

CATHOLIC PARISH OF ST MARY'S MACLEAN



ST JOHNS CHURCH



ST MARYS CHURCH



ST JAMES CHURCH

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SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, YEAR A: 15 FEBRUARY 2026

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ: in today's gospel our Lord Jesus Christ further specifies what it means to be happy and be salt and light of the world.

The first reading, Sirach 15:15-20, tells us that human beings have a free will. "They are accountable for their actions, for the way they live their own lives. Physical and external situations do affect them at times, but they always retain the capability of making the basic decisions. The reading of today tells us that man is at a crossroads: one way leads to life, the other to death. He must choose between the two. God has pointed out to us how to avoid making mistakes. The way to life is shown by the commandment of God; the way of death is marked by vices, passions and corruption." (Fr Fernando Armellini)

In the Gospel, Matthew 5:17-37, Jesus teaches how his disciples should exercise their God-given free will. Fr Brendan Byrne has this to say on the gospel passage: "Jesus insists that he has not come to abolish 'the law and the prophets' but to 'fulfil' or bring them to completion. ... Jesus will fulfil the law by interpreting it in the light of the priority Israel's prophets gave to values such as justice, mercy and faith in human interrelationship (see Matt 23:23). This will entail a 'righteousness' ... 'deeper' than that practised by the scribes and Pharisees.

"As authoritative interpreter, Jesus cites a ruling from the Torah, appealing to Scripture, and then modifies, radicalises, or extends it in some direction. What he cites is usually a prohibition ('Thou shalt not ...'). What he sets over against it is a pronouncement that seeks to go beyond mere external restraint to plant the value enshrined in the prohibition deep within the human heart.

"So over against the prohibition 'You shall not kill ...,' Jesus addresses the anger in the heart that can lead to an increasing scale of insult and injury to another, of which murder would be simply the most extreme case. Reconciliation with an aggrieved brother or sister is so supremely important as to take priority over

the duty of worship. Particularly noteworthy is the delicacy of what Jesus counsels: Not 'if you have something against your brother or sister,' but 'if you remember (= "suspect") that your brother or sister has something against you, ...'.

"The same radical sense of going to the heart is explicit in the next ruling dealing with sexual behaviour. The old commandment simply prohibited adultery. In a way that actually sounds very contemporary Jesus insists that the problem begins with perception: with a man's fundamental attitude to a woman. Is she an object for male sexual exploitation (lust)? Or is she a fellow human being with whom dealings in any area, including the sexual, must be based upon equality of relationship, fidelity and consent? When the latter prevails, the old prohibition simply becomes unnecessary.

"The next pronouncement deals with the delicate area of fidelity in marriage. The old dispensation looked at the issue entirely from the male perspective and set in place (the Mosaic divorce ruling) what is basically a 'harm minimisation' procedure for the woman. Jesus excludes divorce absolutely, save in the case of adultery (also 19:9). His exclusion, again, stems from a more holistic view of marriage as a lifelong union of equals bound not by law but by mutual fidelity and companionship.

"The same kind of quest for fidelity in relationships motivates the final pronouncement: against the taking of oaths. Such trust and faithfulness should prevail in the community of the Kingdom that, to have their word taken seriously, its members should not have to have recourse to such procedures – fraught with the danger of taking God's holy name in vain."

Let us pray in this Mass that we may always be guided by the moral teachings of our Jesus and his Church, and have the grace and strength to obey them and so attain the freedom of God's children.

Fr Roland

ENTRANCE ANTIphon (*Iluka*)

Be my protector, O God, a mighty stronghold to save me. For you are my rock, my stronghold! Lead me, guide me, for the sake of your name.

COLLECT

O God, who teach us that you abide in hearts that are just and true, grant that we may be so fashioned by your grace as to become a dwelling pleasing to you. 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 15:15-20

A reading from the book of Ecclesiasticus

If you wish, you can keep the commandments, to behave faithfully is within your power. He has set fire and water before you; put out your hand to whichever you prefer. Man has life and death before him; whichever a man likes better will be given him. For vast is the wisdom of the Lord; he is almighty and all-seeing. His eyes are on those who fear him, he notes every action of man. He never commanded anyone to be godless, he has given no one permission to sin.

The word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM *Ps 118:1-2. 4-5. 17-18. 33-34. R. v.1*

R. Happy are they who follow the law of the Lord!

1. They are happy whose life is blameless, who follow God's law! They are happy those who do his will, seeking him with all their hearts. (R.)
2. You have laid down your precepts to be obeyed with care. May my footsteps be firm to obey your statutes. (R.)
3. Bless your servant and I shall live and obey your word. Open my eyes that I may consider the wonders of your law. (R.)
4. Teach me the demands of your statutes and I will keep them to the end. Train me to observe your law, to keep it with my heart. (R.)

