

# CATHOLIC PARISH OF ST MARY'S MACLEAN



ST JOHNS CHURCH



ST MARYS CHURCH



ST JAMES CHURCH

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## FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT, YEAR A: 15 MARCH 2026

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, we are reminded in our Eucharistic celebration this fourth Sunday of Lent that the Christian is a person who has received Christ, who is the light of the world, and enlightened by his divine revelation and enabled by his grace, walks in the light of good deeds.

The passage from the First Book of Samuel affirms that God sees and knows the core of things, what they really are and especially the heart of a human person. "God does not see as man sees; man looks at appearances but the Lord looks at the heart." The reading is about the selection of David by God from the sons of Jesse. Jesse has many sons and thinks that God has chosen one of the older sons who are all strong, handsome, capable, and intelligent yet none of them is God's choice. His choice is David who is very young.

This does not only demonstrate God's freedom in choosing his human messenger but also points to the mysterious ways of God. In this case, he chooses the one considered to be the least capable of the choices. His decision comes from seeing the heart. In other words, whoever has not received the light of God judges the things and the world through human eyes; but in reality he/she cannot see. A believer then has to unite his/her mind with the mind of God so that he/she may see as God sees. The light of faith enlightens those who are in a living relationship with God and guides them in their journey of life.

St Paul in the second reading tells Christian believers: "you were darkness once, but one you are light in the Lord." In other words, by converting to the Lord Jesus Christ, and receiving the grace of redemption through baptism, they have become participants in God's own life and light. He says: "anything exposed by the light will be illuminated and anything illuminated turns into light". Baptism realized in living faith enlightens. On one occasion Jesus said: "I am the light of the world; anyone who follows me will not be walking in the dark; he will have the light of life" (John 8:12). St Paul tells his Christian audience that baptism has taken them out of the world of darkness and they are now in the kingdom of light, the kingdom of risen Christ; and so they must

practice deeds of light. And the deeds of light are: what is good, just and true.

The gospel passage presents the course to follow if one wants to reach the light, namely Christ. The first step is the healing of the man's physical blindness by Jesus. The gospel tells us that Jesus sees the man who had been blind from birth. Without being asked, Jesus heals him. What is shown here is that the journey towards the light begins with the unmerited offer and action of grace. God's grace comes before any action of ours. This free gift enables us to start the journey towards living faith in Jesus.

The second step is the recognition and appreciation of the gift of healing and salvation. When asked why the man born blind is now able to see, he acknowledged that it was Jesus who healed him. Experience of healing or any other divine favour is often the beginning of faith-awakening or a renewed search for God, his Son Jesus or his Church.

The third and final step is the personal encounter with Jesus. Jesus found the blind man after he was driven away by the Pharisees who did not believe his testimony. This meeting provided him with the opportunity to profess his faith in Jesus. In other words, to reach the light, to reach a conscious, personal and committed faith, we often need to seek actively, to learn and discover anew our Catholic faith. Initial act of faith is preceded by search and followed by deeper investigation of the different elements of faith.

Having reached the light through personal faith, one nourishes this living relationship with Christ by means of ongoing worship. Having said "Lord, I believe", the man healed of his blindness worshipped Jesus. To be able to walk in the light and light of the world, we need to be in constant communion with him. Active discipleship comes from and returns to Eucharistic worship, the source of life and mission of Christians. Let us ask the Lord in this Mass to enlighten us anew and so walk in the light of life.

Fr Roland

**ENTRANCE ANTIPHON** (*Iluka*)

Rejoice, Jerusalem, and all who love her. Be joyful, all who were in mourning; exult and be satisfied at her consoling breast.

**COLLECT**

O God, who through your Word reconcile the human race to yourself in a wonderful way, grant, we pray, that with prompt devotion and eager faith the Christian people may hasten toward the solemn celebrations to come. 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** *1 Samuel 16:1. 6-7. 10-13*

A reading from the first book of Samuel

The Lord said to Samuel, 'Fill your horn with oil and go. I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem, for I have chosen myself a king among his sons.' When Samuel arrived, he caught sight of Eliab and thought, 'Surely the Lord's anointed one stands there before him,' but the Lord said to Samuel, 'Take no notice of his appearance or his height for I have rejected him; God does not see as man sees; man looks at appearances but the Lord looks at the heart.' Jesse presented his seven sons to Samuel, but Samuel said to Jesse, 'The Lord has not chosen these.' He then asked Jesse, 'Are these all the sons you have?' He answered, 'There is still one left, the youngest; he is out looking after the sheep.' Then Samuel said to Jesse, 'Send for him; we will not sit down to eat until he comes.' Jesse had him sent for, a boy of fresh complexion, with fine eyes and pleasant bearing. The Lord said, 'Come, anoint him, for this is the one.' At this, Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him where he stood with his brothers; and the spirit of the Lord seized on David and stayed with him from that day on.

The word of the Lord.

