

CATHOLIC PARISH OF ST MARY'S MACLEAN



ST JOHN'S CHURCH



ST MARY'S 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

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, YEAR A: 2 AUGUST 2026

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, the Lord saves the whole human person who is a union of body and soul. He nourishes not only our spiritual lives with his divine life, light and love, but also our physical or biological life with bodily and material blessings.

In the first reading, Isaiah 55:1-3, the Lord invites his hearers then and now to come to the water that he offers for free, and to listen to him so that they may have good things to eat and rich food to enjoy. In this poetic passage, Mark O'Brien, an Old Testament bible scholar says, "God is portrayed as a hawker in a market who offers the kind of deal that no consumer, ancient or modern, could resist: unlimited and free supplies of the best of everything. Of course, this is designed to emphasise the generosity of God rather than encourage rampant consumerism. It also plays cleverly with two meanings of eating and drinking. The obvious one is food and drink leading to physical well-being. The other or more spiritual meaning of 'eating and drinking' is imbibing and absorbing God's teaching. The poem may be echoing the famous text in Deut 8:3 that 'one does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord'." In other words, the Lord nourishes both body and soul. However, this does not mean that those who believe in God and his Son Jesus Christ will not experience any bodily suffering.

In the second reading, Romans 8:35, 37-39, St Paul tells us that experience of bodily and psychological sufferings does not necessarily mean that God has abandoned us or punished us for sins committed. In this passage, St Paul "challenges the theory of retribution which held that good will be rewarded and evil will be punished. He argues that sometimes the opposite is true – the righteous, precisely because they are righteous, enter into the sufferings of Christ. Their misfortune does not separate them from Christ; it unites them with him. ... [St] Paul insists that neither the sufferings of this life nor death itself has power over the bond of love that joins believers to Christ" (Sr Dianne Bergant).

St Paul proclaims: Nothing can come "between us and the love of God made visible in Christ Jesus our

Lord." Nothing in this world, nothing physical or material, nothing external to our free choice, has the power to separate us, his disciples, from the love of Christ. Thanks to his grace, no circumstance or created power outside ourselves is capable of severing the communion that joins us to the risen Christ. His faithful love is the source of our strength amidst sufferings. It is only our free choice to commit serious or mortal sin that can destroy our communion of love with God made visible in Christ Jesus our Lord.

In the Gospel, Matthew 14:13-21, the Lord heals the sick and feeds the people who came to hear his teaching. St Matthew tells us that Jesus took pity on the large crowd that followed him in the desert. He felt compassion for them. His love is expressed in attending to the physical needs of the people: curing their sickness and giving them something to eat. He did not stop at teaching them with heavenly doctrines that fed their spiritual lives. He took practical steps to respond to their bodily needs as well.

Jesus fed the people by miraculously multiplying the food that those who were there already possessed: five loaves and two fish. In other words, Jesus employs the gifts or possessions we already have, if we are willing to share them, to feed others. He will bless and multiply what we can give him to respond to the physical need of others. What Jesus did continues to be realised in our communities today. Through us, his disciples, he keeps feeding people in our communities in this time.

Finally, the gesture of Jesus taking the bread and fish, and saying a blessing, breaking the loaves and giving them to the people anticipated his gesture over the bread and wine at the Last Supper where he instituted the Eucharist. Every time we celebrate the Eucharist, he feeds us with his word and his Body. In receiving him in Holy Communion, he inspires us anew to have compassion on the needy. Let us ask the Lord in this Mass to make us living instruments of his mercy in our community.

Fr Roland

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON (*Iluka*)

O God, come to my assistance; O Lord, make haste to help me! You are my rescuer, my help; O Lord, do not delay.

COLLECT

Draw near to your servants, O Lord, and answer their prayers with unceasing kindness, that, for those who glory in you as their Creator and guide, you may restore what you have created and keep safe what you have restored. 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*Isaiah 55:1-3*

A reading from the prophet Isaiah

Thus says the Lord:

Oh, come to the water all you who are thirsty;
though you have no money, come!

Buy corn without money, and eat,
and, at no cost, wine and milk.

Why spend money on what is not bread,
your wages on what fails to satisfy?

Listen, listen to me and you will have good things to eat

and rich food to enjoy.

Pay attention, come to me;
listen, and your soul will live.

With you I will make an everlasting covenant
out of the favours promised to David.

The word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM *Ps 144:8-9. 15-18. R. v.16*

(R.) *The hand of the Lord feeds us:
he answers all our needs.*

1. The Lord is kind and full of compassion,
slow to anger, abounding in love.
How good is the Lord to all,
compassionate to all his creatures. (R.)
2. The eyes of all creatures look to you
and you give them their food in due time.
You open wide your hand,
grant the desires of all who live. (R.)
3. The Lord is just in all his ways
and loving in all his deeds.
He is close to all who call him,
call on him from their hearts. (R.)

