

# CATHOLIC PARISH OF ST MARY'S MACLEAN



ST JOHN'S CHURCH



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ST JAMES CHURCH

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## FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT, YEAR A: 22 FEBRUARY 2026

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, the Eucharistic liturgy of the first Sunday of Lent invites us to reflect on temptation. The first reading tells us of the temptation of Adam and Eve, the second reading describes the obedience of Jesus and the Gospel describes the temptations that Jesus had to face in his mission of saving sinful humanity.

The passage from Genesis tells us how Adam and Eve were tempted and consented to the seduction of the evil one. Commenting on this passage Fr Brendan Byrne, SJ, says: "God fashions the first man (Hebrew 'Adam') from the clay of the earth and places him, along with his female companion ('Eve'), in a garden setting where all they had to do for nourishment was to stretch out their hands to the fruits surrounding them. The sense is that God's total intent for human beings is to lavish life and gifts upon them."

The Church sees in this passage the divine revelation on the original condition of humanity before their disobedience. "In creating man and woman God had given them a special participation in his own divine life in holiness and justice. In the plan of God they would not have had to suffer or die. Furthermore, a perfect harmony held sway within the human person, a harmony between creature and Creator, between man and woman, as well as between the first human couple and all of creation."

The gift of communion of life and love with God, however, has to be treasured, preserved and brought to perfection by the human exercise of free will. As such there is an element of test. Fr Byrne says: "The all-important relationship with God cannot develop unless the human pair know God as God and themselves as creatures, greatly gifted by God to be sure but within creaturely limit. Hence, while they may eat from all the trees of the garden, including the tree of life (the source of immortality), there is one tree from which they may not eat: the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The most likely understanding of this mysterious tree is that which sees it as simply a symbol of going beyond creaturely limit, to grasp

knowledge and status belonging to God alone."

Adam and Eve let themselves be seduced by evil and chose to go against the will of God. As a consequence they destroyed their own selves and condemned themselves to unhappiness.

The *Compendium of the Catechism* puts it succinctly: "When tempted by the devil, the first man and woman allowed trust in their Creator to die in their hearts. In their disobedience they wished to become "like God" but without God and not in accordance with God (Genesis 3:5). Thus, Adam and Eve immediately lost for themselves and for all their descendants the original grace of holiness and justice." In addition, human nature, as a result of the loss of the original grace of holiness and justice, is wounded in its natural powers and inclined toward sin.

St Paul tells us in the second reading that it is through the mission of Christ of saving the world, in particular his total obedience to the will of the Father, that restored us to holiness and justice: by his obedience "many will be made righteous." At Baptism, we received this gift of holiness and justice. The journey of Christian discipleship is about preserving and growing in this gift. It is our task to protect and treasure the supernatural gifts we have received.

Jesus was tempted in every way as we are but did not consent to the temptations he had to face. "The temptations of Jesus in the desert recapitulate the temptation of Adam in Paradise and the temptations of Israel in the desert. Satan tempts Jesus in regard to his obedience to the mission given him by the Father. Christ, the new Adam, resists and his victory proclaims that of his passion which is the supreme obedience of his filial love."

Let us unite ourselves more deeply with Christ especially during the season Lent so that we can face temptations and trials with the strength that comes from him.

Fr Roland

**ENTRANCE ANTIPHON** (*Iluka*)

When he calls on me, I will answer him; I will deliver him and give him glory, I will grant him length of days.

**COLLECT**

Grant, almighty God, through the yearly observances of holy Lent, that we may grow in understanding of the riches hidden in Christ and by worthy conduct pursue their effects. 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***Genesis 2:7-9; 3:1-7*

A reading from the book of Genesis

The Lord God fashioned man of dust from the soil. Then he breathed into his nostrils a breath of life, and thus man became a living being.

The Lord God planted a garden in Eden which is in the east, and there he put the man he had fashioned. The Lord God caused to spring up from the soil every kind of tree, enticing to look at and good to eat, with the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the middle of the garden.

The serpent was the most subtle of all the wild beasts that the Lord God had made. It asked the woman, 'Did God really say you were not to eat from any of the trees in the garden?' The woman answered the serpent, 'We may eat the fruit of the trees in the garden. But of the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden God said, "You must not eat it, nor touch it, under pain of death".' Then the serpent said to the woman, 'No! You will not die! God knows in fact that on the day you eat it your eyes will be opened and you will be like gods, knowing good and evil.' The woman saw that the tree was good to eat and pleasing to the eye, and that it was desirable for the knowledge that it could give. So she took some of its fruit and ate it. She gave some also to her husband who was with her, and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened and they realised that they were naked. So they sewed fig-leaves together to make themselves loin-cloths.