**RESPONSORIAL PSALM** *Ps 22 R. v.1*

**R. The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.**

1. The Lord is my shepherd;  
there is nothing I shall want.  
Fresh and green are the pastures  
where he gives me repose.  
Near restful waters he leads me,  
to revive my drooping spirit. (R.)
2. He guides me along the right path;  
he is true to his name.  
If I should walk in the valley of darkness  
no evil would I fear.  
You are there with your crook and your staff;  
with these you give me comfort. (R.)

3. You have prepared a banquet for me  
In the sight of my foes.  
My head you have anointed with oil;  
my cup is overflowing. (R.)

4. Surely goodness and kindness shall follow me  
all the days of my life.  
In the Lord's own house shall I dwell  
for ever and ever. (R.)

**SECOND READING***Ephesians 5:8-14*

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Ephesians

You were darkness once, but now you are light in the Lord; be like children of light, for the effects of the light are seen in complete goodness and right living and truth. Try to discover what the Lord wants of you, having nothing to do with the futile works of darkness but exposing them by contrast. The things which are done in secret are things that people are ashamed even to speak of; but anything exposed by the light will be illuminated and anything illuminated turns into light. That is why it is said:

Wake up from your sleep,  
rise from the dead,  
and Christ will shine on you.  
The word of the Lord.

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

**Glory to you, Word of God, Lord Jesus Christ!  
I am the light of the world, says the Lord; whoever  
follows me will have the light of life.  
Glory to you, Word of God, Lord Jesus Christ!**

**GOSPEL***John 9:1-41*

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

As Jesus went along, he saw a man who had been blind from birth. His disciples asked him, 'Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, for him to have been born blind?' 'Neither he nor his parents sinned,' Jesus answered, 'he was born blind so that the works of God might be displayed in him.

'As long as the day lasts  
I must carry out the work of the one who sent me;  
the night will soon be here when no one can work.  
As long as I am in the world  
I am the light of the world.'

Having said this, he spat on the ground, made a paste with the spittle, put this over the eyes of the blind man and said to him, 'Go and wash in the Pool of Siloam' (a name that means 'sent'). So the blind man went off and washed himself, and came away with his sight restored.

His neighbours and people who earlier had seen him begging said, 'Isn't this the man who used to sit and beg?' Some said, 'Yes, it is the same one.' Others

said, 'No, he only looks like him.' The man himself said, 'I am the man.' So they said to him, 'Then how do your eyes come to be open?' 'The man called Jesus' he answered 'made a paste, daubed my eyes with it and said to me, "Go and wash at Siloam"; so I went, and when I washed I could see.' They asked, 'Where is he?' 'I don't know' he answered.

They brought the man who had been blind to the Pharisees. It had been a sabbath day when Jesus made the paste and opened the man's eyes, so when the Pharisees asked him how he had come to see, he said, 'He put a paste on my eyes, and I washed, and I can see.' Then some of the Pharisees said, 'This man cannot be from God: he does not keep the sabbath.' Others said, 'How could a sinner produce signs like this?' And there was disagreement among them. So they spoke to the blind man again, 'What have you to say about him yourself, now that he has opened your eyes?' 'He is a prophet' replied the man.

However, the Jews would not believe that the man had been blind and had gained his sight, without first sending for his parents and asking them, 'Is this man really your son who you say was born blind? If so, how is it that he is now able to see?' His parents answered, 'We know he is our son and we know he was born blind, but we don't know how it is that he can see now, or who opened his eyes. He is old enough: let him speak for himself.' His parents spoke like this out of fear of the Jews, who had already agreed to expel from the synagogue anyone who should acknowledge Jesus as the Christ. This was why his parents said, 'He is old enough; ask him.'

So the Jews again sent for the man and said to him, 'Give glory to God! For our part, we know that this man is a sinner.' The man answered, 'I don't know if he is a sinner; I only know that I was blind and now I can see.' They said to him, 'What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?' He replied, 'I have told you once and you wouldn't listen. Why do you want to hear it all again? Do you want to become his disciples too?' At this they hurled abuse at him: 'You can be his disciple,' they said 'we are disciples of Moses: we know that God spoke to Moses, but as for this man, we don't know where he comes from.' The man replied, 'Now here is an astonishing thing! He has opened my eyes, and you don't know where he comes from! We know that God doesn't listen to sinners, but God does listen to men who are devout and do his will. Ever since the world began it is unheard of for anyone to open the eyes of a man who was born blind; if this man were not from God, he couldn't do a thing.' 'Are you trying to teach us,' they replied 'and you a sinner through and through, since you were born!' And they drove him away.

Jesus heard they had driven him away, and when he found him he said to him, 'Do you believe in the Son of Man?' 'Sir,' the man replied 'tell me who he is so that I may believe in him.' Jesus said, 'You are looking at him; he is speaking to you.' The man said, 'Lord, I believe', and worshipped him.