SECOND READING*Romans 8:35. 37-39*

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans

Nothing can come between us and the love of Christ, even if we are troubled or worried, or being persecuted, or lacking food or clothes, or being threatened or even attacked. These are the trials through which we triumph, by the power of him who loved us.

For I am certain of this: neither death nor life, no angel, no prince, nothing that exists, nothing still to come, not any power, or height or depth, nor any created thing, can ever come between us and the love of God made visible in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The word of the Lord.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION*Matthew 4:4*

Alleluia, alleluia!

No one lives on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.

Alleluia!

GOSPEL*Matthew 14:13-21*

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

When Jesus received the news of John the Baptist's death he withdrew by boat to a lonely place where they could be by themselves. But the people heard of this and, leaving the towns, went after him on foot. So as he stepped ashore he saw a large crowd; and he took pity on them and healed their sick.

When evening came, the disciples went to him and said, 'This is a lonely place, and the time has slipped by; so send the people away, and they can go to the villages to buy themselves some food.' Jesus replied, 'There is no need for them to go: give them something to eat yourselves.' But they answered, 'All we have with us is five loaves and two fish.' 'Bring them here to me,' he said. He gave orders that the people were to sit down on the grass; then he took the five loaves and the two fish, raised his eyes to heaven and said the blessing. And breaking the loaves he handed them to his disciples who gave them to the crowds. They all ate as much as they wanted, and they collected the scraps remaining, twelve baskets full. Those who ate numbered about five thousand men, to say nothing of women and children.

The Gospel of the Lord.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Graciously sanctify these gifts, O Lord, we pray, and, accepting the oblation of this spiritual sacrifice, make of us an eternal offering to you. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

PREFACE VI: SUNDAYS IN ORDINARY TIME**EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER III**

COMMUNION ANTIPHON (*Iluka*)

You have given us, O Lord, bread from heaven,
endowed with all delights and sweetness in every
taste.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Accompany with constant protection, O Lord, those
you renew with these heavenly gifts and, in your
never-failing care for them, make them worthy of
eternal redemption. 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.

SCRIPTURE COMMENTARY

The theme uniting the readings this week is clearly
that of the boundless generosity of God: God gives
freely and God gives in extravagant measure.

This note is struck in the First Reading, Isaiah 55:1-3.
To the Israelites, who have known such a miserable
existence during the Exile, the prophet holds out a
vision of the messianic age (note the ‘favours
promised to David’). While the corn, wine and milk
that is freely offered may refer in first instance to
these foods in a material sense, the invitation to
‘come to the water’ echoes language associated in
other parts of scripture with divine Wisdom (Proverbs
3; 8; Sirach 4; John 7:37-39). This suggests that what
is really on offer is a divine enhancement of life for
which, in the depths of their being, most people thirst.
All forms of spirituality, all techniques of prayer,
seek to tap this source of life, which is the gift of God
alone and which, like a perpetual spring of water, is
freely given.

The episode of the Multiplication of the Loaves that
forms the Gospel, Matthew 14:13-21, looks
backwards to biblical traditions about God’s generous
provision of food, such as the manna in the
wilderness (Exodus 16; Numbers 11) and the
multiplication miracle of the prophet Elisha (2 Kings
4:42-44); it looks forwards to the gift of the Eucharist
and, ultimately, to the final banquet in the Kingdom
of God, of which the Eucharist is a foretaste and
prefiguration.

Herod’s execution of John the Baptist (Matt 14:1-12)
has highlighted the danger in which Jesus himself
now stands. So he seeks to withdraw, going by boat
to a lonely place. The people, however, thwart this
move, gathering in large numbers to meet him as
soon as he steps ashore. In Matthew’s account what
they particularly seek from Jesus is healing (in Mark
6:34 he ‘teaches’). When, despite his desire to
withdraw, he accedes to their needs, they show no
inclination to disperse. So the disciples, functioning
rather like ‘minders’ attached to a celebrity, urge him
to send the crowds off to nearby villages to buy
provisions for the night.

‘Buy’ seems to be the word that sparks off Jesus’
response. Jesus will not send people away to ‘buy’
anything – nor should his disciples (cf. the First
Reading): ‘There is no need for them to go; give them
something to eat yourselves.’ When the astonished
disciples point out that they barely have enough for
themselves (five loaves and two fish),
Jesus freely provides more than enough food for the
whole multitude through the miracle of the
multiplication.

[...]The fact that the tradition appears no less than six
times across all four Gospels (twice in Matthew and
Mark; once in Luke and John) points to its
theological significance in the early Christian
tradition. ... Central to the theological significance is
the way in which the episode anticipates the
institution of the Eucharist. Jesus’ gestures – ‘taking
(the loaves)’, ‘blessing’, ‘breaking’, ‘giving’ –
foreshadow those at the Last Supper (Matt 26:26).
The Evangelist expects that readers will understand
that when they participate in the Eucharist they are
experiencing the same divine hospitality that the
Galilean crowds in this ‘lonely place’ experienced
from Jesus. Instead of having to go off and ‘buy’
provisions, God satisfies their hunger in abundance
(‘all ate as much as they wanted’). The twelve baskets
of leftover fragments highlight the abundance. Even
the final comment about women and children not
being included in the reckoning, grating as it sounds
to our more gender-inclusive ears, by enhancing the
number of people fed, reinforces the same sense of
abundant generosity.