The word of the Lord.

**RESPONSORIAL PSALM** *Ps 50:3-6. 12-14. 17. R. see v.3*

**R. Be merciful, O Lord, for we have sinned.**

1. Have mercy on me, God, in your kindness. In your compassion blot out my offence. O wash me more and more from my guilt and cleanse me from my sin. (R.)
2. My offences truly I know them; my sin is always before me. Against you, you alone, have I sinned; what is evil in your sight I have done. (R.)

3. A pure heart create for me, O God, put a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me away from your presence, nor deprive me of your holy spirit. (R.)

4. Give me again the joy of your help; with a spirit of fervour sustain me. O Lord, open my lips and my mouth shall declare your praise. (R.)

**SECOND READING***Romans 5:12-19*

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans

Sin entered the world through one man, and through sin death, and thus death has spread through the whole human race because everyone has sinned. Sin existed in the world long before the Law was given. There was no law and so no one could be accused of the sin of 'law-breaking', yet death reigned over all from Adam to Moses, even though their sin, unlike that of Adam, was not a matter of breaking a law.

Adam prefigured the One to come, but the gift itself considerably outweighed the fall. If it is certain that through one man's fall so many died, it is even more certain that divine grace, coming through the one man, Jesus Christ, came to so many as an abundant free gift. The results of the gift also outweigh the results of one man's sin: for after one single fall came judgement with a verdict of condemnation, now after many falls comes grace with its verdict of acquittal. If it is certain that death reigned over everyone as the consequence of one man's fall, it is even more certain that one man, Jesus Christ, will cause everyone to reign in life who receives the free gift that he does not deserve, of being made righteous. Again, as one man's fall brought condemnation on everyone, so the good act of one man brings everyone life and makes them justified. As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by one man's obedience many will be made righteous.

The word of the Lord.

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

*Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ, king of endless glory!*

*No one lives on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.*

*Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ, king of endless glory!*

**GOSPEL***Matthew 4:1-11*

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

Jesus was led by the Spirit out into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. He fasted for forty days and forty nights, after which he was very hungry, and the tempter came and said to him, 'If you are the Son of

God, tell these stones to turn into loaves.’ But he replied, ‘Scripture says:

Man does not live on bread alone  
but on every word that comes from the mouth of  
God.’

The devil then took him to the holy city and made him stand on the parapet of the Temple. ‘If you are the Son of God,’ he said, ‘throw yourself down; for scripture says:

He will put you in his angels’ charge,  
and they will support you on their hands  
in case you hurt your foot against a stone.’

Jesus said to him, ‘Scripture also says:

You must not put the Lord your God to the test.’

Next, taking him to a very high mountain, the devil showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendour. ‘I will give you all these’, he said, ‘if you fall at my feet and worship me.’ Then Jesus replied, ‘Be off, Satan! For scripture says:

You must worship the Lord your God,  
and serve him alone.’

Then the devil left him, and angels appeared and looked after him.

The Gospel of the Lord.

### **PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS**

Give us the right dispositions, O Lord, we pray, to make these offerings, for with them we celebrate the beginning of this venerable and sacred time. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

### **PREFACE; EUCHARISTIC PRAYER**

#### **COMMUNION ANTIPHON (*Iluka*)**

One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes forth from the mouth of God.

#### **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Renewed now with heavenly bread, by which faith is nourished, hope increased, and charity strengthened, we pray, O Lord, that we may learn to hunger for Christ, the true and living Bread, and strive to live by every word which proceeds from your mouth. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

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### **SCRIPTURE COMMENTARY**

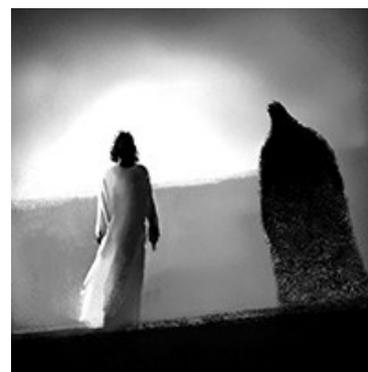
The first reading features three episodes: the creation of the first man; his placement in the garden; and the sin. The man is formed of the ground, as are the animals and the trees of the garden. This establishes from the beginning a physical bond between humans and other creatures of the earth. The story is filled with allusions to wisdom. Eden is in the East, the

place of enlightenment because the sun rises there. The tree of temptation is the tree of knowledge. The sin was disobedience, but the inclination that gave rise to it was a form of hubris – the desire to know like the gods know.

