

CATHOLIC PARISH OF ST MARY'S MACLEAN



ST JOHNS CHURCH



ST MARYS CHURCH



ST JAMES CHURCH

Parish Administrator: Father Roland Agrisola
2 McIntyres Lane Maclean NSW 2463
Email: office@stmarysparish.org.au

Postal: PO Box 19 MACLEAN NSW 2463
Tel: 02 66 451188 **ABN** 43 360 517 680
Web: stmarysparish.org.au

FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT, YEAR A: 22 MARCH 2026

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ: we are invited this fifth Sunday of Lent to reflect on the power of God to raise the dead to life. He has the power to bring the biologically dead back to their former life and the spiritually dead to a life filled with divine life.

The passage from the prophet Ezekiel speaks of God's intention to lead the people of Israel from their exile in Babylon back to their own land of Israel. "Ezekiel uses bodily resurrection as a metaphor of the re-establishment of the nation after its exile in a foreign land ... Those in the grave live again when they are raised from the dust of death and are given God's own spirit ... The passage testifies to God's absolute and unconditional control over the powers of life and death, destruction and restoration" (Sr D. Bergant CSA).

The passage from St Paul's letter to the Romans speaks of God's power to raise the spiritually dead to spiritual life. A human person is spiritually dead if he/she is separated from God because of mortal sin. Human beings born after the fall of Adam and Eve were born in the state of original sin, that is, not endowed with divine life. Cut off from God, they are spiritually dead.

To be spiritually alive, one has to be in communion of life and love with God. Through baptism, we who were born in the state of being separated from God have been reconciled with God and given the gift of divine life that made us holy and children of God. In the words of St Paul, "the Spirit of God has made his home in you" and we belong to Christ because we possess the Spirit of Christ. He goes on: "If Christ is in you then your spirit is life itself because you have been justified." The gift of divine life or sanctifying grace makes a person holy, friend or child of God and temple of the Holy Spirit.

However, this gift of divine life can be destroyed and, in fact, it is destroyed by mortal sin – any seriously sinful behaviour committed with full knowledge and full consent. This is implied in the words of St Paul: "People who are interested only in unspiritual things

can never be pleasing to God." Divine life, the possession of the Spirit of Christ makes us "pleasing to God" while mortal sin makes us enemies of God, displeasing to him. As such, the interests of Christians must not be in unspiritual things – anything that is contrary to God and his love.

The journey of spiritual life that began in baptism, therefore, is about preserving and increasing this gift of divine life, allowing it to permeate us ever more fully by our cooperation with God, by being actively involved in the life and mission of the church, and by growing in prayer, in faith, hope and love.

Perseverance in the spiritual life and dying in the state of grace will be rewarded with bodily and spiritual resurrection on the last day. In the words of St Paul: "he who raised Jesus from the dead will give life to your own mortal bodies through his Spirit living in you."

When lost or destroyed because of mortal sin, divine life, that is our communion life and love with God can be restored by the sacrament of Reconciliation or Confession. This is the sacrament of conversion and reconciliation with God after baptism when one loses the gift of divine life because of grievous sin. Good confession brings back to spiritual life Christians spiritually dead because of mortal sin.

The gospel passage about the raising of Lazarus shows the power of Jesus, who is the Resurrection and the Life, to bring the dead to life. More importantly, this affirms his mission. He came to bring us, spiritually dead because of sin to a life in communion with God. Jesus accepted death on the cross for us and God raised him up. By belonging to Christ, we are spiritually resurrected and will be raised up body and soul on the last day.

Let us pray in this Mass for the grace of perseverance and continuous improvement in the spiritual or the courage to be reconciled with God if we are cut-off from him.

Fr Roland

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON (*Iluka*)

Give me justice, O God, and plead my cause against a nation that is faithless. From the deceitful and cunning rescue me, for you, O God, are my strength.

COLLECT

By your help, we beseech you, Lord our God, may we walk eagerly in that same charity with which, out of love for the world, your Son handed himself over to death. 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*Ezekiel 37:12-14*

A reading from the prophet Ezekiel

The Lord says this: I am now going to open your graves; I mean to raise you from your graves, my people, and lead you back to the soil of Israel. And you will know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves and raise you from your graves, my people. And I shall put my spirit in you, and you will live, and I shall resettle you on your own soil; and you will know that I, the Lord, have said and done this – it is the Lord who speaks.

The word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM*Ps 129. R. v.7*

R. *With the Lord there is mercy and fullness of redemption.*

1. Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord,
Lord, hear my voice!
O let your ears be attentive
to the voice of my pleading. (R.)
2. If you, O Lord, should mark our guilt,
Lord, who would survive?
But with you is found forgiveness:
for this we revere you. (R.)
3. My soul is waiting for the Lord,
I count on his word.
My soul is longing for the Lord
more than watchman for daybreak.
(Let the watchman count on daybreak
and Israel on the Lord.) (R.)
4. Because with the Lord there is mercy
and fullness of redemption,
Israel indeed he will redeem
from all its iniquity. (R.)

