

CATHOLIC PARISH OF ST MARY'S MACLEAN



ST JOHN'S CHURCH



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ST JAMES CHURCH

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FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, YEAR A: 8 FEBRUARY 2026

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ: the Word of God this Sunday invites us to reflect on our mission to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world.

In the first reading, Isaiah 58:7-10, we hear that our light will shine like the dawn if we perform good deeds: when we share our bread with the hungry, shelter the homeless poor, clothe the naked, and give relief to the oppressed; and also when we avoid or cease doing evil: when we do away with the yoke, the clenched fist, the wicked word. To be light to others means to let the word of God direct our actions so that we may show love and compassion.

Commenting on this passage Sr Diane Begant CSA says: "It is very clear from this passage from the prophet that communion with God is dependent upon the fulfilment of social responsibility. Those who have been admitted into the embrace of the covenant are expected to care for the needs of their covenant sisters and brothers in both body and soul."

In the second reading, 1 Corinthians 2:1-5, St Paul identifies the source of a person's good works – namely, the grace of the Holy Spirit. Charitable deeds are the sign of the active presence of the Spirit of Truth and Love in one's life. Any good deed done by a Christian, is a "demonstration of the power of the Spirit." Works of charity and mercy, and the new life that the message of Christ arouses are signs of the active presence of the Spirit of Christ – the Holy Spirit. The grace of the Holy Spirit is powerful in itself; it is made powerless only by those who do not cooperate with it.

In the gospel, our Lord Jesus, continuing his Sermon on the Mount, tells us his disciples: you are the salt of the earth and the light of the world. Since salt gives taste to food, it became a symbol of wisdom – of deeper understanding of reality and of living according to truth and justice. The disciples of Jesus obtain wisdom from listening to his word, accepting the truth that he reveals, and from keeping his commandments. Enlightened and directed by the word of Christ and

grace of the Holy Spirit, Christians are salt because they see the meaning of what happens in the world, the hand of God in situations. From their prayerful reading of the Word of God, and their cooperation with it, they offer words of wisdom.

But there is a second aspect to being salt of the earth. Salt is not only used to add taste; it also serves to preserve food, to prevent decay. In other words, Christians have also the mission of preserving what is true, good and beautiful in humanity. "Their presence prevents humanity from becoming corrupt; it does not allow society to be led by evil principles and be ruined." All Christians are called to contribute to the building of a just society. By active participation in the life of the community, guided by the teachings of Christ and his Church, they prevent society from moral decay.

Jesus also warns his disciples to make sure they do nothing that would make the salt tasteless. In other words, they must not abandon their faith but do their best to grow in their communion with him and in their knowledge and practice of the faith. Their friendship with him is the source of their mission.

The disciples are light to the world by living the Gospel of Beatitudes, by their service of charity. Sr Diane says: "True disciples are the light that shines forth in the darkness of ignorance or faithlessness. They enlighten others not by words but by their manner of living. It is this manner of living that declares to the world that the reign of God has indeed been established in their midst, and that the age of fulfilment has dawned."

In the Mass, we receive anew the light of Christ that comes from his Word, the grace of the Holy Spirit, and the Body of Christ, empowering us again to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world.

Fr Roland

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON (*Iluka*)

O come, let us worship God and bow low before the God who made us, for he is the Lord our God.

COLLECT

Keep your family safe, O Lord, with unfailing care, that, relying solely on the hope of heavenly grace, they may be defended always by your protection. 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 58:7-10

A reading from the prophet Isaiah

Thus says the Lord:

Share your bread with the hungry,
and shelter the homeless poor,
clothe the man you see to be naked
and turn not from your own kin.
Then will your light shine like the dawn
and your wound be quickly healed over.
Your integrity will go before you
and the glory of the Lord behind you.
Cry, and the Lord will answer;
call, and he will say, 'I am here.'
If you do away with the yoke,
the clenched fist, the wicked word,
if you give your bread to the hungry,
and relief to the oppressed,
your light will rise in the darkness,
and your shadows become like noon.
The word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Ps 111:4-9. R. v.4

R. A light rises in the darkness for the upright.

1. He is a light in the darkness for the upright:
he is generous, merciful and just.
The good man takes pity and lends,
he conducts his affairs with honour. (R.)
2. The just man will never waver:
he will be remembered for ever.
He has no fear of evil news;
with a firm heart he trusts in the Lord. (R.)
3. With a steadfast heart he will not fear;
open-handed, he gives to the poor;
his justice stands firm for ever.
His head will be raised in glory. (R.)

