CATHOLIC PARISH OF ST MARY'S MACLEAN

ST JOHNS CHURCH

ST MARYS CHURCH

ST JAMES CHURCH

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THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT, YEAR A: 8 MARCH 2026

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, the Gospel on this third Sunday of Lent features the story of the encounter and conversation between Jesus and a Samaritan woman at a well. The theme of passage is living water. Hence, as a background, the passage from the book of Exodus relates the giving of water to the Israelites in the desert. The second reading from Romans speaks of the love of God like water being poured into the hearts of Christian disciples by the Holy Spirit given to them.

Let us begin with the first reading. "After leaving Egypt and crossing the Read Sea, the Israelites led by Moses, began their journey to the promised land and started out across the Sinai desert. At first everything was glorious... But soon there arose difficulties: the heat was oppressive, they got weary, they encountered snakes, they got hungry and especially thirsty.

"As soon as Israel realised that there was not water, they were afraid of dying and began doubting God's faithfulness and promises … They started doubting God and decided to put him to the test, to force him to show them what he had in mind" (Fr Fernando Armellini).

In response, God gave them water to drink. Even if the people were grumbling, doubting his care for them, the Lord showed them his compassion. God is loving and merciful even to those whose trust in him is shallow. "Just as God had delivered them from the bondage of Egypt through the leadership of Moses, so now, again through the actions of Moses, God gives them the water they demand. The miracle demonstrates that God is indeed in their midst. Why does God endure such thanklessness, rebellion and audacity? This is but another example of God's boundless and compassionate love for sinners" (Sr Dianne Bergant CSA).

This love of God for us sinners, cut off from him, weak and easily fall into sins, was ultimately shown when God sent his own Son, becoming man, to reconcile us with God. Jesus, united with God's love us sinners, accepted death on a Cross to save us. "We were still helpless when at his appointed moment Christ died for sinful men … what proves that God loves us is that Christ died for us while we were still sinners." God loves us not because of the goodness that we already have but because of the change into and/or growth in goodness and holiness that his love for us brings about. His love is poured into our hearts, and the love of God is the Holy Spirit. This Divine Love willingly received heals us and makes us partakers in God's life. He is the living water that fulfills our thirst for happiness and truth, for belonging and love.

The gospel passage demonstrates the interaction between the love of God and the human search for this love. The first element of this interaction is encounter. Jesus who is at the Jacob's well meets a Samaritan woman. Jesus meets us where and as we are. He meets us especially in our weakness, woundedness, sinfulness and desire for forgiveness. The second element as shown in this passage is dialogue by which one comes to know each other. Jesus starts the conversation and the woman responds. In this conversation, the woman comes to know step by step who Jesus is and his saving work. In other words, we respond to the initial offer of grace by being curious about Jesus, being open to him and by a desire to get to know him. During this dialogue with Jesus, we will also discover who we are and our need of God's love, mercy and forgiveness. The third element is our response to God's offer of love: either to accept or reject it. The Samaritan woman welcomed Jesus into her life by her initial faith. The final element is sharing this encounter with Jesus with others so that they too may come to him, believe in him and receive his offer of salvation. Others believed because of her witness.

As we continue our Lenten journey, let us encounter anew our Lord Jesus, grow in our conversation with him in prayer, open our hearts more widely to his offer of divine love, and bring others to him by our witness of life transformed by our communion with him.

Fr Roland

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON *(Iluka)*
My eyes are always on the Lord, for he rescues my feet from the snare. Turn to me and have mercy on me, for I am alone and poor.