Jesus said:

'It is for judgement that I have come into this world, so that those without sight may see and those with sight turn blind.'

Hearing this, some Pharisees who were present said to him, 'We are not blind, surely?' Jesus replied: 'Blind? If you were, you would not be guilty, but since you say, "We see", your guilt remains.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

### **PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS**

We place before you with joy these offerings, which bring eternal remedy, O Lord, praying that we may both faithfully revere them and present them to you, as is fitting, for the salvation of all the world. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

### **PREFACE; EUCHARISTIC PRAYER**

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

The Lord anointed my eyes: I went, I washed, I saw and I believed in God.

#### **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

O God, who enlighten everyone who comes into this world, illuminate our hearts, we pray, with the splendour of your grace, that we may always ponder what is worthy and pleasing to your majesty and love you in all sincerity. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

#### **PRAYER OVER THE PEOPLE**

Look upon those who call to you, O Lord, and sustain the weak; give life by your unfailing light to those who walk in the shadow of death, and bring those rescued by your mercy from every evil to reach the highest good. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

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#### **SCRIPTURE COMMENTARY**

The healing of the blind man is not a restoration, for the man was born blind. By means of the water that washed away his blindness, he is made a new creation. He progresses from knowing the name of the one who cured him, to professing that Jesus is a prophet, to proclaiming that he comes from God. The struggle between darkness and light, between blindness and sight runs throughout this account. Jesus is the light of the world. The man, who is gradually brought from physical blindness to sight, also progressively moves from spiritual blindness to religious insight. The Pharisees were blind to the truth that the newly cured man saw so clearly. The one who was blind sees, and those who can see are blind. © *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 Nicolia, Peter Burns, Matthew Tierney, Matt Mohorovic, Sharon Grayson, Dennis Cathedral, Allan Dick. **Recently Decensed:** Sr Bernice Kerr. **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, 12:00am, 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

## EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION:

First Wednesday: 10:00am, Yamba

First Saturday: 12:00pm, Maclean

## MINISTRY ROSTER: 21/22 MARCH 2026

**Readers:** Yamba: F Robertson/B Cullen; Maclean: St Joseph's Primary School; Iluka: D Speirs.

**Commentators:** Yamba: M Dee, Maclean: St Joseph's Primary School, Iluka: T Sullivan. **E Communion:** Maclean: J Moloney. **Count team:** Smith/Robertson.

## READINGS: 21/22 MARCH 2026

**First:** Ezekiel 37:12-14; **Second:** Romans 8:8-11; **Gospel:** John 11:1-45.

## 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>

**Lenten Retreat:** The parish of St Mary's Grafton is holding a Lenten Retreat next week. From Tuesday 17 to Thursday 19 March at McCarthy Centre, 2 Clarence Street Grafton from 6-8pm each evening. Fr Roland Agrisola will be facilitating. Everyone is welcome to attend.

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

**St Joseph's Feast Day Mass:** St. Joseph's Primary School will be celebrating our patron saint with a Mass on his feast day, Thursday, March 19th, at 12:00PM in St. Mary's Church. All families and parishioners are warmly invited to join us for this special celebration.

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

**Project Compassion:** Life was hard for **Manaini** and her children living in rural Fiji. With the support from Caritas Australia's partner, FRIEND, she learnt food processing and gardening skills, improving nutrition and creating new income opportunities to support her children's education. Please donate today. You can support Project Compassion 2026 through 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.

**Adult Online Faith Formation:** The Diocese of Lismore continues its partnership with the University of Dayton's VLCFF, offering access to over 100 online faith-formation courses at a reduced rate. Cycle 3 registrations for three-week courses open 11 March and close 9 April, with courses beginning 13 April. More information: St Agnes' Parish, Port Macquarie, [stagnesparish.org.au/faith](http://stagnesparish.org.au/faith). Enquiries: Tony Worner, [VLCFF.LismoreDiocese@stagnesparish.org.au](mailto:VLCFF.LismoreDiocese@stagnesparish.org.au), 0436 941 280. Learn more about the VLCFF: [vlcff.udayton.edu/about](http://vlcff.udayton.edu/about)

**Confirmation 2026:** Bishop Greg will be visiting our parish on Wednesday 29 April to confer the Sacrament of Confirmation to baptised children aged 8 years and above. Families whose children do **not** attend our Catholic schools are asked to please contact the parish office to register. **Confirmation workshops** for candidates and their parents will be held on **Monday 23 March at St James Primary School, Yamba** and **Tuesday 24 March at St Joseph's Primary School, Maclean**. Both sessions run from 5:30pm to 7:00pm.

**Scam alert:** A parishioner has advised Father Roland of a text message claiming to be from him asking for money in the form of gift cards. Please be aware this is a **scam!** Father Roland will **NEVER** ask for money via text messages, emails or any similar means. If in any doubt at all please contact Father Roland personally.