

# CATHOLIC PARISH OF ST MARY'S MACLEAN



ST JOHN'S CHURCH



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ST JAMES CHURCH

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## SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT, YEAR A: 1 MARCH 2026

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ: as we continue our Lenten journey, we are invited this second Sunday of Lent to reflect on the call of Abraham in the first reading, the free gift of salvation and sanctification in the second reading and the transfiguration of Jesus in the gospel.

The passage from Genesis (12:1-4) relates the call of Abraham, the father of the chosen people of God. The Lord asked Abram to leave everything – his country, family and father's house – and promised to give him land, to make him a great nation, to make him famous and a source of blessing. This encounter with God and his directives require a profound faith on the part of Abram. At the end of the passage, we are told of his response: "Abram went as the Lord told him."

Here we see that our salvation, our being brought into communion of life and love with God is divine grace and free human cooperation with it. God takes the initiative in offering his friendship and divine gifts; human beings have to willingly accept them. God shows his love; humans have to lovingly entrust their lives to him.

"Sustained by divine grace, we respond to God with the obedience of faith, which means the full surrender of ourselves to God and the acceptance of his truth insofar as it is guaranteed by the One who is Truth itself."

The Letter to the Hebrews says: "By faith, Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place which he was to receive as an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he has to go" (11:8). By faith, he also lived as a stranger and pilgrim in the promised land, and by faith offered his only son in sacrifice.

This is saving faith: not mere notional but real, not half-hearted 'yes' but a total cooperation with divine love.

St Paul, in the second reading, emphasises the gratuity of the grace of being saved and made holy. He says that God "has saved us and called us to be holy – not because of anything we ourselves have done but by his

own purpose and by his own grace." There is nothing that we have achieved that can merit his gift of salvation. However, once we have entered into communion with God and so made holy and able by his grace, we can then merit increase of grace or growth in holiness and love. Holiness, in other words, is both a gift and a task. Our task is to appreciate the gift, treasure it, live according to it and so be gradually permeated by it.

The transfiguration of Jesus both reveals Jesus' humanity being permeated by divine life, love and light. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* says of the significance of the Transfiguration: "For a moment Jesus discloses his divine glory ... He also reveals that he will have to go by the way of the cross at Jerusalem in order to 'enter into his glory'... Christ's Passion is the will of the Father: the Son acts as God's servant; the cloud indicates the presence of the Holy Spirit..."

God saved us by becoming man in his eternal Son. When he became man, Jesus was in communion of mind and heart with the divine mind and heart. His human intellect was totally enlightened by divine light. His human will was totally united to the divine will. In other words, Jesus cooperated completely with God and so became a living instrument of divine light, life and love for men and women and for their salvation.

A prayer from the Byzantine Liturgy goes: "You were transfigured on the mountain, and your disciples, as much as they were capable of it, beheld your glory, O Christ our God, so that when they should see you crucified they would understand that your Passion was voluntary, and proclaim to the world that you truly are the splendour of the Father."

As we continue our Lenten journey, let us do our best to grow in grace, to let it heal us deeply, enlighten and inspire our thoughts, words and actions.

Fr Roland

**ENTRANCE ANTIPHON** (*Iluka*)

Of you my heart has spoken, Seek his face.  
It is your face, O Lord, that I seek;  
hide not your face from me.

**COLLECT**

O God, who have commanded us to listen to your beloved Son, be pleased, we pray, to nourish us inwardly by your word, that, with spiritual sight made pure, we may rejoice to behold your glory. 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 12:1-4*

A reading from the book of Genesis

The Lord said to Abram, 'Leave your country, your family and your father's house, for the land I will show you. I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name so famous that it will be used as a blessing.

'I will bless those who bless you:  
I will curse those who slight you.  
All the tribes of the earth  
shall bless themselves by you.'

So Abram went as the Lord told him.  
The word of the Lord.

**RESPONSORIAL PSALM** *Ps 32:4-5. 18-20. 22.*  
*R. v.22*

**R.** *Lord, let your mercy be on us,  
as we place our trust in you.*

1. The word of the Lord is faithful  
and all his works to be trusted.  
The Lord loves justice and right  
and fills the earth with his love. (R.)
2. The Lord looks on those who revere him,  
on those who hope in his love,  
to rescue their souls from death,  
to keep them alive in famine. (R.)
3. Our soul is waiting for the Lord.  
The Lord is our help and our shield.  
May your love be upon us, O Lord,  
as we place all our hope in you. (R.)

