

CATHOLIC PARISH OF ST MARY'S MACLEAN



ST JOHNS CHURCH



ST MARYS CHURCH



ST JAMES CHURCH

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FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER, YEAR A: 26 APRIL 2026

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ: the fourth Sunday of Easter is called Good Shepherd Sunday. In the prayers and readings, the image of a shepherd is used to describe the risen Christ and the image of a sheep is used for his Christian disciples.

In the Collect, Jesus is described as the “brave Shepherd” who has gone to heaven and Christians are portrayed as “humble flock” who are being led to the joys of heaven. In the Prayer after Communion, the eternal Father is also referred to as “kind Shepherd” and the baptised as his “flock” redeemed by the Precious Blood of his Son Jesus. In other words, inseparable in their divine nature and their divine work for our salvation, the Father and the Son are both characterised as Shepherd. The readings elaborate on Jesus as our Good Shepherd.

In the first reading, Acts 2: 14, 36-41, Peter says that God has made Jesus whom you crucified both Lord and Christ.” As God, the eternal Son is “shepherd.” But when he became man, his humanity, Jesus of Nazareth, was the living instrument of his divine presence and saving work in the world. During his public ministry, Jesus went around proclaiming the Good News that the Reign of God was near. His humanity, though united with his divinity, still experienced the limitations of being human. However, when he resurrected, his humanity has been permeated by God and the power of the Holy Spirit.

The risen humanity of Christ is transformed and now shares in the power and glory of God. As such he is made both “Lord and Christ.” ‘Lord’, the Greek word for the substitute for YHWH, is used here to say that the risen humanity of Jesus has been totally filled with divine life. It has been ‘divinised.’ Christ, the Greek translation of the word messiah, anointed one, is used here to say that the risen Jesus is filled with the power of the Holy Spirit. “Lord and Christ”, the risen Jesus leads and cares for us our Good Shepherd. Not limited by space and time, he is always present offering his spiritual guidance and assistance.

The responsorial psalm describes God as a ‘shepherd’ and identifies his responsibilities. “It is the responsibility of the shepherd to find pastures that will provide enough grazing and abundant water for the

entire flock, to lead them there without allowing any of the sheep to stray and be lost, to guard them from predators or dangers of any kind, and to attend to their every need. Such a characterisation of the Lord implies trust that God will discharge all these responsibilities” (Sr Dianne Bergant CSA). Indeed, God has performed these responsibilities in Jesus who continues to do so especially through the ministers in the Church.

In the second reading, 1 Peter 2:20-25, St Peter says: “You had gone astray like sheep but now you have come back to the shepherd and guardian of your souls.” Jesus, the Good Shepherd, suffered and died for us. His death and resurrection has reconciled us with God. By baptism, we sinners return to God and by active discipleship remain in communion with him. Christians can still go astray like sheep. But after wandering away from him, they return to him by repentance and active discipleship in the Church, they will be safe and will prosper.

Finally, in the gospel, John 10:1-10, “Jesus uses several features from sheep herding to characterise the relationship between himself and his followers. First he identifies himself as the shepherd and contrasts the way he guides, guards and nurtures the sheep with the way others might regard the sheep only as potential objects of immediate ill-gotten profit. For their part, the sheep will recognise the sound of their shepherd’s voice and will follow him. Jesus then uses the technical phrase ‘I am’ in his characterisation of himself as the gate. Those who go through this gate will be safe within the pen. As both shepherd and gate of the sheepfold, Jesus is concerned with the welfare of the sheep” (Sr Dianne Bergant CSA).

As sheep of the Good Shepherd, let us stay close to him, let us train ourselves to be sensitive and responsive to his guidance and inspirations. In this Mass let us pray especially for the bishops, priests and deacons who through their ministries of teaching, sanctifying and governing, sacramentally make present the person and saving work of the risen Jesus, our Good Shepherd.

Fr Roland

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON (*Iluka*)

The merciful love of the Lord fills the earth; by the word of the Lord the heavens were made, alleluia.

COLLECT

Almighty ever-living God, lead us to a share in the joys of heaven, so that the humble flock may reach where the brave Shepherd has gone before. Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

FIRST READING *Acts of the Apostles 2:14. 36-41*

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

On the day of Pentecost Peter stood up with the Eleven and addressed the crowd with a loud voice: 'The whole House of Israel can be certain that God has made this Jesus whom you crucified both Lord and Christ.'

Hearing this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the apostles, 'What must we do, brothers?' 'You must repent,' Peter answered 'and every one of you must be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise that was made is for you and your children, and for all those who are far away, for all those whom the Lord our God will call to himself.' He spoke to them for a long time using many arguments, and he urged them, 'Save yourselves from this perverse generation.' They were convinced by his arguments, and they accepted what he said and were baptised. That very day about three thousand were added to their number.

