

CATHOLIC PARISH OF ST MARY'S MACLEAN



ST JOHN'S CHURCH



ST MARY'S CHURCH



ST JAMES' CHURCH

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SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, YEAR A: 26 JULY 2026

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, this Sunday's readings invite us to reflect on the value of God's gift and on the response required of us to receive it. In the first reading, Solomon asks God for the wisdom he needs to rule as king. The second reading reminds us that God is actively involved in our lives. Finally, the Gospel presents the parables of the hidden treasure, the pearl of great value, and the dragnet.

The First Reading, 1 Kings 3:5, 7-12, shows that Solomon's wisdom came from God as a gift. Before Solomon began his reign, God appeared to him in a dream and invited him to ask for whatever he wished. Solomon did not ask for wealth, health, or victory over his enemies. Instead, aware of his youth and inexperience, he asked for the wisdom needed to govern God's great and numerous people. He understood that power can easily be distorted by emotion, personal preference, unchecked passions, or unjust alliances. So he asked God for "a heart to understand how to discern between good and evil, for who could govern this people of yours that is so great?"

God was pleased with Solomon's request and gave him a wise and discerning heart. Solomon recognised wisdom as a divine gift and valued it above all other favours. His choice prepares us for the Gospel's message: Jesus invites us to choose wisely and to place the Kingdom of God—God's presence and saving action—above everything else.

In the Second Reading, Romans 8:28-30, St Paul reminds us that God is actively at work in our lives. He can bring good even from difficult situations that remain unchanged. God is always present, offering peace and guidance while respecting our freedom and awaiting our response. He desires the salvation of all and provides the help we need. Yet we must also respond: turning to the Lord, repenting of sin, avoiding evil, and doing good. Those who do so are justified—that is, made righteous, holy, and pleasing to God. This gift is received personally through conversion and faith. Those who persevere in holiness, faith, hope, and love will share in God's glory. As Sr Bergant explains, St Paul "does not suggest that some

are predestined to salvation and others to perdition. Rather, he argues that God calls all to conformity to the image of God's son. It is this conformity that justifies them, and their justification will be the source of their glorification."

In the Gospel (13:44-52), the Lord tells the parables of the hidden treasure, the pearl of great value, and the dragnet. The hidden treasure suggests that the Kingdom of God is not yet fully recognised by everyone. Like the treasure in the field, the Kingdom Jesus proclaims contains something of incomparable value: God's gift of himself and his saving action. Yet only a few perceive it. Once discovered and appreciated, the Kingdom calls for an urgent response. The person in the parable recognises a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and sacrifices everything to obtain the treasure, selling all he owns to buy the field.

The parable of the pearl of great value also highlights the urgency of responding to the Kingdom of God. Like the hidden treasure, the Kingdom transforms a person's priorities. Whoever discovers God and his gift of salvation is willing to let go of former treasures in order to possess this greater gift. The merchant reflects the first disciples, who left everything to follow Jesus, and he invites us to place God and his saving grace above all else.

The parable of the dragnet shows that God offers salvation to all, giving everyone the opportunity to repent and grow in love of God and their neighbour until life's journey is complete. It explains the coexistence of good and evil in the world and in the Church, reveals God's patience, and points to the final separation of the righteous from the wicked at the end of the age.

Let us ask the Lord in this Mass to give us the courage to always prefer him and His offer of salvation to everything else, and for the grace to keep growing in our faith, hope and love.

Fr Roland



ENTRANCE ANTIPHON (*Iluka*)

God is in his holy place, God who unites those who dwell in his house; he himself gives might and strength to his people.

