

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

TWELFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, YEAR A: 21 JUNE 2026

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, we hear in the gospel this Sunday the instruction of our Lord Jesus to the Twelve disciples who are about to be sent to preach the nearness of the Kingdom of God by words and miraculous deeds. He tells them: "Do not be afraid!" When the light of God's presence and action finally disturbs those who prefer to live in darkness of sin, they inevitably react by showing opposition. They will be persecuted.

They will be persecuted like the true prophets of their history have been. The first reading reminds us of prophet Jeremiah who was persecuted by his own people for conveying the word of God. He lived ca 626-586 before Christ. He was appointed as a prophet when he was a teenager. On one occasion, Jeremiah openly accused the authorities of misleading the people and warned his fellow countrymen that disaster was near. Offended by his words, the leaders turned against him and began to persecute him. They imprisoned him, beat him, and threw him into a muddy cistern.

Today's passage opens with the crowd reacting to Jeremiah's prophetic words and even attempting to lynch him. He feels isolated—cut off from his people, estranged from his family, and rejected by the community—all because he remains faithful to the word of God. Despite these trials and persecutions, Jeremiah comes to realise that God remains by his side: "The Lord is at my side, a mighty hero." From that conviction, he speaks words of hope and trust, confident that God will eventually act and bring justice to victory.

St Paul in the second reading in a way explains the ultimate cause why human beings reject God's word and offer of salvation. Reaction to the light of God's word is ultimately caused by our sinful condition of being spiritually cut off from God together with the inordinate self-love that comes with this fallen situation. He begins by teaching that sin entered human history from the beginning and disrupted God's plan. Over the centuries, people continued to act with pride, injustice, and disobedience. Like Adam, and because of the fallen condition brought about by his

sin, they turned away from God. As a result of original sin—our spiritual separation from God and the weakness it brings—we are naturally inclined to resist God's light, love, and life.

Jesus came to reconcile us with God and bring us salvation. In perfect obedience to the Father, he embraced his will even to the point of death. Adam's sin brought spiritual death, but the grace won through Christ's obedience far surpasses the damage caused by sin. Through Christ's merits, God offers humanity a share in his own life. Those who believe in him and follow him in the Church are freed from original sin and continually strengthened to do God's will through his word, the sacraments, and works of charity.

In the gospel Jesus tells his disciples that they will experience persecutions. He knows that fear is the worst possible enemy of anybody who wants to announce the gospel and tell the truth. People who are afraid are paralysed. As he sends his disciples into the world, Jesus warns them of this danger. He repeats to them three times: Do not be afraid! Those who proclaim the Gospel may fear that the violence of Christ's enemies will cause them to fail in their mission. But Christ reassures them: despite trials and suffering, his message will continue to spread and transform the world. No enemy or evil force can overturn God's plan. The work of his disciples is never in vain, even if they are put to death.

Although the enemy may harm the disciples outwardly, no violence can take from them the divine life they have received from God through faith and faithful discipleship. What they must truly fear is anything that could lead them to lose that life. It is lost through mortal sin—that is, grave sin committed with full knowledge and deliberate consent. They have to do their best to defend and preserve the gift of their communion of life and love with God. God's help is always available in this working out of our salvation.

As we celebrate Mass today, let us ask the Lord to empower us anew that we may have the courage to live our Christian faith and be witnesses to His saving presence. *Fr Roland*

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON (*Iluka*)

The Lord is the strength of his people, a saving refuge for the one he has anointed. Save your people, Lord, and bless your heritage, and govern them for ever.

COLLECT

Grant, O Lord, that we may always revere and love your holy name, for you never deprive of your guidance those you set firm on the foundation of your love. 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*Jeremiah 20:10-13*

A reading from the prophet Jeremiah

Jeremiah said: 'I hear so many disparaging me, "Terror from every side! Denounce him! Let us denounce him!" All those who used to be my friends watched for my downfall, "Perhaps he will be seduced into error. Then we will master him and take our revenge!" But the Lord is at my side, a mighty hero; my opponents will stumble, mastered, confounded by their failure; everlasting, unforgettable disgrace will be theirs. But you, Lord of Hosts, you who probe with justice, who scrutinise the loins and heart, let me see the vengeance you will take on them, for I have committed my cause to you. Sing to the Lord, praise the Lord, for he has delivered the soul of the needy from the hands of evil men.'

The word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM*Ps 68:8-10. 14. 17. 33-35. R. v.14*

(R.) Lord, in your great love, answer me.