The word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM *Ps 22:1-6. 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

1 Peter 2:20-25

A reading from the first letter of St Peter

The merit, in the sight of God, is in bearing punishment patiently when you are punished after doing your duty.

This, in fact, is what you were called to do, because Christ suffered for you and left an example for you to follow the way he took. He had not done anything wrong, and there had been no perjury in his mouth. He was insulted and did not retaliate with insults; when he was tortured he made no threats but he put his trust in the righteous judge. He was bearing our faults in his own body on the cross, so that we might die to our faults and live for holiness; through his wounds you have been healed. You had gone astray like sheep but now you have come back to the shepherd and guardian of your souls.

The word of the Lord.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

John 10:14

Alleluia, alleluia!

I am the good shepherd, says the Lord; I know my sheep, and mine know me.

Alleluia!

GOSPEL

John 10:1-10

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

Jesus said: 'I tell you most solemnly, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold through the gate, but gets in some other way is a thief and a brigand. The one who enters through the gate is the shepherd of the flock; the gatekeeper lets him in, the sheep hear his voice, one by one he calls his own sheep and leads them out. When he has brought out his flock, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow because they know his voice. They never follow a stranger but run away from him: they do not recognise the voice of strangers.'

Jesus told them this parable but they failed to understand what he meant by telling it to them.

So Jesus spoke to them again:

'I tell you most solemnly,

I am the gate of the sheepfold.
 All others who have come
 are thieves and brigands;
 but the sheep took no notice of them.
 I am the gate.
 Anyone who enters through me will be safe:
 he will go freely in and out
 and be sure of finding pasture.
 The thief comes
 only to steal and kill and destroy.
 I have come
 so that they may have life
 and have it to the full.’
 The Gospel of the Lord.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Grant, we pray, O Lord, that we may always find delight in these paschal mysteries, so that the renewal constantly at work within us may be the cause of our unending joy. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

PREFACE; EUCHARISTIC PRAYER III

COMMUNION ANTIPHON (*Iluka*)

The Good Shepherd has risen, who laid down his life for his sheep and willingly died for his flock, alleluia.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Look upon your flock, kind Shepherd, and be pleased to settle in eternal pastures the sheep you have Redeemed by the Precious Blood of your Son. Who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

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SCRIPTURE COMMENTARY

Today’s readings feature a series of themes loosely connected around the ‘Shepherd-Sheep’ image. This venerable image reaches right back to the tradition that the first king of the royal house of Judah, David, was originally a young shepherd (1 Sam 16:11-13). Instead of lording it over their subjects like the rulers of other peoples, Israelite kings were meant primarily to be shepherds for the people. Few kings lived up to this standard. But the long awaited Messiah, Son of David, was expected to be the ‘Good Shepherd’ par excellence.

Today’s Gospel (John 10:1-10) comes from the first half of an entire

chapter (10) the Fourth Gospel devotes to this theme. The passage builds up to Jesus’ solemn claim (unfortunately not included in the reading): ‘I am the Good Shepherd’ (v 11). Leading up to this is a series of related images, each of which presupposes an understanding of how shepherding functioned in ancient Palestine. During the day sheep grazed on the open hillsides under the watchful eyes of their shepherds. At nightfall the shepherds led them down to large communal sheepfolds, where mingled sheep from a number of flocks could remain safe for the night with just one gatekeeper to watch over them. At daybreak, when the shepherds returned, each would summon the sheep of the flock for which he was responsible. Recognising the voice of their shepherd, the sheep would follow his lead out to pasture through the gate of the fold.

Inevitably there would be attempts to steal sheep from the fold during the night. Thieves would succeed only if they got into the fold by some means other than the gate and also only if they could get sheep to follow their call. Sheep attuned to their own shepherd’s voice would not follow the call of a stranger and so would not be in danger of being removed from the fold.

We can now bring this understanding to the series of images used by Jesus in the Gospel. The central idea is that of the intimate knowledge that should exist between a shepherd and sheep: he knows his sheep, they recognise his voice and willingly follow his call. Jesus contrasts a ‘good shepherd’ like this with others who come only to steal, harass, and ultimately destroy sheep that do not belong to them.

