

FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

Weekend of the 21st and 22nd February 2026 Year A

First Reading: **Genesis 2:7-9, 3:1-7** Second Reading: **Romans 5:12-19** Gospel: **Matthew 4:1-11**

Embracing the faith communities of **St Mary's Buderim, St Peter's Coolum, Stella Maris Maroochydore and St Catherine of Siena, Sippy Downs.**

STELLA MARIS CATHOLIC PARISH

Our Parish has zero tolerance for all forms of abuse and is committed to safeguarding everyone involved in its activities, ministries and services. The safety and wellbeing of children and adults-at-risk are paramount.

The Secrets We Dare Not Tell

What would be your first reaction if I told you that I have an addiction? Would your imagination jump to all sorts of conclusions? ***Gambling, alcohol, cigarettes, drugs!*** Even the word itself – addiction – is harsh and demeaning; it evokes images of dependence and a lack of self control.

But before we get carried away, it is important to be honest with ourselves and admit that all of us live with some form of addiction. ***More often than not our addictions are our best kept secrets, and we would be traumatised if we knew that anyone else knew.*** It might not be the scary and well known addictions of alcohol, gambling, cigarettes or drugs – but there are plenty of other addictions that can take their place. There are plenty of things in our lives that we just simply can't imagine living without – ***they are our addictions.***

Our addictions may be shopping, gossiping or even taking care of other people. Some addictions on the outside may seem positive. We can be addicted to the latest, the newest, the hottest, the most fashionable. Our addiction may be our obsession with our computers or electronic gadgets. It may be our golf clubs or simply being slumped in front of the TV. We are all addicted to habits, substances or surroundings that comfort us, that provide a refuge for us, that block out what scares or hurts us.

I once lived with a priest who was addicted to food, and when you think of it, that is the worst form of addiction because you can live without alcohol, gambling and drugs but you can't live without food. It was a titanic battle of willpower and self-control, day in and day out every time he opened the fridge door!

At some point in our lives, however, we all find ourselves alone in some kind of desert or wilderness, deprived of our addictions. We experience an emptiness within us that our addiction will not fill. We are suddenly exposed, like someone addicted to painkillers whose prescriptions have just run out. ***It is hard. It is awful. It can be very scary.*** But to become fully human, it is necessary to encounter the world without our own anaesthesia, to find out what life is like with no comfort but God.

That may be the simplest definition of addiction: anything we use to fill the empty place inside us that belongs to God alone.

This is the first weekend of Lent, and we hear of Jesus' journey into the desert. We are all called to make the same journey: to leave behind our addictions, our comfort food and mobile phones and devices and journey into the desert. To be alone with nothing but God. It is a time to take a hard look at the "addictions" that control us and regain control of our time and values so that we may become the man or woman God created us to be.

Wishing you every blessing during this first week of Lent. ***Fr Peter Brannelly***

Our High School Youth Group is Back

Calling all young people, Years 7-12! Join us each Sunday afternoon for **10:10**, our parish youth group here on the Sunshine Coast! 📅 **Date: Every Sunday**, 🕒 **Time: 3:00pm** 📍 **Location: Stella Maris Church**

Come along for an afternoon of fun, faith, and friendship as we kick off this exciting new journey together. Meet the amazing NET team, enjoy delicious slushies, and take part in awesome games. Inspired by John 10:10, ***"I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full"***, our youth group is a place to grow, explore, and live life to the fullest. Bring your friends and be part of something awesome. See you there!

Stella Maris Parish Office

Adjacent to the Stella Maris Church
Office Hours 9:00am—2:00pm Weekdays
Telephone: 5443 3488
Email: suncoast@bne.catholic.net.au
Website: maroochydoreparish.com.au



Parish Clergy

Fr Peter Brannelly
Fr Isaac Falzon
Deacon Michael Khoury
Bishop Brian Heenan
Bishop Emeritus

The Week Ahead

We acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which our communities celebrate liturgies and live out our faith. We pay respects to leaders past, present and emerging. May their example of stewardship be reflected in our lives.