The psalm response is a familiar penitential psalm. It includes a plea for mercy, a confession of sin, a prayer for transformation, and a request for the opportunity of praising God. The psalmist appeals to God's covenant dispositions: goodness and compassion or womb-love, the kind of attachment that a mother has to the child she has carried within herself. A thorough transformation is required and so the psalmist prays for a clean heart and a right or true spirit. The response ends with a prayer to be empowered to praise God. This request shows that the covenant relationship, forgiveness of sin, transformation of heart, and the ability to praise God are all gifts of grace from God.

Paul sets up a comparison between the universal effects of sin and death and the all-encompassing power of forgiveness and life. He contrasts the actions of Adam the first man and Christ his unrivalled counterpart. While it may appear that the contrast is between Adam and Christ, it is really between the epochs that each inaugurated. Adam inaugurated the era of sin and death; Christ established the eschatological era of acquittal and life. At each stage of Paul's comparison, we see the surpassing power of the salvation won by Christ. In his conclusion, Paul argues that as condemnation came through one sin, acquittal comes through one righteous act; disobedience brought death, obedience brought life.

The Gospel passage is an account of the temptation of Jesus. Jesus' responses to the temptations posed by the devil all come from Deuteronomy's version of Israel's testing in the wilderness. This suggests that



Jesus is here being compared with that ancient community. This account is replete with messianic meaning. It shows that the Son of God has chosen not to use divine power to establish his reign on earth. He will be open to the word of God, allowing it to

direct his actions; he will rely on God's providence and not put God's promises to the test; he will not compromise his fidelity to God regardless of the price that he might have to pay. Unlike the wilderness community, Jesus is steadfast in the face of temptation. *By Sr 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 Gravalin, Ron Weekes, Margaret Donges, Pam Lewis, Matthew & Paul Gallagher, Chris Naismith, Trevor Nicolina, Peter Burns, Matthew Tierney, Matt Mohorovic, Sharon Grayson, Dennis Cathedral, 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:** Tuesday, 9:00am: Iluka; Wednesday, 9:30am: Yamba; Friday, 12:00pm, Maclean; First Saturday: 11:30am, Maclean.

## RECONCILIATION TIMES

Saturday, 11:00am, Maclean; 5:00pm, Yamba

Sunday, 8:00am, Maclean

Tuesday, 9:30am, Iluka

Wednesday, 10:00am, Yamba

## EUCHARISTIC ADORATION:

First Wednesday: 10:00am, Yamba

First Saturday: 12:00pm, Maclean

## MINISTRY ROSTER: 28 FEB / 1 MAR 2026

**Readers:** Yamba: G Drummond/B Montgomery;

Maclean: L Senz/C Newton; Iluka: C Nilon.

**Commentators:** Yamba: F Robertson, Maclean: R Wiseman, Iluka: T Sullivan. **E Communion:** Maclean: S Winter. **Count team:** Davies/Robertson

## READINGS: 28 FEB / 1 MAR 2026

**First:** Genesis 12:1-4; **Second:** 2 Timothy 1:8-10; **Gospel:** Matthew 17:1-9.

## 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>

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

**Count Team Volunteers Needed:** We would love a few extra helping hands to join our friendly count

team. Volunteers assist with counting the weekly collections on Monday mornings at the parish office in Maclean, working on a flexible rotating roster. If you'd like to be part of this ministry or would like further information, please contact Lucia at [office@stmarysparish.org.au](mailto:office@stmarysparish.org.au)

**COMPASSIO – Lenten Program:** Yamba meets Wednesday after 9:30am Mass in Ted Howe Room. Maclean meets Friday at 10:30am in Cranney Room. There are a few books available at \$10 each. If interested, please contact Fran on 0401 303 522

**Renovation work to St James Church:** will commence on 9 March and the church will be closed until 25 March. Saturday evening Masses (14 & 21 March) will be held in St James Primary School Hall and Wednesday Masses in the Ted Howe Room.

**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](http://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](mailto: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](https://youtube.com/LismoreDioceseAU). All are most welcome!

**Unit Available – Licence to Occupy:** A 2-bedroom unit with a lock-up garage is available at 32 Queen Elizabeth Drive, Coraki within our Independent Living community. For details, contact the Coraki Parish Office: 02 6628 3047 or [parish@acrec.org.au](mailto:parish@acrec.org.au).

**Eucharist28:** Australia will host the International Eucharistic Congress in 2028, with Pope Leo XIV coming to grace the occasion. Preparations officially begin on Sunday, 1 March 2026. Prayer cards are available at the back of the Church.