The miraculous feeding and the Eucharist which it
foreshadows make clear that what God wants to do
for humanity is simply be a most generous Host at the
banquet of eternal life. At the same time, since it
depicts people being fed with real food, it is also
‘sacramental’ in the sense of bearing directly upon
the problem of hunger still affecting so large a
proportion of our world. The Lord who looked upon
the large crowd and took pity on them, looks with
similar eyes upon our world and instructs us, as he
instructed his disciples, ‘Give them something to eat
yourselves’. In the words of Pedro Arrupe, ‘The
Eucharist will never be complete so long as people
still go hungry in our world.’ © Brendan Byrne SJ

EUCHARIST28 (eucharist28.org)

In 2028, Australia will host the 54th International
Eucharistic Congress, an extraordinary global
encounter with Jesus Christ in the Eucharist. Pilgrims
from around the world will come together. “At every
Mass, the celebration of the Eucharist is a moment of
communion where we are all united in Christ, whose
body and blood we share. Through sharing the
Eucharist, we draw closer to each other and to God.
In the Scriptures, Jesus tells us that “Whoever eats
my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I
will raise them up on the last day.” (John 6:54)

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: Ann Burns, Maureen Robertson, Clive McLachlan, 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 Nicolai, Peter Burns, Matthew Tierney, Sharon Grayson, Dennis Catheral, Allan Dick. **Recently Deceased:** Audrey Hancock. **Anniversary:** Kirsty Cox, Patricia Ann Newman (Trish), Dulcinderberry. **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

EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION:

First Wednesday: 10:00am, Yamba

First Saturday: 12:00pm, Maclean

MINISTRY ROSTER: 8/9 AUGUST 2026

Readers: Yamba: F Robertson/M Dee; Maclean: B McGowan/L Senz; Iluka: C Nilon. **Commentators:** Yamba: B Cullen; Maclean: J de Roos, Iluka: H Naug. **E Communion:** Maclean: J Moloney.

READINGS: 8/9 AUGUST 2026

First: 1 Kings 19:9. 11-13; **Second:** Romans 9:1-5; **Gospel:** Matthew 14:22-23.

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 0401 508 812

Ignite Conference 2026: This youth conference will be held in Brisbane 24-27 September. This national youth conference is a real world formation with something for everyone. Please see the noticeboard for

more information. To express interest scan the QR code on the noticeboard.

Vinnies Winter Appeal – Donation envelopes will be available at our churches for the next 8 weeks. All donations over \$2 are tax deductible, receipt issued upon request.

First Holy Communion in our Parish will take place in Yamba on 29 August and Maclean on 30 August. First Communion workshop for parents and candidates will be held on 6 August at St Josephs Maclean. Candidates who do not attend our Catholic Schools please contact the parish office.

Rosary Group: to be held at St Mary's Church Maclean, every Saturday at 9am. Seeking expressions of interest, please contact John on 0450 922 686 or the office.

Training of old and new liturgy ministers: in September those involved in liturgical ministries will have their training.

Platinum (70) and Golden Jubilee (50) Priestly Ordination anniversary of Father John Dacey and Father Colin Reinhard: 29 August 2026, 11am Mass. Please see the poster on the noticeboard for RSVP instructions.

Feast of Saint Mary of the Cross MacKillop: See the noticeboard for more information.

Holy Days new release movie: please see the noticeboard for the poster

Is God calling you? Are you ready, to say, "Speak Lord, your servant is listening," and to begin listening to know if God may be calling you to be a priest, deacon or religious? To begin that journey of discernment contact the Director of Vocations Lismore| Evocations@lismore.catholic.org.au | M +61 0494 656 854 I P 02 6621 9444

St Vincent's Hospital Lismore Past Nurses annual Reunion - Saturday 29th August. Mass 1030am - SVH Dalley St. LISMORE Chapel. Lunch 12md Lismore Heights Bowling Club. RSVP 16th August to Leslie B: 0419489763.

Souper Sunday: all parishioners are invited to come to Souper Sunday Singalong, Sunday 9 August in Cranney Room, Maclean after morning Mass. Gold coin donation, raffle and 50 Club – all proceeds to Parish Environment Fund. This event is organised by the Parish Pastoral Council. Plenty of food and fun to be had by all!

Catholic Youth Lismore Launch: please see the noticeboard for the poster titled 'The Gathering' with a QR code.

Baptism: Welcome to the family of God Betty who is being baptised in our parish this weekend.