1. It is for you that I suffer taunts,
that shame covers my face,
that I have become a stranger to my brothers,
an alien to my own mother's sons.
I burn with zeal for your house
and taunts against you fall on me. (R.)
2. This is my prayer to you,
my prayer for your favour.
In your great love, answer me, O God,
with your help that never fails:
Lord, answer, for your love is kind;
in your compassion, turn towards me. (R.)
3. The poor when they see it will be glad
and God-seeking hearts will revive;
for the Lord listens to the needy
and does not spurn his servants in their chains.
Let the heavens and the earth give him praise,
the sea and all its living creatures. (R.)

SECOND READING*Romans 5:12-15*

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans

Sin entered the world through one man, and through sin death, and thus death has spread through the whole human race because everyone has sinned. Sin existed in the world long before the Law was given. There was no law and so no one could be accused of the sin of 'law-breaking', yet death reigned over all from Adam to Moses, even though their sin, unlike that of Adam, was not a matter of breaking a law.

Adam prefigured the One to come, but the gift itself considerably outweighed the fall. If it is certain that through one man's fall so many died, it is even more certain that divine grace, coming through the one man, Jesus Christ, came to so many as an abundant free gift.

The word of the Lord.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION*John 15:26. 27*

Alleluia, alleluia!

The Spirit of Truth will bear witness to me, says the Lord, and you also will be my witnesses.

Alleluia!

GOSPEL*Matthew 10:26-33*

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

Jesus instructed the Twelve as follows: 'Do not be afraid. For everything that is now covered will be uncovered, and everything now hidden will be made clear. What I say to you in the dark, tell in the daylight; what you hear in whispers, proclaim from the house-tops.

'Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; fear him rather who can destroy both body and soul in hell. Can you not buy two sparrows for a penny? And yet not one falls to the ground without your Father knowing. Why, every hair on your head has been counted. So there is no need to be afraid; you are worth more than hundreds of sparrows.

'So if anyone declares himself for me in the presence of men, I will declare myself for him in the presence of my Father in heaven. But the one who disowns me in the presence of men, I will disown in the presence of my Father in heaven.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Receive, O Lord, the sacrifice of conciliation and praise and grant that, cleansed by its action, we may make offering of a heart pleasing to you. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

PREFACE VI OF THE SUNDAYS IN ORDINARY TIME

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER III

COMMUNION ANTIPHON (*Iluka*)

The eyes of all look to you, Lord, and you give them their food in due season.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Renewed and nourished by the Sacred Body and Precious Blood of your Son, we ask of your mercy, O Lord, that what we celebrate with constant devotion may be our sure pledge of redemption. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

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SCRIPTURE COMMENTARY

Any lingering joy of Eastertide seems to have receded this Sunday. The readings focus rather relentlessly upon the phenomenon of evil in the world and the fate that appears to await those who would seek to confront it in fidelity to the Gospel.

The tone is set in the First Reading, from Jeremiah 20:10-13. From this most autobiographical of the prophetic books, we have a passage where Jeremiah reflects at length upon the difficulty of his vocation and, above all, of the message of woe he has to deliver to his fellow citizens. Though this brings down upon himself hostility from every side, he remains confident that the Lord, to whom he has 'committed his cause', will vindicate him in the end.

The prophetic vocation seen so poignantly in the figure of Jeremiah sets the pattern for the instruction Jesus gives in the Gospel, Matthew 10:26-33. Part of a much longer discourse (10:1-42) that begins simply as an instruction addressed to the Twelve (10:1-16), the extract set down for today speaks to a wider audience of believers in respect to the challenges they will face in attempting to live and give witness to the Gospel.

The text is governed by the recurring refrain, 'Do not fear', 'Do not be afraid ...'. Jesus recognises that there will be much that will cause his disciples to be afraid but tries to get them to distinguish appropriate from inappropriate fear. There is a false fear and a true fear. Disciples need not fear those (human persecutors) who can kill the body, because their entire physical existence is held within the hands of God and is precious in God's sight: if God values the life of sparrows sold two for a penny, marking when they fall to the ground, how much more does the heavenly Father value and protect the lives of believers, worth more than hundreds of sparrows! Those who stand firm in witness to the Gospel and the values it enshrines, even to the point of death, can

be confident that their ultimate fate lies in the hand of God and will one day be vindicated.

The only valid fear for disciples should be that of falling out of God's favour and so of losing, not one's body, but one's soul. The object of the fear in the injunction, 'Fear him, rather, who can destroy both body and soul in hell', can be understood in a number of ways. The 'him' could refer to a human persecutor or adversary, but it could also be a reference to God. Preachers may want to shy away from the latter interpretation and the image of God it suggests. It has, nonetheless, a good claim to originality and ought not be easily set aside. This is a Gospel which readily illustrates the adage that Christianity is comforting but not comfortable. The evangelist (Matthew) presents Jesus as insisting that the Gospel is not something to be talked about and lived behind closed doors. It – and the values it enshrines – demands public witness and proclamation.