SECOND READING*Romans 8:8-11*

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans

People who are interested only in unspiritual things can never be pleasing to God. Your interests, however, are not in the unspiritual, but in the spiritual, since the Spirit of God has made his home in you. In fact, unless you possessed the Spirit of Christ you would not belong to him. Though your body may be dead it is because of sin, but if Christ is in you then your spirit is life itself because you have been justified; and if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, then he who raised Jesus from the dead will give life to your own mortal bodies through his Spirit living in you.

The word of the Lord.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

***Glory and praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!
I am the resurrection and the life, says the Lord;
whoever believes in me will not die for ever.
Glory and praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!***

GOSPEL*John 11:1-45*

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

There was a man named Lazarus who lived in the village of Bethany with the two sisters, Mary and Martha, and he was ill. – It was the same Mary, the sister of the sick man Lazarus, who anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair. The sisters sent this message to Jesus, ‘Lord, the man you love is ill.’ On receiving the message, Jesus said, ‘This sickness will end not in death but in God’s glory, and through it the Son of God will be glorified.’

Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, yet when he heard that Lazarus was ill he stayed where he was for two more days before saying to the disciples, ‘Let us go to Judaea.’ The disciples said, ‘Rabbi, it is not long since the Jews wanted to stone you; are you going back again?’ Jesus replied:

‘Are there not twelve hours in the day?’

A man can walk in the daytime without stumbling because he has the light of this world to see by; but if he walks at night he stumbles, because there is no light to guide him.’

He said that and then added, ‘Our friend Lazarus is resting, I am going to wake him.’ The disciples said to him, ‘Lord, if he is able to rest he is sure to get better.’ The phrase Jesus used referred to the death of Lazarus, but they thought that by ‘rest’ he meant ‘sleep’, so Jesus put it plainly, ‘Lazarus is dead; and for your sake I am glad I was not there because now you will believe. But let us go to him.’ Then Thomas – known as the Twin – said to the other disciples, ‘Let us go too, and die with him.’

On arriving, Jesus found that Lazarus had been in the tomb for four days already. Bethany is only about two miles from Jerusalem, and many Jews had come to Martha and Mary to sympathise with them over their brother. When Martha heard that

she went to meet him. Mary remained sitting in the house. Martha said to Jesus, 'If you had been here, my brother would not have died, but I know that even now, whatever you ask of God, he will grant you.' 'Your brother' said Jesus to her 'will rise again.' Martha said, 'I know he will rise again at the resurrection on the last day.' Jesus said:

'I am the resurrection and the life.
If anyone believes in me, even though he dies he will live,
and whoever lives and believes in me will never die.
Do you believe this?'

'Yes, Lord,' she said 'I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, the one who was to come into this world.'

When she had said this, she went and called her sister Mary, saying in a low voice, 'The Master is here and wants to see you.' Hearing this, Mary got up quickly and went to him. Jesus had not yet come into the village; he was still at the place where Martha had met him. When the Jews who were in the house sympathising with Mary saw her get up so quickly and go out, they followed her, thinking that she was going to the tomb to weep there.

Mary went to Jesus, and as soon as she saw him she threw herself at his feet, saying, 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.' At the sight of her tears, and those of the Jews who followed her, Jesus said in great distress, with a sigh that came straight from the heart, 'Where have you put him?' They said, 'Lord, come and see.' Jesus wept; and the Jews said, 'See how much he loved him!' But there were some who remarked, 'He opened the eyes of the blind man, could he not have prevented this man's death?' Still sighing, Jesus reached the tomb: it was a cave with a stone to close the opening. Jesus said, 'Take the stone away.' Martha said to him, 'Lord, by now he will smell; this is the fourth day.' Jesus replied, 'Have I not told you that if you believe you will see the glory of God?' So they took away the stone. Then Jesus lifted up his eyes and said:

'Father, I thank you for hearing my prayer.
I knew indeed that you always hear me,
but I speak
for the sake of all these who stand round me,
so that they may believe it was you who sent me.'

When he had said this, he cried in a loud voice, 'Lazarus, here! Come out!' The dead man came out, his feet and hands bound with bands of stuff and a cloth round his face. Jesus said to them, 'Unbind him, let him go free.'

Many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary and had seen what he did believed in him.