SECOND READING

I Corinthians 2:6-10

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

We have a wisdom to offer those who have reached maturity: not a philosophy of our age, it is true, still less of the masters of our age, which are coming to their end. The hidden wisdom of God which we teach in our mysteries is the wisdom that God predestined to be for our glory before the ages began. It is a wisdom that none of the masters of this age have ever known, or they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory; we teach what scripture calls: the things that no eye has seen and no ear has heard, things beyond the mind of man, all that God has prepared for those who love him.

These are the very things that God has revealed to us through the Spirit, for the Spirit reaches the depths of everything, even the depths of God.

The word of the Lord.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!

Blessed are you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth; you have revealed to little ones the mysteries of the kingdom.

Alleluia!

GOSPEL

Matthew 5:17-37

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

Jesus said to his disciples: 'Do not imagine that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets. I have come not to abolish them but to complete them. I tell you solemnly, till heaven and earth disappear, not one dot, one little stroke, shall disappear from the Law until its purpose is achieved. Therefore, the man who infringes even one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be considered the least in the kingdom of heaven; but the man who keeps them and teaches them will be considered great in the kingdom of heaven.'

'For I tell you, if your virtue goes no deeper than that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never get into the kingdom of heaven.'

'You have learnt how it was said to our ancestors: You must not kill; and if anyone does kill he must answer for it before the court. But I say this to you: anyone who is angry with his brother will answer for it before the court; if a man calls his brother "Fool" he will answer for it before the Sanhedrin; and if a man calls him "Renegade" he will answer for it in hell fire. So then, if you are bringing your offering to the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your offering there before the altar, go and be reconciled with your brother first, and then come back and present your offering. Come to terms with your opponent in good time while you are still on the way to the court with him, or he may hand you over to the judge and the judge to the officer, and you will be thrown into prison. I tell you solemnly, you will not get out till you have paid the last penny.'

‘You have learnt how it was said: You must not commit adultery. But I say this to you: if a man looks at a woman lustfully, he has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye should cause you to sin, tear it out and throw it away; for it will do you less harm to lose one part of you than to have your whole body thrown into hell. And if your right hand should cause you to sin, cut it off and throw it away; for it will do you less harm to lose one part of you than to have your whole body go to hell.

‘It has also been said: Anyone who divorces his wife must give her a writ of dismissal. But I say this to you: everyone who divorces his wife, except for the case of fornication, makes her an adulteress; and anyone who marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

‘Again, you have learnt how it was said to our ancestors: You must not break your oath, but must fulfil your oaths to the Lord. But I say this to you: do not swear at all, either by heaven, since that is God’s throne; or by the earth, since that is his footstool; or by Jerusalem, since that is the city of the great king. Do not swear by your own head either, since you cannot turn a single hair white or black. All you need say is “Yes” if you mean yes, “No” if you mean no; anything more than this comes from the evil one.’

The Gospel of the Lord.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

May this oblation, O Lord, we pray, cleanse and renew us and may it become for those who do your will the source of eternal reward. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

PREFACE II; EUCHARISTIC PRAYER III

COMMUNION ANTIphon (*Iluka*)

They ate and had their fill, and what they craved the Lord gave them; they were not disappointed in what they craved.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Having fed upon these heavenly delights, we pray, O Lord, so that we may always long for that food by which we truly live. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

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SCRIPTURE COMMENTARY

The Book of Sirach is a collection of proverbial teachings. This wisdom tradition presumes a fundamental order in creation and life. However, human beings are not predestined to conform to this order. On the contrary, its very nature presumes that humans are free. Women and men can decide to live in conformity with the way life unfolds –and this is

wisdom, or they can choose to disregard this order – and that is foolishness. Although God desires that all live in conformity to this order, God has predestined no one to sin. All have been given freedom of choice. It is up to us to use it wisely. Today’s reading addresses human freedom and human choice.

Composed of both instruction and prayer, the responsorial psalm focuses on adherence to the law (a word best translated ‘instruction’). The language used throughout is typical of that found in the wisdom tradition, a tradition characterised by a clear delineation of two ways of living: the way of the righteous, and the way of the wicked. In the instruction, a beatitude describes the rewards that attend righteous living. In the prayers that follow, one asks to remain obedient. The commitment of which the psalmist speaks means that one is acting out of devotion, not merely out of external observance.