This is the point of the opening sentences about 'proclaiming from housetops, what you hear in whispers.' To simply 'whisper' the gospel among themselves will perhaps preserve believers from public hostility and threat. But it will do so only for a time since 'all that is now covered, will one day come to light.' Moreover, it will amount to 'disowning' Jesus in the presence of human beings in a way that will cause him to disown such followers in the presence of his Father.

The challenge of today's Gospel may seem remote from the experience of Christians in Western societies today. It will have a far greater immediacy for the growing number of believers who have to live out their commitment as a minority in a surrounding sea of fundamentalism and intolerance. Like the prophet Jeremiah they can only say to the Lord, 'My cause is with you.' The challenge for Christians not currently living in such situations will be to question a far too easy symbiosis between discipleship and surrounding cultural mores.

The short extract from Romans 5 in the Second Reading (5:12-15) can form an appropriate background to this sense of Christian witness confronting the world's evil. Paul describes the universal spread of evil throughout the world. Though cast as something that happened 'back there' through Adam, it is really not about 'back there' at all. It bears upon the present situation in the world and about the way in which God has addressed and continues to address it in the person of Jesus Christ. God addresses it victoriously because the gift of grace that comes in Christ abundantly 'outweighs' the negative, death-dealing legacy symbolised in Adam.

Fr Brendan Byrne SJ

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: Maureen Robertson, Clive McLachlan, Audrey Hancock, Ben & Nadine Shaw, Patrick Wheeler, 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 Nicolola, Peter Burns, Matthew Tierney, Sharon Grayson, Dennis Cathedral, Allan Dick. **Recently Deceased:** Jennifer Nicholson, Judith Want. **Anniversary:** Rodney Couper, Bonnie Tonkin, Col McDonald, Bill Wolff, Kathleen Sullivan. **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: 27/28 JUNE 2026

Readers: Yamba: P Edgar/B Montgomery; Maclean: C Newton/L Senz; Iluka: H Naug. **Commentators:** Yamba: F Robertson; Maclean: J de Roos, Iluka: T Sullivan. **E Communion:** Maclean: J Moloney. **Count team:** Davies/Stephenson.

READINGS: 27/28 JUNE 2026

First: 2 Kings 4:8-11. 14-16; **Second:** Romans 6:3-4. 8-11; **Gospel:** 1 Peter 2:9.

NEWS & EVENTS

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

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>

Thinking of Becoming a Catholic? Contact Fr Roland 0401508 812

Mission Today Autumn/Winter 2026 issue: please

find copies at the church entrance.

Ignite Conference 2026: This youth conference will be held in Darwin on 19-21 June, Sydney 9-12 July, and Brisbane 24-27 September. This national youth conference is a real world formation with something for everyone. For more information see hello@igniteyouth.com or the poster on the notice board.

Diocesan Investment Fund Interest rate 3.90% effective 1/6/26: For further information and our current interest rate, please visit our website www.dif.org.au or contact us on 1800 802 516.

ASPIRE Young Adults Spiritual Formation invitation: Please see the noticeboard for the dates on the poster.

Subscribe to our Diocesan newsletters: Join our online community and receive news, inspiration and updates across the diocese. Catholic Life Magazine, The Light, Youth Newsletter and Renewal Journey Newsletter. Subscribe to our newsletters to stay connected via the QR code on the noticeboard.

Eucharist28 Update—Hearts Set Ablaze!: The international Eucharistic Congress in Sydney 2028 ('Eucharist28') will be a global gathering of the Church centred on the Eucharist, the source and summit of our Christian lives, culminating in a Papal Mass with Pope Leo XIV. It will be a festival of faith, rich and worship, prayer, testimonies, art, music—a truly 'once in a lifetime' experience, and a transformative moment for our nation. For more information and regular updates, please register on the website: eucharist28.org

Planned giving envelopes: the planned giving envelopes for the upcoming financial year are now available for collection.

Working with Children Week is from 22 to 28 June 2026. This year's theme, Start safe: smarter recruitment for child safety, is less about compliance and more about judgement. It's a reminder that child safety is built through people, culture and systems, often long before a child ever walks through the door.

Part-time cook position: Lismore Congregation of the Presentation Sisters are seeking applicants. Please see the noticeboard for the job advertisement.

Pastoral Council Meeting: This month's meeting is on Thursday 25 June at 5pm in the Cranny room.

Baptisms: Welcome to the family of God Gundry, Dacia and Ethelwyn who are being baptised in our parish this weekend.