COLLECT

O God, protector of those who hope in you, without whom nothing has firm foundation, nothing is holy, bestow in abundance your mercy upon us and grant that, with you as our ruler and guide, we may use the good things that pass in such a way as to hold fast even now to those that ever endure. 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

1 Kings 3:5.7-12

A reading from the first book of the Kings

The Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream and said, 'Ask what you would like me to give you.' Solomon replied, 'Lord, my God, you have made your servant king in succession to David my father. But I am a very young man, unskilled in leadership. Your servant finds himself in the midst of this people of yours that you have chosen, a people so many its numbers cannot be counted or reckoned. Give your servant a heart to understand how to discern between good and evil, for who could govern this people of yours that is so great?' It pleased the Lord that Solomon should have asked for this. 'Since you have asked for this' the Lord said 'and not asked for long life for yourself or riches or the lives of your enemies, but have asked for a discerning judgement for yourself, here and now I do what you ask. I give you a heart wise and shrewd as none before you has had and none will have after you.'

The word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Ps 118:57. 72. 76-77. 127-130. R. v.97

(R.) Lord, I love your commands.

1. My part, I have resolved, O Lord,
is to obey your word.
The law from your mouth means more to me
than silver and gold. (R.)
2. Let your love be ready to console me
by your promise to your servant.
Let your love come to me and I shall live
for your law is my delight. (R.)
3. That is why I love your commands

more than finest gold.
That is why I rule my life by your precepts:
I hate false ways. (R.)

4. Your will is wonderful indeed;
therefore I obey it.
The unfolding of your word gives light
and teaches the simple. (R.)

SECOND READING

Romans 8:28-30

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans

We know that by turning everything to their good God co-operates with all those who love him, with all those that he has called according to his purpose. They are the ones he chose specially long ago and intended to become true images of his Son, so that his Son might be the eldest of many brothers. He called those he intended for this; those he called he justified, and with those he justified he shared his glory.

The word of the Lord.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

See Matthew 11:25

Alleluia, alleluia!

**Blessed are you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth;
you have revealed to little ones the mysteries of the kingdom.**

Alleluia!

GOSPEL

Matthew 13:44-52

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

Jesus said to the crowds, 'The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field which someone has found; he hides it again, goes off happy, sells everything he owns and buys the field.

'Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls; when he finds one of great value he goes and sells everything he owns and buys it.

'Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet cast into the sea that brings in a haul of all kinds. When it is full, the fishermen haul it ashore; then, sitting down, they collect the good ones in a basket and throw away those that are no use. This is how it will be at the end of time: the angels will appear and separate the wicked from the just to throw them into the blazing furnace where there will be weeping and grinding of teeth.

'Have you understood all this?' They said, 'Yes.' And he said to them, 'Well, then, every scribe who becomes a disciple of the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out from his storeroom things both new and old.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Accept, O Lord, we pray, the offerings which we bring from the abundance of your gifts, that through the powerful working of your grace these most sacred mysteries may sanctify our present way of life and lead us to eternal gladness. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

PREFACE VI: SUNDAYS IN ORDINARY TIME

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER III

COMMUNION ANTIPHON (*Iluka*)

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and never forget all his benefits.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

We have consumed, O Lord, this divine Sacrament, the perpetual memorial of the Passion of your Son; grant, we pray, that this gift, which he himself gave us with love beyond all telling, may profit us for salvation. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

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SCRIPTURE COMMENTARY

The Gospel for today features the final three parables in Matthew 13, together with a concluding summary (vv. 51-52). Once again, there is much to be said, ... for taking simply the two short parables, that of the Treasure in the Field (v. 44) and the Pearl of Great Value (vv. 45-46).

Seeing them as a pair allows a common pattern to emerge. Two persons from very different situations (a day labourer? a merchant with professional expertise?) both come upon something which they dearly desire to possess. For both, however, immediate possession is not possible. There is a time gap between finding and possessing. Both have to sell all they have in order to finally obtain ('buy') what they so desire. But the mere sight of what they dearly long for so relativises the value of everything else as to render them free to make the sacrifice with joy.

The parables are essentially descriptive. They are not about what one 'ought' to do; they simply describe what happens in the life of people who have caught a glimpse of the kingdom. While not yet within their grasp, it is already bringing joy, freedom and hope to human lives.