Monday, 23rd February

- ◆ Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament (4:30pm, Stella Maris Church)
- ◆ Benediction (5:15pm, Stella Maris Church)
- ◆ **Mass** (5:30pm, Stella Maris Church)

Tuesday, 24th February

- ◆ **Mass** (9:00am, Stella Maris Primary School Chapel)
- ◆ Craft (1:00pm, St Peter's Church)

Wednesday, 25th February

- ◆ **Mass** (7:00am, St Mary's Church)
- ◆ **Mass** (9:00am, St Catherine's Church)
- ◆ Pray & Play (9:30am, The Annex)
- ◆ Scripture Study Group (9:30am, Zoom)
- ◆ Funeral of Bob Marshall (12:30pm, Stella Maris Church)
- ◆ Latin Prayer Group (6:00pm, Stella Maris)
- ◆ Young Adults (6:00pm, NET House Buderim)

Thursday, 26th February

- ◆ **Mass** (8:30am, St Peter's Church)
- ◆ Funeral of Paige Wincen (11:30am, St Mary's Church)

Friday, 27th February

- ◆ Stations of the Cross (8:30am, Stella Maris Church)
- ◆ **Mass** (9:00am, Stella Maris Church)
- ◆ Craft (9:45am, Stella Maris)
- ◆ Community Meal for Homeless
- ◆ Stations of the Cross (6:00pm, St Catherine's Church)

Saturday, 28th February

- ◆ Reconciliation (8:30am—9:30am, Stella Maris Church)
- ◆ **Vigil Mass** (4:30pm, St Peter's Church)
- ◆ **Vigil Mass** (6:00pm, Stella Maris Church)

Sunday, 1st March

Second Sunday of Lent

- ◆ **Mass** (6:30am, Stella Maris Church)
- ◆ **Mass** (7:30am, St Peter's Church)
- ◆ **Mass** (8:00am, St Catherine's Church) (Children's Church)
- ◆ **Mass** (9:00am, Stella Maris Church) (Children's Church)
- ◆ **Mass** (9:30am, St Mary's Church) (Children's Church)
- ◆ Junior Ministers (3:00pm, Stella Maris)
- ◆ 10:10 Youth (3:00pm, The Annex)
- ◆ **Mass** (5:00pm, Stella Maris Church) (Children's Church)

Gluten-free hosts are available. To arrange, simply contact the sacristan or Mass coordinator before Mass. The priest will always distribute the gluten free host at communion.

Next weekend, being the first weekend of the month, means that hospitality is the focus of our community and all parishioners, regardless of what Mass you go to, are invited to bring a plate along and join in the **hospitality** of your parish family. This week also marks the beginning of another NRL footy season and while kick-off for the first match is next Sunday now is the time to be part of our **Parish Tipping Competition** – it is a bit of fun but also serious competition – and your \$40 donation supports our extensive youth programme. If you have never been part of a tipping competition, why not join this week and be part of the fun?

How to Join

Step One: Scan the QR Code and donate \$40



Step Two: Visit iTipFooty.com.au and if you are a new player, create an account. Players returning from last years comp, can log into your old account.

Step Three: New players use Comp #103447 and the password 'Stella25!' to join the competition and returning players click "REJOIN".

Start your Tipping!

Your **Project Compassion** envelopes, supporting Caritas Australia and their humanitarian work beyond our shores, are available at the entrance to the Church—thank you once again for your generous support.

World Day of Prayer

The World Day of Prayer is an international **ecumenical** Christian initiative that is celebrated annually in over 170 countries on the first Friday in March. This year, St Mary's Buderim, St Peter's Coolum and Faith Church at Millwell Road, Maroochydore, will be hosting the prayer service. Each year, a country takes responsibility for the Order of Service, and this year, the people of Nigeria invite us to be part of their rich and unique Christian tradition. Everyone in our Sunshine Coast Parish is warmly invited to attend the World Day of Prayer service and the morning tea that follows on Friday, 6th March.

9:00am, St Peter's Catholic Church, 28 Elizabeth St, Coolum Beach

10:00am, St Mary's Catholic Church, 7 Main St, Buderim

10:00am, Faith Church Sunshine Coast, Millwell Road, Community Centre, Maroochydore.

All parishioners are invited and welcome!

On the journey—Where life meets faith

We welcome into God's Family, the Church, **Eloise Hewitt, Liam Hewitt, Luke Knowles, Zahlee Niutta, Bodhi Riddle, and Zahli Riddle** who will be baptised this weekend in our parish.

We pray for all those who have died, especially **Ricardo Lopez, Bob Marshall** and **Paige Wincen**. May their souls and the souls of all our deceased Priests, Religious, Family members and members of our Parish Community, through the rich mercy of God,

Rest in Peace.