The Gospel of the Lord.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Hear us, almighty God, and, having instilled in your servants the teachings of the Christian faith, graciously purify them by the working of this

sacrifice. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

PREFACE; EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

COMMUNION ANTIPHON (*Iluka*)

Everyone who lives and believes in me will not die for ever, says the Lord.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

We pray, almighty God, that we may always be counted among the members of Christ, in whose Body and Blood we have communion. Who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

PRAYER OVER THE PEOPLE

Bless, O Lord, your people, who long for the gift of your mercy, and grant that what, at your prompting, they desire they may receive by your generous gift. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

© The scriptural quotations are taken from the Jerusalem Bible, published and copyright 1966, 1967 and 1968 by Darton Longman and Todd Ltd and Doubleday & Co Inc, and used by permission of the publishers. The English translation of the Psalm Responses, the Alleluia and Gospel Verses, and the Lenten Gospel Acclamations, and the Titles, Summaries, and Conclusion of the Readings, from the Lectionary for Mass © 1997, 1981, 1968, International Committee on English in the Liturgy, Inc. All rights reserved. The prayers are from the English Translation of the Roman Missal © 2010 International Committee on English in the Liturgy Inc. (ICEL). All rights reserved.

HOLY WEEK AND EASTER 2026

Palm Sunday 28/29 March: Mass times as usual

Holy Monday: 30 March

12:00nn, St Mary's Maclean: Mass & Anointing

Holy Tuesday: 31 March

9:00am, St John's Iluka: Mass and Reconciliation

Holy Wednesday: 1 April

9:30am, St James' Yamba: Mass and Eucharistic Adoration; 11:00am, 6:00pm, St James' Yamba: *Penitential Rite and Sacrament of Reconciliation*

Holy Thursday: 2 April

11:30am, St Mary's Maclean: Reconciliation
6:00pm, St Mary's Maclean: *Mass of the Lord's Supper*

Good Friday, 3 April

10:00am: St Mary's Maclean, St James' Yamba, St John's Iluka: *Stations of the Cross*
3:00pm: St Mary's Maclean, *Celebration of the Lord's Passion*

Holy Saturday, 4 April

11:00am: St Mary's Maclean: Reconciliation
6:00pm: St Mary's Maclean: *The Easter Vigil*

Easter Sunday, 5 April

8:00am, St James' Yamba: *Easter Mass*
9:30am, St Mary's Maclean: *Easter Mass*
11:30am, St John's Iluka: *Easter Mass*

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 Gravin, 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 Deceased:** Sr Bernice Kerr. **Anniversary:** Clarie Woodroffe. **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: 28/29 MARCH 2026

Readers: Yamba: B Montgomery/G Drummond;

Maclean: C Newton/B McGowan; Iluka: C Nilon.

Commentators: Yamba: A Schofield, Maclean: J de Roos, Iluka: I Durham. **E Communion:** Maclean: S Winter. **Count team:** Davies.

READINGS: 28/29 MARCH 2026

First:; Isaiah 50:4-7 **Second:**; Phillippians 2:6-11 **Gospel:** Matthew 26:14-27:66

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>

Baptisms: Welcome to the family of God, Stella and Julian who were recently Baptised in our parish.

Renovation work to St James Church: has commenced and the church will be closed until 27 March. Saturday evening Masses (14 & 21 March) are being held in St James Primary School Hall and

Wednesday Masses in the Ted Howe Room. Mass next Saturday, 28 March, will be held in St James' church.

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

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.

Parish Pastoral Council: will have their next meeting on 26 March at 5:00PM in the Cranny Room.

Sacred Triduum: St Mary's Maclean

2 April, 6:00pm: **Mass of the Lord's Supper**

3 April, 3:00pm: **The Passion of the Lord**

4 April, 6:00pm: **The Easter Vigil**

Easter Sunday, 5 April

8:00am, St James' Yamba: **Easter Mass**

9:30am, St Mary's Maclean: **Easter Mass**

11:30am, St John's Iluka: **Easter Mass**

Project Compassion: Since October 2023, Caritas Jerusalem staff in Gaza have endured displacement, personal loss, and danger alongside the communities they serve. Despite unimaginable challenges, they remain committed to providing lifesaving support, standing in solidarity with families enduring this conflict. Please donate today. You can support Project Compassion 2026 through donation boxes, envelopes or online at: www.projectcompassion.org.au/donate or by calling: 1800 024 413 Thank you for standing with us, as we Unite Against Poverty this Lent.

School Reunion: A 50 year reunion for former students and teachers of St Aloysius College, St Mary's College and Holy Spirit College (Years 10-12 from 1975-1977) is being planned for October, 2026. Please contact Jim O'Donohue M: 0418 761 165 E: jim.odonohue1960@gmail.com

St Joseph's OSHC Maclean—jobs available:

seeking Casual Educators to join the team. Positions are available for after-school care and vacation care, with excellent pay rates of \$40–\$43 per hour. To learn more or apply, visit seek.com.au/job/90798010.

Divine Mercy Sunday, 12 April

St Mary's Maclean, 2:30pm-3:30pm: Divine Mercy Devotion