

CATHOLIC PARISH OF ST MARY'S MACLEAN



ST JOHN'S CHURCH



ST MARY'S CHURCH



ST JAMES CHURCH

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FIFTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, YEAR A: 12 JULY 2026

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, the fruitfulness of God's word and grace in our lives depends not only on their inherent power, but also on our cooperation.

The first reading, Isaiah 55:10-11, highlights the inherent power of God's word. It likens the word to rain and snow that fall from heaven and bring forth life. Just as rain and snow come from above, God's word comes from him as a gift to humanity. It is not the product of human reasoning, but is freely given.

Water enables grain and every kind of tree to grow. In the same way, God's word unfailingly accomplishes what it promises. Sent with purpose, it enlightens, guides, and helps its recipients grow in righteousness and love. The word obeys the one who sends it and perseveres until it fulfils its mission.

Its success, however, is measured less by immediate results than by its faithfulness and perseverance. God's word has the power to transform, sanctify, and lead people into righteous living, but it does not work magically. Because human beings have free will, our salvation and fruitfulness in justice and love depend on our cooperation with God's word and the grace that accompanies it. In all its forms, God's word and the graces given with it continually offer light and strength, helping us choose good, avoid evil, and grow in love and justice.

The Gospel, Matthew 13:1-23, presents Jesus' parable of the sower, showing the different ways people receive the word of God. Like the sower, God offers his word to everyone; as seed falls on various kinds of soil, so the gift of salvation is offered to all. God desires everyone's salvation and gives his word, together with inner helps that enlighten and strengthen us. These helps come through visible and ordinary means, and also in ways known to God alone, enabling us to cooperate with him in working out our salvation.

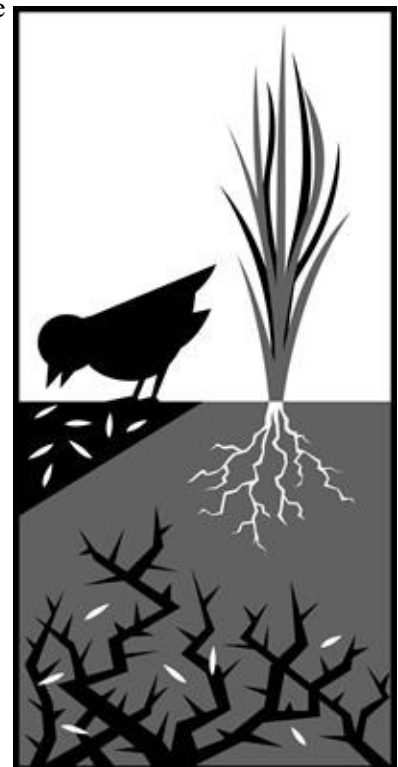
Because God created human beings with free will, he seeks our willing cooperation. The four types of soil show the different ways people respond to his word and grace. The first soil represents those who reject the word; although it is freely given, they do not open their minds and hearts to Christ, his teaching, or his

works. The second soil represents those who receive God's word, and the teaching of Jesus and his Church, with initial enthusiasm, but fall away when trials arise. The third soil represents those who welcome the word, yet allow worldly anxieties and the lure of riches to choke it, leaving it fruitless. The fourth soil represents those who open their minds and hearts to God's word, seek to understand it, actively embrace it, and firmly intend to follow Christ. They bear the fruits of righteousness, holiness, and love.

The second reading, Romans 8:18-23, affirms the ultimate purpose for which God sends his word into the world: the complete transformation of the human person, body and soul, and of all creation. God's word is directed toward glorification, freedom from decay, and full participation in the freedom and glory of God's children—not only for humanity, but for the material world as well. A renewed humanity and creation will emerge as believers who trust and love God cooperate with his transforming work.

Let us ask the Lord in this Mass, therefore, to enable us anew to cooperate with his word and grace that we may continue to bear abundant fruits of lively faith, deeper hope and growing love.

Fr Roland



ENTRANCE ANTIPHON (*Iluka*)

As for me, in justice I shall behold your face; I shall be filled with the vision of your glory.

COLLECT

O God, who show the light of your truth to those who go astray, so that they may return to the right path, give all who for the faith they profess are accounted Christians the grace to reject whatever is contrary to the name of Christ and to strive after all that does it honour. 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 55:10-11

A reading from the prophet Isaiah

Thus says the Lord: 'As the rain and the snow come down from the heavens and do not return without watering the earth, making it yield and giving growth to provide seed for the sower and bread for the eating, so the word that goes from my mouth does not return to me empty, without carrying out my will and succeeding in what it was sent to do.'