**SECOND READING***2 Timothy 1:8-10*

With me, bear the hardships for the sake of the Good News, relying on the power of God who has saved us and called us to be holy – not because of anything we ourselves have done but for his own purpose and by his own grace. This grace had already been granted to

us, in Christ Jesus, before the beginning of time, but it has only been revealed by the Appearing of our saviour Christ Jesus. He abolished death, and he has proclaimed life and immortality through the Good News.

The word of the Lord.

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

**Glory and praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!**  
**From the shining cloud the Father's voice is heard:**  
**this is my beloved Son, hear him.**  
**Glory and praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!**

**GOSPEL***Matthew 17:1-9*

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain where they could be alone. There in their presence he was transfigured; his face shone like the sun and his clothes became as white as the light. Suddenly Moses and Elijah appeared to them; they were talking with him. Then Peter spoke to Jesus. 'Lord,' he said 'it is wonderful for us to be here; if you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.' He was still speaking when suddenly a bright cloud covered them with shadow, and from the cloud there came a voice which said, 'This is my Son, the Beloved; he enjoys my favour. Listen to him.' When they heard this, the disciples fell on their faces, overcome with fear. But Jesus came up and touched them. 'Stand up,' he said 'do not be afraid.' And when they raised their eyes they saw no one but only Jesus.

As they came down from the mountain Jesus gave them this order. 'Tell no one about the vision until the Son of Man has risen from the dead.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

**PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS**

May this sacrifice, O Lord, we pray, cleanse us of our faults and sanctify your faithful in body and mind for the celebration of the paschal festivities. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

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

This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him.

**PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

As we receive these glorious mysteries, we make thanksgiving to you, O Lord, for allowing us while still on earth to be partakers even now of the things of heaven. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

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## SCRIPTURE COMMENTARY

As in all three cycles for Sundays of the year, the Gospel for this Second Sunday of Lent features the mysterious episode of the Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1-9). It is not easy, however, to see the principle behind the choice of the remaining two readings: the Call of Abraham (Gen 12:1-4) and a brief extract from the Second Letter to Timothy (1:8-10). It may be that all have to do in some sense with ‘vocation’ or ‘calling’. This would follow on well from the theme of ‘temptation’ or ‘test’ last week, where what was at stake was the quality of trust on the part of those (Israel, Jesus, ourselves) called by God.

The call of Abraham in the First Reading marks the second great development in the Book of Genesis after the Primeval history (Genesis 1-11). Following the lapse of the first human pair (Genesis 3), the intervening material (Genesis 4-11) has been nothing else than a record of ever-increasing sin, violence and dehumanisation, culminating in the great flood (Genesis 7-9). Here creation literally goes into reverse and would have done so irrevocably had it not been for God’s preservation and blessing of Noah.

The building of the Tower of Babel (11:1-9) represented a futile effort on the part of human beings acting independently of the Creator to restore their status and dignity. The call of Abraham marks the beginning of a vast divine project to achieve what the people of Babel wanted but could not realise because of the evil inherent in the human heart.

Let us note key elements of the call. First, Abraham must ‘leave’ his father’s house, his family and his country, and all the security they provide. From now on his security will rest simply in God’s promise to create from him ‘a great nation’ and (what the people of Babel wanted) ‘a great name’, one so famous that it will become a byword for blessing amongst all the peoples of the earth.

The text is also open to the sense (see the NRSV) ‘in you all the nations of the earth shall be blessed’ – the understanding that has prevailed in most subsequent interpretation, including that of the New Testament. The sense is that the blessed existence originally intended by the Creator for human beings and the earth (Gen 1:1 – 2:3) but frustrated by human sin, will come to realisation through what is now

beginning with the call of Abraham and his trusting response.

The text here sets a fundamental pattern for Christian life. We are all in some sense inheritors of the ‘call’ of our ancestor Abraham. Particularly in this season of Lent, we are called to sit lightly to the conventional securities offered by this world, to rest, rather, in a promise and vision of ‘blessedness’ held out by God.

The Second Reading from 2 Timothy goes along with this in its brief summary of Christian life and vocation. We are the people who ‘rely on the power of God, who has saved us and called us to be holy (that is, people especially close to God), not because of anything we ourselves have done (cf. the futile efforts of the people of Babel) but by God’s own grace’. This ‘grace,’ determined since the beginning of time, has now been realised in the ‘appearance’ (Greek: ‘epiphany’) of Christ Jesus.