COLLECT
O God, author of every mercy and of all goodness, who in fasting, prayer and almsgiving have shown us a remedy for sin, look graciously on this confession of our lowliness, that we, who are bowed down by our conscience, may always be lifted up by your mercy. 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 *Exodus 17:3-7*

A reading from the book of Exodus

Tormented by thirst, the people complained against Moses. 'Why did you bring us out of Egypt?' they said. 'Was it so that I should die of thirst, my children too, and my cattle?' Moses appealed to the Lord. 'How am I to deal with this people?' he said. 'A little more and they will stone me!' The Lord said to Moses, 'Take with you some of the elders of Israel and move on to the forefront of the people; take in your hand the staff with which you struck the river, and go. I shall be standing before you there on the rock, at Horeb. You must strike the rock, and water will flow from it for the people to drink.' This is what Moses did, in the sight of the elders of Israel. The place was named Massah and Meribah because of the grumbling of the sons of Israel and because they put the Lord to the test by saying, 'Is the Lord with us, or not?'
The word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM *Ps 94:1-2. 6-9. R. v.8*

R. If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts.

1. Come, ring out our joy to the Lord;
hail the rock who saves us.
Let us come before him, giving thanks,
with songs let us hail the Lord. (R.)

2. Come in; let us bow and bend low;
let us kneel before the God who made us
for he is our God and we
the people who belong to his pasture,
the flock that is led by his hand. (R.)

3. O that today you would listen to his voice!
'Harden not your hearts as at Meribah,
as on that day at Massah in the desert
when your fathers put me to the test;
when they tried me, though they saw my
work.' (R.)

SECOND READING *Romans 5:1-2. 5-8*

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans

Through our Lord Jesus Christ by faith we are judged righteous and at peace with God, since it is by faith and through Jesus that we have entered this state of grace in which we can boast about looking forward to God's glory. This hope is not deceptive, because the love of God has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit which has been given us. We were still helpless when at his appointed moment Christ died for sinful men. It is not easy to die even for a good man – though of course for someone really worthy, a man might be prepared to die – but what proves that God loves us is that Christ died for us while we were still sinners.
The word of the Lord.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Glory to you, Word of God, Lord Jesus Christ!
Lord, you are truly the Saviour of the world; give me living water, that I may never thirst again.
Glory to you, Word of God, Lord Jesus Christ!

GOSPEL *John 4:5-42*

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

Jesus came to the Samaritan town called Sychar, near the land that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Jacob's well is there and Jesus, tired by the journey, sat straight down by the well. It was about the sixth hour. When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, 'Give me a drink.' His disciples had gone into the town to buy food. The Samaritan woman said to him, 'What? You are a Jew and you ask me, a Samaritan, for a drink?' – Jews, in fact, do not associate with Samaritans. Jesus replied:
'If you only knew what God is offering
and who it is that is saying to you:
Give me a drink,
you would have been the one to ask,
and he would have given you living water.'
'You have no bucket, sir,' she answered 'and the well is deep: how could you get this living water? Are you a greater man than our father Jacob who gave us this well and drank from it himself with his sons and his cattle?' Jesus replied:
'Whoever drinks this water
will get thirsty again;
but anyone who drinks the water that I shall give
will never be thirsty again:
the water that I shall give
will turn into a spring inside him, welling up to
eternal life.'
'Sir,' said the woman, 'give me some of that water, so that I may never get thirsty and never have to come here again to draw water.' 'Go and call your husband'

said Jesus to her 'and come back here.' The woman answered, 'I have no husband.' He said to her, 'You are right to say, "I have no husband"; for although you have had five, the one you have now is not your husband. You spoke the truth there.' 'I see you are a prophet, sir' said the woman. 'Our fathers worshipped on this mountain, while you say that Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship.' Jesus said:

'Believe me, woman, the hour is coming
when you will worship the Father
neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem.
You worship what you do not know;
we worship what we do know;
for salvation comes from the Jews.
But the hour will come– in fact it is here already–
when true worshippers will worship the Father in
spirit and truth:
that is the kind of worshipper
the Father wants.
God is spirit,
and those who worship
must worship in spirit and truth.'

The woman said to him, 'I know that Messiah – that is, Christ – is coming; and when he comes he will tell us everything.' 'I who am speaking to you,' said Jesus 'I am he.'

At this point his disciples returned, and were surprised to find him speaking to a woman, though none of them asked, 'What do you want from her?' or, 'Why are you talking to her?' The woman put down her water jar and hurried back to the town to tell the people, 'Come and see a man who has told me everything I ever did; I wonder if he is the Christ?' This brought people out of the town and they started walking towards him.