The word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM *Psalm 64:10-14 R. Lk 8:8*

(R.) *The seed that falls on good ground will yield a fruitful harvest.*

1. You care for the earth, give it water,
you fill it with riches.
Your river in heaven brims over
to provide its grain. (R.)
2. And thus you provide for the earth;
you drench its furrows,
you level it, soften it with showers,
you bless its growth. (R.)
3. You crown the year with your goodness.
Abundance flows in your steps,
in the pastures of the wilderness it flows. (R.)
4. The hills are girded with joy,
the meadows covered with flocks,
the valleys are decked with wheat.
They shout for joy, yes, they sing. (R.)

SECOND READING

Romans 8:18-23

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans

I think that what we suffer in this life can never be compared to the glory, as yet unrevealed, which is waiting for us. The whole creation is eagerly waiting

for God to reveal his sons. It was not for any fault on the part of creation that it was made unable to attain its purpose, it was made so by God; but creation still retains the hope of being freed, like us, from its slavery to decadence, to enjoy the same freedom and glory as the children of God. From the beginning till now the entire creation, as we know, has been groaning in one great act of giving birth; and not only creation, but all of us who possess the first-fruits of the Spirit, we too groan inwardly as we wait for our bodies to be set free.

The word of the Lord.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!

The seed is the word of God, Christ is the sower; all who come to him will live for ever.

Alleluia!

GOSPEL

Matthew 13:1-23

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew
Jesus left the house and sat by the lakeside, but such crowds gathered round him that he got into a boat and sat there. The people all stood on the beach, and he told them many things in parables.

He said, 'Imagine a sower going out to sow. As he sowed, some seeds fell on the edge of the path, and the birds came and ate them up. Others fell on patches of rock where they found little soil and sprang up straight away, because there was no depth of earth; but as soon as the sun came up they were scorched and, not having any roots, they withered away. Others fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. Others fell on rich soil and produced their crop, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. Listen, anyone who has ears!'

Then the disciples went up to him and asked, 'Why do you talk to them in parables?' 'Because' he replied 'the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven are revealed to you, but they are not revealed to them. For anyone who has will be given more, and he will have more than enough; but from anyone who has not, even what he has will be taken away. The reason I talk to them in parables is that they look without seeing and listen without hearing or understanding. So in their case this prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled:

You will listen and listen again, but not understand, see and see again, but not perceive. For the heart of this nation has grown coarse, their ears are dull of hearing, and they have shut their eyes, for fear they should see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their heart, and be converted and be healed by me.

'But happy are your eyes because they see, your ears because they hear! I tell you solemnly, many

prophets and holy men longed to see what you see, and never saw it; to hear what you hear, and never heard it.

‘You, therefore, are to hear the parable of the sower. When anyone hears the word of the kingdom without understanding, the evil one comes and carries off what was sown in his heart: this is the man who received the seed on the edge of the path. The one who received it on patches of rock is the man who hears the word and welcomes it at once with joy. But he has no root in him, he does not last; let some trial come, or some persecution on account of the word, and he falls away at once. The one who received the seed in thorns is the man who hears the word, but the worries of this world and the lure of riches choke the word and so he produces nothing. And the one who received the seed in rich soil is the man who hears the word and understands it; he is the one who yields a harvest and produces now a hundredfold, now sixty, now thirty.’

The Gospel of the Lord.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Look upon the offerings of the Church, O Lord, as she makes her prayer to you, and grant that, when consumed by those who believe, they may bring ever greater holiness. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

PREFACE VII: SUNDAYS IN ORDINARY TIME

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER III

COMMUNION ANTIPHON (*Iluka*)

The sparrow finds a home, and the swallow a nest for her young: by your altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God. Blessed are they who dwell in your house, for ever singing your praise.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Having consumed these gifts, we pray, O Lord, that, by our participation in this mystery, its saving effects upon us may grow. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

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SCRIPTURE COMMENTARY

Today and the next two Sundays the Gospels are taken from Matthew 13: the ‘parable’ chapter of the gospel. Heading the list is the great parable of the Sower, which, with its long allegorical interpretation (vv. 18-23) and the intervening material (vv. 9-17), makes for a very long Gospel reading indeed (13:1-23). [...]