Within the same basic image, however, Jesus identifies himself not only with the shepherd but also with the Gate of the sheepfold: ‘I am the Gate of the sheepfold.’ This adds a fresh dimension. If the sheep are to flourish, they have to come and go through the gate of the fold; if they stay within the fold, they will decline for lack of pasture. If they do not return to the fold but stay out in the hillsides all night, they will be at risk. So daily they have to come and go through the gate, which then becomes their means of access to both protection and growth. By describing himself as ‘the Gate of the sheepfold’ Jesus is indicating that only through vital and continual interaction with himself will members of the community find life and growth. In this sense he ‘has come that they may have life and have it to the full’, (v. 10), that is, beyond life as mere existence, to have the ‘eternal life’ that is a share in the undying life of God. In this sense several of the verses of Psalm 22, used as the Responsorial Psalm, become very appropriate.



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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: Audrey Hancock, Ben & Nadine Shaw, Patrick Wheeler, Maree Hammond, Denise & Bob, Tim Scherger, Jan Taylor, Miriam Scherger, Kathy Leseberg, Ava Blay, Mark Thurbon, Alma Bailey, Mary Wiseman, Sue Gravalin, Ron Weekes, Pam Lewis, Matthew & Paul Gallagher, Chris Naismith, Trevor Nicolai, Peter Burns, Matthew Tierney, Sharon Grayson, Dennis Cathedral, Allan Dick. **Recently Deceased:** Margaret Donges, Maree Hammond, Mary Thorne, Dennis Neville, Nathan Mifsud. **Anniversary:** Mark Leseberg, William Ellem, Douglas Henry Starr Snr, Joe Robertson **Pray for:** Jurgen Zoller, John Fox, Towell, Baker, Gough & Robertson families, Fran Eckersley, Robyn Smith, Pam Sutherland 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

EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION:

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

MINISTRY ROSTER: 2/3 MAY 2026

Readers: Yamba: St James Primary School; Maclean: C Newton/R Harvey; Iluka: D Speirs. **Commentators:** Yamba: St James Primary School; Maclean: S Winter, Iluka: I Durham. **E Communion:** Maclean: J de Roos. **Count team:** Robertson/Stephenson.

READINGS: 2/3 MAY 2026

First: Acts of the Apostles 6:1-7 **Second:** 1 Peter 2:4-9;
Gospel: John 14:1-12

NEWS & EVENTS

Emergency contact: In case of emergency outside of parish office hours, contact Fr Roland 0401 508 812.

New office days/times: Monday, Wednesday, Friday: 9:00am-2:30pm.

Parish bulletin online: Our bulletin is now uploaded weekly to our website <http://stmarysparish.org.au>

Confirmation 2026: will be held on Wednesday 29th April 2026 at St. Mary's church, Maclean. Please pray

for the candidates of Confirmation: Lachlan, Rudy, Charlotte, Bronte, Letty, Lewis, James, Fletcher, Taura, James, Nick, Alfie, Jack, Leo, Ben, Will, Millie, Alexis, Callie, Karla, Indiannah, Harper, Zayden, Aleaha and Willow.

Baptism: Welcome to the Family of God Evelyn, who is getting baptised in our parish this weekend.

First Saturday Devotion: Next Saturday, 2 May, 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.

The 6th National Count of Attendance at Mass and Other (Sunday) Assemblies will take place in May 2026. This year marks a significant milestone—25 years of national attendance data, beginning with the first count in 2001. The 2026 results will provide valuable insights into long-term trends, particularly in understanding the ongoing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, which influenced attendance patterns in 2021.

Vocations view: During April in the Mass, we celebrate the expansion of the Church and the spread of the Gospel. The good news of Jesus risen transforms lives. Is God calling you to be a minister of his Gospel as a deacon or priest to transform lives? Contact Vocations Lismore to consider your call. vocations@lismore.catholic.org

Passionist Family Group Movement: Please see the latest copy of the newsletter on the noticeboard.

Funerals: Maree Hammond at 10:00am on Thursday 30th April in St John's Iluka. Margaret Donges at 2:00pm on Friday 1st May in St James' Yamba.

Thinking of Becoming a Catholic? Contact Fr Roland 0401508 812

Preschool in St James School DA Application: We are excited to announce that we are supporting St James Catholic Primary School to submit a Development Application (DA) for a proposed new on-site preschool. If approved, the preschool building would be funded by the NSW Government's New and Upgraded Pre-School Funding Program. The proposed preschool would provide a high-quality early years education program for local children and in time support potentially a smooth and connected transition into Kindergarten at St James in line with diocesan policy.

Safeguarding: If you or a person close to you has been abused by someone working or ministering within the Diocese of Lismore, we ask you to contact us. We will listen to you respectfully: offer support and discuss options you have available to you. Contact the Safeguarding Office – Phone: (02) 66219444 or Email: safeguarding@lismore.catholic.org.au