SECOND READING

1 Corinthians 2:1-5

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

When I came to you, brothers, it was not with any show of oratory or philosophy, but simply to tell you what God had guaranteed. During my stay with you, the only knowledge I claimed to have was about Jesus, and only about him as the crucified Christ. Far from relying on any power of my own, I came among you in great 'fear and trembling' and in my speeches and the sermons that I gave, there were none of the arguments that belong to philosophy; only a demonstration of the power of the Spirit. And I did this so that your faith should not depend on human philosophy but on the power of God.

The word of the Lord.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!

I am the light of the world, says the Lord; the man who follows me will have the light of life.

Alleluia!

GOSPEL

Matthew 5:13-16

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

Jesus said to his disciples: 'You are the salt of the earth. But if salt becomes tasteless, what can make it salty again? It is good for nothing, and can only be thrown out to be trampled underfoot by men.

'You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill-top cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp to put it under a tub; they put it on the lamp-stand where it shines for everyone in the house. In the same way your light must shine in the sight of men, so that, seeing your good works, they may give the praise to your Father in heaven.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

O Lord, our God, who once established these created things to sustain us in our frailty, grant, we pray, that they may become for us now the Sacrament of eternal life. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

PREFACE I; EUCHARISTIC PRAYER III**COMMUNION ANTIPHON** (*Iluka*)

Let them thank the Lord for his mercy, his wonders for the children of men, for he satisfies the thirsty soul, and the hungry he fills with good things.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

O God, who have willed that we be partakers in the one Bread and the one Chalice, grant us, we pray, so to live that, made one in Christ, we may joyfully bear fruit for the salvation of the world. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

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SCRIPTURE COMMENTARY

The theme that runs through the Scripture readings today and that has determined their choice is clearly that of ‘light’. We can see it in the First Reading (‘then will your light shine like the dawn’), in the opening verse of the Responsorial Psalm and (with reference to Christ) in the Alleluia verse (‘I am the Light of the world’), all building up the climactic statement in the Gospel: ‘You are the light of the world’. Only the Second Reading (1 Cor 2:1-5) seems to be an exception.

The **First Reading**, from Isaiah 58:7-10, features one of the great appeals for social justice in the Old Testament. Israel has complained that much fasting on her part has met with no response from God. In reply God explains the kind of ‘fast’ Israel needs to undertake: not one involving penitential ritual but a ‘fast’ from injustice. Refraining from indifference and violence towards the weak, and a positive program of hospitality will cause Israel’s ‘light to shine like the dawn’ and her ‘wound’ to be ‘quickly healed over’. In a way that retains remarkable relevance for all human societies – local, national or, indeed, global – the prophetic text insists that if a community gets social justice right, then all else will fall into place.

Twice (v. 8, v. 10) Israel is reminded that social justice will cause her ‘light’ to shine. In this allusion to light we surely hear an echo of the belief, expressed above all in Isaiah’s Servant Songs, that Israel’s destiny is to be ‘a light to the nations’ (Isa 42:6; 49:6; 51:4; 60:3). The text, then, is summoning Israel, to realise her true vocation through the implementation of social justice. She is to become a ‘light to the nations’ by modelling before the world what a truly human society should be.

It is at this point that the prophetic text becomes most relevant as a background for the brief extract from the Sermon on the Mount that forms the **Gospel** (Matt 5:13-16). Two images – salt and light – dominate the extract. The community of disciples, to whom Jesus has just addressed the Beatitudes (5:3-12), is not just to be something for itself. It has the vocation both to preserve (‘salt’) and to model (‘light’) something for the rest of the world.