A New Initiative



Our late Pope Francis, through his encyclical, *Laudato Si*, encouraged and challenged us to be more aware of God's good creation and how we can respond more positively to caring for our environment. Sometimes, **that is a lot easier said than done!** One practical way, however, which is a **win / win** for our parish family, is by recycling. On the first weekend of every month, we will have a trailer parked at Stella Maris where you can leave your bottles and cans – we will take them to **Containers for Change** to be recycled. The proceeds will go towards supporting our youth programme. If you would rather go directly to the Containers for Change depot, you can use our identification number **Scheme ID number C10193859**. However you wish to support this initiative, thank you for doing your part in caring for God's good creation here on the Sunshine Coast, and supporting our youth programme.

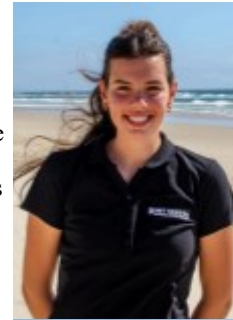
Introducing the 2026 NET Team



Arabella Farrugia is 19, from Adelaide, SA. This is her second year serving with NET. She loves matcha, sunrise beach swims, and four-wheel driving. She is excited to share Jesus with new faces.



Damian Fernando is 19, from Melbourne, VIC. He is returning to NET for a second year. He loves music, is learning guitar and is passionate about helping young people know they are loved by Jesus.



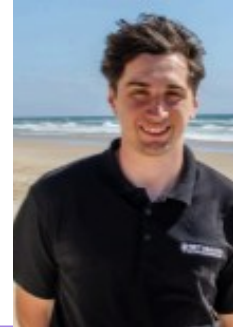
Jacinda Blair is 18, from Christchurch, New Zealand. She hopes to join the NZ Police Force. She loves fitness, sport, and the outdoors, often feeling closest to God while hiking, and is excited to share Jesus' joy.



Lourdes Hakko is 18, from Vancouver, Canada. She is excited to serve on NET this year. Fluent in English and Arabic, she's eager to discover her calling and walk closely alongside Jesus.



Finn Flatt is 18, from Austin, Texas. He is serving his first year with NET. A former lifeguard and water polo player, he loves ministry, staying active and sharing his faith with enthusiasm.



Kayden Beyer is 21, from Brisbane, QLD. This is his first year serving with NET. He's excited to journey with people, is curious about faith and loves music, playing over 12 instruments.

A Golden Opportunity

Do yourself a favour and make sure that you take advantage of our Parish Lenten Mini Mission with Fr Richard Leonard. Born in Warwick, Queensland, having grown up in Toowoomba, Father Leonard has undergraduate degrees in arts, education and theology, as well as a masters degree in systematic theology. After ordination to the priesthood in 1993, he was apprenticed to Albert Street Productions where he wrote, produced and directed documentary films for Australian television.

He did graduate studies at the London Film School and has a PhD from the University of Melbourne. He directs the Australian Catholic Office for Film & Broadcasting, is an Honorary Fellow of the Australian Catholic University; has been a visiting scholar within the School of Theatre, Film & Television at UCLA and a Visiting Professor at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome.

He is the author of ten books, among his film related titles are: *The Mystical Gaze of the Cinema: The Films of Peter Weir* and *Movies That Matter: Reading Film Through the Lens of Faith*. He has also written, *Where the Hell is God?; Preaching to the Converted Throughout the Sundays and Feast Days of the Year; What does it all mean? A guide to being more faithful, hopeful and loving*, and his most recent book is *Hatch, Match & Dispatch: A Catholic Guide to Sacraments*.



We are delighted that he has accepted our invitation to lead our Mini Mission from **5:00pm-6:00pm, Monday, 9th March, Tuesday, 10th March, and Wednesday, 11th March at Stella Maris Church.** *Why not invite a friend?*

You are Never too Young to be of Service

Each Sunday afternoon at Stella Maris, our Junior Ministers meet, and all younger members of our parish family, from First Communion to Year 6 are invited. **Our focus is fun and community service!** The Junior Ministry is open to all younger members of the parish from Year 3, and above who are eager to actively participate in serving our community. Opportunities include training to become an altar server, welcomer, reader, computer operator, collector, or part of the music ministry. While our primary focus is on serving others, we also ensure there's plenty of fun to be had with friends. We meet every at 3:00pm every Sunday during the school term for training, pizza, fun games, and activities. For more information, or if you are an adult interested in participating in this ministry, please contact Bernie Baillie, bbaillie811@gmail.com.