Meanwhile, the disciples were urging him, 'Rabbi, do have something to eat'; but he said, 'I have food to eat that you do not know about.' So the disciples asked one another, 'Has someone been bringing him food?' But Jesus said:

'My food
is to do the will of the one who sent me,
and to complete his work.
Have you not got a saying:
Four months and then the harvest?
Well, I tell you:
Look around you, look at the fields;
already they are white, ready for harvest!
Already the reaper is being paid his wages,
already he is bringing in the grain for eternal life,
and thus sower and reaper rejoice together.
For here the proverb holds good:
one sows, another reaps;
I sent you to reap
a harvest you had not worked for.
Others worked for it;
and you have come into the rewards of their
trouble.'

Many Samaritans of that town had believed in him on the strength of the woman's testimony when she said, 'He told me all I have ever done', so, when the Samaritans came up to him, they begged him to stay with them. He stayed for two days, and when he spoke to them many more came to believe; and they said to the woman, 'Now we no longer believe because of what you told us; we have heard him ourselves and we know that he really is the saviour of the world.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS
Be pleased, O Lord, with these sacrificial offerings, and grant that we who beseech pardon for our own sins, may take care to forgive our neighbour. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

PREFACE; EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

COMMUNION ANTIPHON (*Iluka*)
For anyone who drinks it, says the Lord, the water I shall give will become in him a spring welling up to eternal life.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION
As we receive the pledge of things yet hidden in heaven and are nourished while still on earth with the Bread that comes from on high, we humbly entreat you, O Lord, that what is being brought about in us in mystery may come to true completion. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

PRAYER OVER THE PEOPLE
Direct, O Lord, we pray, the hearts of your faithful, and in your kindness grant your servants this grace: that, abiding in the love of you and their neighbour, they may fulfil the whole of your commands. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

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SCRIPTURE COMMENTARY
Jesus asks the Samaritan woman for water when in fact he intends to give water. He is not talking about the water that could be drawn from the well. However, his real meaning was not immediately evident, and her misunderstanding is the opening for Jesus' instruction. His knowledge of her marital situation prompts her to call him a prophet and to engage him in a discussion about the proper place to worship God. Once again Jesus moves the conversation away from what is merely perceptible to the level of deep spiritual meaning. He declares that when the eschatological hour arrives, all religious observance will be superseded by worship that is animated by the Spirit. Ultimately it is through this woman that the word of salvation takes root in the hearts of the despised and marginalised and grows into a great harvest. © 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 Gravolin, Ron Weekes, Margaret Donges, Pam Lewis, Matthew & Paul Gallagher, Chris Naismith, Trevor Nicolia, Peter Burns, Matthew Tierney, Matt Mohorovic, Sharon Grayson, Dennis Catheral, Allan Dick. ***Recently Deceased:*** Robert Davis. ***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, 12:00nn, 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

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

MINISTRY ROSTER: 14/15 MARCH 2026
Readers**:** *Yamba*: R Tory/M Dee; *Maclean*: A Smith/J Moloney; *Iluka*: T Sullivan. ***Commentators***: *Yamba*: A Schofield, *Maclean*: S Winter, *Iluka*: A Speirs. ***E Communion***: *Maclean*: J de Roos. ***Count team:*** Neander/Robertson.

READINGS: 14/15 MARCH 2026
First:: 1 Samuel 16:1, 6-7. 10-13; *Second*: Ephesians 5:8-14; *Gospel*: John 9:1-41.

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 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

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: Monoranjon lives in a village in Bangladesh close to the sea, where floods and storms often damage his crops and his home. With support from Project Compassion, he learnt climate-resilient farming techniques and new ways to diversify his income, helping his family survive and build a safer, more sustainable future. Please donate today. You can support Project Compassion 2026 through the 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.

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. Enquiries: Tony Worner, VLCFF.LismoreDiocese@stagnesparish.org.au, 0436 941 280. Learn more about the VLCFF: 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.

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. Organisers are seeking advice regarding contact details or information for ex-students and staff. Please contact Jim O'Donohue M: 0418 761 165 E: jim.odonohue1960@gmail.com