The difference between a parable proper and an allegory is that a parable tends to make a single sharp point or issue a finely focused challenge. The aim is not so much to teach a moral lesson as to radically

change the way the hearers see things – to show them ‘another world’. An allegory, on the other hand, takes single items in the parable one by one and relates them to life situations in a morally uplifting way. So, in today’s Gospel the concluding, allegorical explanation takes what happens to the seed in each of the four cases and relates it to various circumstances that can either threaten or – in the case of the last – foster the growth of the word in the hearts of believers. Most people can see some resonance in their lives to the situations described in respect to the seed – which doubtless explains why the parable, understood in this way, has been so prominent in Christian teaching and spiritual counsel.

Originally, however, the parable as Jesus told it (vv. 1-8) may have gone in another direction. Fundamentally, it seems designed to counter discouragement. Some of Jesus’ followers and close disciples may have been showing signs of disappointment that his message was not receiving acceptance on a wider and more enthusiastic scale. If Jesus really were the messenger of God, shouldn’t there be more evident success than this!

As usual, the parable moves directly from ordinary, everyday life, in this case agricultural practice in Palestine. The sower scatters the seed around in a casual, even ‘wild’ fashion. By no means all of it lands in good soil. Quite a bit could land in the three situations – on the path, on rocky ground, among thorns – where it suffers the fate described. Isn’t this all rather wasteful? Not at all! The sower knows that each seed that falls on good soil will bear a yield many times in excess of itself: a hundredfold, sixty or thirty. The yield from the seed in good soil so vastly outweighs the losses as to render them of no account at all. He can afford to be casual and wild.

Jesus scatters his message in a similarly casual way. In the case of many who hear him the word suffers the fate of the seed that is lost. But when it really strikes home and finds a welcome, the corresponding ‘yield’ – hundredfold, sixty, thirty – more than compensates for all the loss.

The parable is about the generosity and prodigality of God. In the face of so much opposition and growing indifference from the crowds, Jesus does not lose confidence in the worthwhileness of his message. When the word finds a generous response in the human heart, there is no limit to the riches of God’s love and grace that can be channelled through such persons more widely into the world.

So the disciples – and, following them, teachers, preachers, catechists, and all concerned with the proclamation of the word and its understanding – should not lose heart. As the very brief First Reading (Isa 55:10-11) insists, the word that goes forth from God’s mouth does not return empty; it does not come back without succeeding in what it was sent to do. [...]

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 Nicolia, Peter Burns, Matthew Tierney, Sharon Grayson, Dennis Cathedral, Allan Dick. **Recently Deceased:** Frank Hanigan. **Anniversary:** Dulc Sinderberry, Frank & Marie Ryan, Les Barnett, Rodney Couper, Bonnie Tonkin, Col McDonald. **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: 18/19 JULY 2026

Readers: Yamba: R Tory/P Edgar; Maclean: B McGowan/L Senz; Iluka: T Sullivan. **Commentators:** Yamba: B Cullen; Maclean: S Winter, Iluka: I Durham. **E Communion:** Maclean: J Moloney. **Count team:** Neander.

READINGS: 18/19 JULY 2026

First: Wisdom 12:13. 16-19; **Second:** Romans 8:26-27; **Gospel:** Matthew 13:24-43.

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

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. 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.

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

Cursillo Weekend: 5pm 15/10—5pm 18/10 at Marian Valley for the Lismore Diocese. The team encourages anyone willing to put their name forward to contact Rex or Carryl Tory PH: 0478 793 618.

Vinnies Winter Appeal – Donation envelopes will be placed in church pews at both Yamba and Maclean for the next 8 weeks. Your generous support helps us to give much needed assistance to people in need in our local community. All donations over \$2 are tax deductible, receipt issued upon request.

Claiming the dates: Please mark your calendars for TWO great Parish events in the planning! Souper Sunday singalong! Sunday 9 August—Cranney Room Maclean after morning mass. Feast of Christ the King! Sunday 22 November—Cranney Room, Maclean.

There will be a special Mass in honour of Our Lady of Mount Carmel at the Carmelite Monastery, Goonellabah, on Thursday 16 July at 10am. There will be an opportunity for enrolment in the Brown Scapular. All welcome.

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.

Worldviews and ways of life in Australia: ANU researchers are exploring how perceptions and ways of thinking (i.e. worldviews) relate to experiences and ways of living (i.e. participation and inclusion) in Australia. They are seeking respondents for their online anonymous 15-20 min survey from any and all adult Australian citizens and permanent residents living in Australia. Access the survey [here \(https://anu.au1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_0Ao5q9gu3ysrbVQ\)](https://anu.au1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_0Ao5q9gu3ysrbVQ)