It is probably the word ‘appearance’ that has led to this text from 2 Timothy being associated with the Gospel of the Transfiguration. Here we have an ‘appearance’ of Jesus truly unique in the accounts of his earthly life. In the biblical tradition whiteness signals closeness to God and God’s heavenly court, a closeness confirmed here by the presence of two figures, Moses and Elijah, known from the biblical record to be enjoying heavenly existence (Deut 34:6; 2 Kgs 2:11). Shortly before this episode, Jesus has for

the first time revealed to the disciples that the Son of Man is destined to suffer and be killed (16:21). As represented by Peter, they simply cannot square this suffering destiny with their knowledge of him to be ‘the Messiah, the Son of God’ (16:16, 22-23). Jesus’ glorious transformation and the Father’s voice from heaven (‘This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him!’) communicates with divine authority that these two truths must be held together: Jesus is God’s beloved

Son and he is, as he has said, going to fulfil his messianic vocation through suffering and death.

The disciples (specifically Peter) want to ‘hold’ the messianic moment (‘Let us build three tents ...’). But there are no ‘short-cuts’ to glory. From now on, precisely as God’s beloved Son, Jesus is to tread the path to Jerusalem as the Messiah who came, ‘not to be served but to serve and give his life as a ransom for many’ (20:28). It is with this deepened sense of his vocation – and ours – that we are invited to continue with him our Lenten journey to Jerusalem.

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## 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 Nicolai, Peter Burns, Matthew Tierney, Matt Mohorovic, Sharon Grayson, Dennis Cathedral, Allan Dick. **Recently Deceased:** 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: 7/8 MARCH 2026

**Readers:** Yamba: A Ricketts/P Edgar; Maclean: B McGowan/R Harvey; Iluka: C Leseberg.

**Commentators:** Yamba: B Cullen, Maclean: J de Roos, Iluka: I Durham. **E Communion:** Maclean: J Moloney. **Count team:** Smith/Robertson

## READINGS: 7/8 MARCH 2026

**First:** Exodus 17:3-7; **Second:** Romans 5:1-2. 5-8; **Gospel:** John 4:5-42.

## 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>

**Yamba weekday Mass cancellation:** Please note that weekday Mass and Eucharistic Adoration at St James, Yamba will be cancelled this Wednesday, 4th March.

**World Day of Prayer.** With a focus on Nigeria, join us for the 2026 World Day of Prayer service on Friday 6 March, 10am, at All Saints Anglican Church (59 Yamba St). Contact: Beverley Daly: 0428 117 959.

**First Saturday Devotion:** Next Saturday, 7 March, 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.

**Yamba Catholic Ladies:** The next parish ladies meeting will be held on Wednesday, 11th March after Mass in the Ted Howe Room. All are welcome!

**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, please contact Lucia at [office@stmarysparish.org.au](mailto:office@stmarysparish.org.au)

**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.

**Chrism Mass:** This year's Chrism Mass will be celebrated on Monday, 23 March at 11am in St Carthage's Cathedral.

**Project Compassion:** Sisilia is a 13-year-old girl living in remote Tanzania, who had to walk long distances to collect water every day. Thanks to Project Compassion, Sisilia's school and village now have safe clean water close by and she can spend more time studying so she can fulfil her dream of one day becoming a pilot. Please donate today. 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) or by calling: 1800 024 413 Thank you for standing with us, as we Unite Against Poverty this Lent.

**ASPIRE:** Join ASPIRE, a monthly online spiritual formation series for young adults with Bishop Greg Homeming, 5:30-6:30pm via Microsoft Teams. Dates: 18 Mar, 4 May, 18 Jun, 27 Jul, 14 Aug, 7 Sep, 12 Oct, 24 Nov. Teams Login: 471 422 568 74059 Password: DB946Sp6. Contact Sr Di Moralde 0434 772 867 / [dmoralde@lismore.catholic.org.au](mailto:dmoralde@lismore.catholic.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.

**Confirmation in 2026.** The Bishop will come to our parish to confer the sacrament of Confirmation to baptised children aged 8 years old and above on 29 April 2026. For children who don't go to our Catholic schools please contact the office. Confirmation workshops for candidates and their parents will be held on 23 March in St James Primary School in Yamba and 24 March in St Joseph's Primary School in Maclean from 5:30pm to 7:00pm.