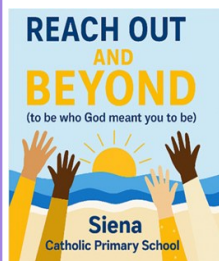
Catholic Education in our Sunshine Coast Parish

Siena Catholic Primary School

58 Sippy Downs Drive,
Sippy Downs
psippydowns@bne.catholic.edu.au
Principal: Eric Ellems



A heartfelt welcome to the Siena Primary community and Stella Maris parish as we begin the 2026 school year! We welcome all families, staff, and students, and look forward to another fantastic year filled with learning, growth, and shared experiences. Our focus for this year is *'Reach Out and Beyond – to be who God meant us to be'*. Inspired by Jesus' call, we encourage everyone to reach out with compassion and bring love and hope, especially to those who are most in need. We strive for excellence—academically, socially, and spiritually—we also aim to go beyond, challenging ourselves to become the best versions of who we are. Our work with the Resilience Project continues ensuring Gratitude, Empathy, and Mindfulness are part of everyday life at Siena Primary.



Guided by our motto—*Prayer, Care, and Learning*—Siena Primary is dedicated to fostering excellence, integrity, justice, and hope throughout our educational and religious journey.

We're grateful for our close relationship with the priests and parishioners of St Catherine's Church and look forward to continuing this special partnership. As we travel through the year together, may God bless and guide each one of you.

Stella Maris Primary School

Stella Maris Way,
Maroochydore
pmaroochydore@bne.catholic.edu.au
Principal: Mark Ballam



It has been wonderful to see Stella Maris School once again filled with the energy, laughter and enthusiasm of students as they began the new year of learning, growth and faith together. Our 2026 school theme, *'Open Hearts, Curious Minds, Loving Spirit'*, will guide all that we do. This theme invites us to be open to God and one another, to approach learning with curiosity, and to live out compassion and service in our daily lives. We look forward to seeing this theme come alive across our classrooms, playgrounds, liturgies and community interactions.

A highlight of the opening weeks was the Welcome BBQ hosted by our Community Engagement Group, which provided a valuable opportunity for families, staff and students to reconnect and celebrate the start of the year together. The strong sense of community was clearly evident and remains a defining feature of Stella Maris School.

Students have settled beautifully into the new school year, from our newest Prep students through to our Year 6 cohort. Their positive attitude, respect and readiness to learn reflect the strong partnership between families and staff. Recently our Year 6 students, participated in a Faith Leadership and Formation Day and were formally commissioned as school leaders at our Opening School Liturgy. Through a range of leadership ministries, students are encouraged to lead by example and live out the values inspired by Nano Nagle.

Finally, this week students celebrated Shrove Tuesday with pancakes before gathering reverently for an Ash Wednesday liturgy, marking the beginning of Lent and reminding us of the call to prayer, generosity and care for others.

We look forward to a Stella 2026!

Siena Catholic College

60 Sippy Downs Drive,
Sippy Downs
ssippydowns@bne.catholic.edu.au
Principal: Sharon Collins



Siena Catholic College was honoured to join students from across Brisbane Catholic Education at the launch of Project Compassion, marking the beginning of the Lenten season. As we gathered in prayer, we were reminded that Lent is not only a school journey but a shared journey with our parish and wider Church community.

Grounded in our Dominican pillars of Prayer, Study, Community and Service, Siena students are embracing Project Compassion as an opportunity to put faith into action. Throughout Lent, our College will participate in awareness and fundraising initiatives supporting Caritas Australia's work with vulnerable communities around the world.

As we enter this sacred season, we pray that our school and parish communities continue to support one another in living with compassion and generosity. May this Lent be a time of renewal for us all, as together we respond to God's call to serve others with open hearts.

The **Craft Group's** next get together is at 9:45am (after the 9:00am Mass) this Friday, 27th February in the Bliss Room. Bring your craft, bring your ideas or just bring yourself - you are very welcome.

Parents, Grandparents, Boys & Girls

Don't forget that each Wednesday during school term, our **Play & Pray** group gathers at Stella Maris. It is a great way for families to connect, interact and grow. Join us, 9:30am, **every Wednesday, in The Annex** for fun, friendship, and faith-filled moments. New families are always welcome—we'd love to meet you. *Come connect, play, and pray with us!*

Reconciliation Action Plan Networking Workshop – Implementing the RAP

This gathering offers an important opportunity to deepen our understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history, culture, and connection to Country.

Many parishes from across the Archdiocese will be joining us, and we warmly invite all Sunshine Coast Parishioners.

Date: **Saturday, 14th March 2026**. Time: **10:00am for a 10:30am start – 2:30pm**
Location: **Our Lady of the Rosary Church, 61 Edmund Street, Caloundra**

TRUTH
TELLING
Implementing
the RAP

Reconciliation Action Plan Networking Workshop