To appreciate this we have to recall the setting in which the Sermon takes place: the mass of burdened, afflicted humanity described as the recipients of Jesus’ healing at the end of the preceding chapter (4:23-25). Matthew’s introduction to the Sermon (5:1-2) suggests that it is the sight of these crowds and their needs that prompts Jesus to address his disciples in the way that follows (‘Seeing the crowds, he went up the mountain ...’). The implication is that it is people who are prepared to live according to the dispositions and attitudes pronounced ‘blessed’ in the Beatitudes (vv. 3-12) – that is, people prepared to live in the vulnerable, non-grasping way they propose – who can really help lift humanity’s burdens, thereby becoming and remaining ‘salt of the earth’ and ‘light of the world’. It is the compassionate and merciful who make the world safe for humanity. (Paul’s description in the **Second Reading** of the vulnerable way in which he approached the community in Corinth actually illustrates this disposition). In this way the community that is receiving from Jesus the ‘Torah’ for the messianic age will reclaim the vocation of Israel as spelled out in the passages from Isaiah.

Jesus does not simply apply the images ‘salt and light’ to the community. To each is added a few sentences of explanation and warning. To appreciate what he says about salt (v. 13b) we have to recall the role salt played in food-preservation before refrigeration; salt was a vital domestic commodity. The explanation, however, is far from clear. Salt can hardly lose its taste but it may be so mixed with other elements as to become impure and so useless for either savour or preservation; it will be good only for salting the path outside the house, where people will trample it underfoot. Disciples who fall away from their vocation may face a similar fate (vv. 14-16).

The comment upon the image of light falls into two distinct parts. In biblical tradition Jerusalem was the archetypal ‘city built on a hilltop’. When the Temple was illuminated – as during the Feast of Tabernacles – Jerusalem was indeed ‘the light of the world’. The image then reverts to the more domestic scene: what one does with a lamp. The disciples’ good works must function as a lamp giving light to a darkened world – not to draw attention to themselves but to lead outsiders to the knowledge and praise of the God who has set them to be salt and light for the world.

Fr 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: Denise and 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 Nicolia, Graham Courte, Peter Burns, Matthew Tierney, Matt Mohorovic, Sharon Grayson, Dennis Catheral, Allan Dick.
Recently Deceased: Ray O'Donnell, Patricia Sloan, Bob Pink.
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

EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION:

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

MINISTRY ROSTER: 14/15 FEBRUARY 2026

Readers: Yamba: B Cullen/R Tory; Maclean: R Harvey/B McGowan; Iluka: T Sullivan.
Commentators: Yamba: M Dee, Maclean: S Winter, Iluka: I Durham. **E Communion:** Maclean: J de Roos.
Count team: Neander/Robertson

READINGS: 14/15 FEBRUARY 2026

First: Sirach 15:15-20; **Second:** 1 Corinthians 2:6-10; **Gospel:** Matthew 5:17-37.

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>

St James Primary School will celebrate their Beginning of School Year Mass on Tuesday, 10 February, at 10am at St James Church. All are welcome.

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

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

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

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.

St Vincent de Paul Christmas Appeal: The members of the St. Vincent DePaul Society conferences at both Maclean and Yamba wish to thank the very generous parishioners of St. Mary's parish for their contributions to the recent Christmas appeal. Many local families benefited from your generosity and experienced a better-than-expected Christmas period. They were able to provide presents for their children and enjoy Christmas meals together. A huge thank you to all

Update from Halle: Halle sent a message to Fr Roland giving him an update of her training: "Training has been really good so far. All the other missionaries are amazing people. I have been having a great time. I just got my team and location for the year. I will be going to the Rockhampton Diocese with 5 other missionaries. We will be a travelling team. So we will travel around the diocese to different parishes and schools doing ministry work." Please continue praying for Halle.

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

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!