Jewish apocalyptic, within which Paul develops his instruction on wisdom, maintained that the secrets of the future had been written down at the beginning of time and preserved somewhere safe from the eyes of humankind. At the fullness of time, they will be revealed. Time is thus divided into ‘this age’ of

waiting and ‘the age to come’, when all things will be made known. Paul contrasts the wisdom of which he speaks with the wisdom of this age. Everything hinges on the essence of the revealed mystery which is the death and resurrection

of Christ. Those who are mature have entered into this mystery by accepting the wisdom of the gospel. Jesus’ words today are based on the law and the prophets (the two major sections of the Bible). His teachings were so unprecedented that some accused him of rejecting his religious tradition. Jesus admits that his interpretations provide a new perspective, but they actually offer the fuller meaning of the tradition. The contrast he sets up is not between himself and the law, but between his interpretation and that of the scribes and Pharisees, the interpreters of the law for the people of that day. The formula he uses (‘You have heard it said ... But I say to you ...’) shows that he demands much more than mere external conformity. The four teachings he contrasts demonstrate how radical is his reinterpretation of the law. © Dianne Bergant CSA



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: Ben & Nadine Shaw, Patrick Wheeler, Maree Hammond, Denise & Bob, Tim Scherger, Jan Taylor, Miriam Scherger, Toni Murphy, Kathy Leseberg, Ava Blay, Mark Thurbon, Alma Bailey, Mary Wiseman, Sue Gravolin, Ron Weekes, Margaret Donges, Pam Lewis, Matthew & Paul Gallagher, Chris Naismith, Trevor Nicolia, Peter Burns, Matthew Tierney, Matt Mohorovic, Sharon Grayson, Dennis Catheral, Allan Dick. **Recently Deceased:** Ray O'Donnell, Patricia Sloan, Robert Davis. **Anniversary:** Sally Irons, Chris Jennings, Marie Rheinberger, John Drum, Debra Lockhart. **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

EUCARIST IC ADORATION:

First Wednesday: 10:00am, Yamba

First Saturday: 12:00pm, Maclean

MINISTRY ROSTER: 21/22 FEBRUARY 2026

Readers: Yamba: P Edgar/G Drummond; Maclean: S Winter/R Wiseman; Iluka: D Speirs. **Commentators:** Yamba: A Schofield, Maclean: J de Roos, Iluka: A Speirs. **E Communion:** Maclean: J Moloney. **Count team:** Neander/Robertson

READINGS: 21/22 FEBRUARY 2026

First: Genesis 2:7-9, 3:1-7; **Second:** Romans 5:12-19; **Gospel:** Matthew 4:1-11.

NEWS & EVENTS

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

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

Ash Wednesday: This year Ash Wednesday is on 18 February. Three Masses with imposition of ashes will be celebrated in our parish: 9:30am Yamba; 12:00nn Maclean; 4:00pm Iluka. It is a day of fasting and abstinence.

St Joseph's Primary Beginning of Year Mass and Leadership Induction: Our parish community is warmly invited to join us as we celebrate our Beginning of Year Mass and Leadership Induction. The Mass will be held at St Mary's Church, Maclean, on Friday 20th February at 12:00 pm. We would love to share this special celebration with you.

Weekday Mass change: Weekday Mass in Iluka will be celebrated on Tuesdays at 9:00am, commencing 24 February.

Bishop Geoffrey Jarrett's Silver Jubilee of Episcopal Ordination: Next Sunday, Bishop Jarrett will celebrate Mass in the Cathedral at 9:00am & 11:00am. A Jubilee lunch will follow at 12:30pm at Invercauld House, Goonellabah. For catering purposes, please RSVP by calling ph:6626 0200.

POSTPONED Renovation work to St James Church: Further updates will be provided as more details become available.

Project Compassion: This Lent, we are called to Unite Against Poverty through Caritas Australia's Project Compassion. Your generosity this Lenten Season will enable Caritas Australia to provide life-changing support to vulnerable communities in need. You can support Project Compassion 2026 through the donation boxes, envelopes or online at www.projectcompassion.org.au/donate.

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

Parish Pastoral Council: will have their first meeting this year on 26 February at 5:00pm in the Cranny Room.

Bishop Greg's 2026 Lenten Talk Series: Bishop Greg's Lenten Talk Series – *The Spiritual Life* Mondays at 6pm, St Mary's Chapel, Lismore - 23 Feb: Prayer - 2 Mar: Detachment - 9 Mar: Union with God Talks will also be available from 6pm on 25 Feb, 4 Mar, and 11 Mar on the diocesan YouTube channel: youtube.com/LismoreDioceseAU. All are most welcome!

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