The outstanding historical example of such transformation would be St Francis of Assisi. His commitment to radical poverty did not come to him as a hard moral demand. It flowed in complete freedom from the 'treasure' of divine love that he had come upon in such high degree.

The two brief parables encapsulate the essence of

Christian spirituality. Christian life requires a measure of detachment. It requires freedom from being completely absorbed and immersed in the attractions, pleasures and concerns of this world – not because these are bad in themselves but because we have been 'captured' by a sense of God's love and God's future for us that relativises all these things and puts them in their place. We do not yet possess the treasure but the prospect of it, unseen but grasped in faith, is already working transformation.

The First Reading, 1 Kings 3:5, 7-12, comes in here in the sense that what Solomon prayed for – and received – was a discerning heart, a heart that, amid all the wealth and opportunity with which he was surrounded, could tell what was of true and lasting value.

The parable of the Dragnet in itself (vv. 47-48; that is, less the negative interpretation about the 'end of time' [vv. 49-50]), aptly holds together two further truths about the kingdom: God's grace is a great 'net' thrown over all – good and bad alike; you don't have to be good to be grasped by the kingdom. Once grasped, however, conversion is required: those who do not over time respond positively to God's generosity will find themselves cast out. [...]

[In the] concluding statement about the scribe 'discipled for the kingdom of heaven' (v. 52) ... note how 'new' comes before 'old' in the things brought out of the storeroom: what has come about in Christ transforms older ways of seeing.

The short Second Reading, Romans 8:28-30, conveys Paul's case for hope deriving from his belief that we (believers) are all caught up within an inexorably unfolding divine plan that is already well under way. The goal of this plan is that human beings become images of the risen Christ, who is himself the image of God (2 Cor 4:4; Col 1:15). This will occur when believers fully share his risen life through their own resurrection (Rom 8:9-11). At that time, Christ will not only be the unique Son of God, but the 'eldest' of many brothers (and sisters) within the one family of God. © **Brendan Byrne SJ**

EUCCHARIST28

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 the Last Supper, on the night when He was betrayed, our Savior instituted the Eucharistic Sacrifice of His Body and Blood. He did this in order to perpetuate the Sacrifice of the Cross throughout the centuries until He should come again, and so to entrust to His beloved Spouse, the Church, a memorial of His Death and Resurrection: a sacrament of love, a sign of unity, a bond of charity, a paschal banquet in which Christ is eaten, the mind is filled with grace, and a pledge of future glory is given to us." See eucharist.org for more information and instructional resources.

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 Nicolia, Peter Burns, Matthew Tierney, Sharon Grayson, Dennis Catheral, Allan Dick. **Recently Deceased:** Audrey Hancock. **Anniversary:** Dulc Sinderberry, Frank & Marie Ryan, Les Barnett. **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: 1/2 AUGUST 2026

Readers: Yamba: St James Primary School; Maclean: S Winter/J Moloney; Iluka: H Naug. **Commentators:** Yamba: St James Primary School; Maclean: L Senz, Iluka: I Durham. **E Communion:** Maclean: J de Roos. **Count team:** Davies.

READINGS: 1/2 AUGUST 2026

First: Isaiah 55:1-3; **Second:** Romans 8:35. 37-39; **Gospel:** Matthew 14:13-21.

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. 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.

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.

St James Primary School Feast Day Mass 10am Thursday 30 July at St James church, and Kindness display in the hall from 12 noon. All are welcome.

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: Join the Sisters of Saint Joseph and Mary MacKillop Place as we celebrate the Feast of Saint Mary of the Cross MacKillop on Saturday 8 August. See the noticeboard for more information.

Diocesan Youth Council: Please see the noticeboard for information on their new initiative.

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

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!

First Saturday Devotion: This Saturday, 1 August, the first Saturday devotion at St Mary's Maclean will begin at 11:00am with the praying of the Rosary, followed by Mass and Adoration.