling the first four of those who, later to become Twelve, will be the pillars of the new People. Leaving their family and their livelihood, they are to become his intimate companions and followers. Life with him and association with his ministry of healing and proclaiming the Good News will transform them from being fishers of fish to being fishers of people.

Here we have the essential and lasting foundation for what was to become the Christian Church: people who have heard the Good News, who know God lives in their midst and who seek constantly to draw others (those who 'live in the darkness and shadow of death') into the freedom and light that Jesus has brought into the world. © Brendan Byrne SJ

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: Tim Scherger, Jan Taylor, Miriam Scherger, Toni 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 Catheral, Allan Dick. **Anniversary:** Debra Lockhart, Stephen Ricketts. **Pray for:** 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: 31 JAN/1 FEB 2026

Readers: Yamba: B Cullen/ A Ricketts; Maclean: J Moloney/ L Senz; Iluka: C Nilon. **Commentators:** Yamba: A Schofield, Maclean: J de Roos, Iluka: A Speirs. **E Communion:** Maclean: S Winter. **Count team:** Neander/Robertson.

READINGS: 31 JAN/1 FEB 2026

First: Zephaniah 2:3; 3:12-13; **Second:** 1 Corinthians 1:26-31; **Gospel:** Matthew 5:1-12.

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 Prodencio Bognay will be assisting with weekday and weekend Masses.

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

Yamba Catholic Ladies: Next meeting to be held Wednesday 11th February after Mass in Ted Howe Room. All are welcome!

Compassio – Lenten Program 2026:

Yamba: The Lenten program will be run each Wednesday from 18 February to 1 April after 9:30am Mass at Yamba in Ted Howe Room. Please place your details on the list at the rear of St James Church, Yamba. Contact Fran for further details: 0401 303 522 or fishinstead@gmail.com.

Maclean: The Lenten program will be run each Friday from 13 February to 27 March before Mass at 10:30am in Cranney Room, Maclean. Please place your details on the list at the rear of St Mary's Church, Maclean. Contact John for further details: 0427 476 383.

POSTPONED Renovation work to St James

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

Parish Secretary position: 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

St James Church Restoration Fund: We have decided to continue with collecting cans/bottles to provide funds for ongoing restoration works in Yamba and throughout the parish. Please remember the cans/bottles must have the 10c symbol on them and no crushing! For queries, please call Fran 0401 303 522.

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

