

Light and darkness are two unescapable themes of this weekend's scripture. It is understandable that many of us feel trapped in a world of darkness, where a war in the Middle East, leaders who disseminate lies, proud hate groups monopolise the media, exploitation of the vulnerable goes unchallenged. Yet, this weekend, we are challenged to hear and see differently! The first reading reminds us powerfully that God's ways are not our ways because God always looks at the heart, where the second reading from St Paul urges us to embrace the light which is Christ, a perfect Segway into today's gospel of the

## Man born Blind.

# The Fourth Sunday of our Lenten Journey

Weekend of the 14<sup>th</sup> & 15<sup>th</sup> March 2026 Year A

First Reading: **1 Samuel 16:1, 6-7, 10-13** Second Reading: **Ephesians 5:8-14** Gospel: **John 9:1-41**

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.

### Stella Maris Parish Office

Adjacent to the Stella Maris  
Church, Maroochydore  
Office Hours  
9:00am—2:00pm Weekdays

Telephone:  
5443 3488

Parish Email:  
suncoast@bne.catholic.net.au

**Planned Giving Enquiries**  
finance.suncoast@  
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**Social Media Enquiries**  
Georgia Whiteley  
media.suncoast@  
bne.catholic.net.au

**Sacramental Coordinator**  
Carrolyn Watt  
sacraments.suncoast@  
bne.catholic.net.au

**Parish Website:**  
maroochydoreparish.com.au

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

**Don't forget that we live stream our 9:00am Mass each Sunday – simply visit our parish web page and click on the **Live Mass** link, or visit our YouTube Channel.**

## Seeing is Believing

I kid myself that I don't really need to wear reading glasses all the time, but the truth is that they are slowly but surely becoming a permanent fixture that I can't live without! I might not like wearing them, but to go to the supermarket and have even the vaguest of idea about how much something costs, to read any label or instruction, even deciphering a simple text on my phone these days requires glasses. Without them, everything becomes a blur, and no amount of squinting will bring clarity to the fuzziness.

This week's Gospel is the story of the man born blind. For the second weekend in a row, we get a rather long Gospel and yet, for such a long story, the amazing thing is that Jesus only appears at the beginning and at the end. In fact, at the end of the story Jesus hears that the blind man had been driven away, and he goes looking for him. We sometimes miss the significance of Jesus hearing about what had happened to the man and deliberately setting out to find him. You see, it is not a question of whether we, sighted or blind, find Jesus. Rather, it is an image of Jesus coming to look for us and finding us where we are.

As for the story itself, there is a rich vein of irony running through it. We can see how God turns the world's expectations on their head. The reality of things is just the opposite of what it seems to be. Those who are so sure they can see are, in truth, blind. He who starts out blind takes a risk at Jesus' invitation and ends up seeing. The once blind man passes from blindness to sight to insight. He stands in contrast to the neighbours, who remain in ignorance; his parents, who refuse to take a risk; and the authorities and Pharisees, who refuse to believe what their eyes see. **It seems it is true that there is no one as blind as the person who refuses to see.**

There's a line from the Talmud, which is a commentary on the Scriptures used by the rabbis, which reads, **"We do not see things as they are – we see them as we are."** For me personally, the point of the story is that one day, a man who was blind from birth was touched by the Light and he, himself, became a light and he touched others with his light and they, in turn, became light to others.

Could it be true that this story could resemble our life story, a tale of our daily struggle to overcome our darkness with light? With our determination and God's grace, anything is possible. Sure there is a risk involved, but we all long to be able to say—while I might not know all the answers, one thing I do know is that **once I was blind but now I see.**

# 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, 16<sup>th</sup> March

- ◆ Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament (4:30pm)
- ◆ Benediction (5:15pm, Stella Maris Church)
- ◆ **Mass** (5:30pm, Stella Maris Church)
- ◆ Finance Committee 6pm

## Tuesday, 17<sup>th</sup> March

*St Patrick*

- ◆ **Mass** (9:00am, Stella Maris Primary School Chapel)
- ◆ Sisterhood (6:00pm, Stella Maris Church)

## Wednesday, 18<sup>th</sup> March

- ◆ **Communion Service** (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)
- ◆ Latin Prayer Group (6:00pm, Stella Maris)
- ◆ Young Adults Encounter Night (6:00pm, St Mary's)
- ◆ Lenten Prayer Group (6:00pm, St Catherine's Church)

## Thursday, 19<sup>th</sup> March

*St Joseph*

- ◆ **Mass** (8:30am, St Peter's Church)

## Friday, 20<sup>th</sup> March

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

## Saturday, 21<sup>st</sup> March

- ◆ Reconciliation (8:30am—9:30am, Stella Maris Church)
- ◆ Shine Jesus Catholic Charismatic Prayer Group (11:00am, Sippy Downs)
- ◆ **Vigil Mass** (4:30pm, St Peter's Church)
- ◆ **Vigil Mass** (6:00pm, Stella Maris Church)

## Sunday, 22<sup>nd</sup> March

### *Fifth Sunday of Lent*

- ◆ **Mass** (6:30am, Stella Maris Church)
- ◆ **Mass** (7:30am, St Peter's Church)
- ◆ **Mass** (8:00am, St Catherine's ) (*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)
- ◆ **Polish Mass** (4:00pm, St Mary's Buderim)
- ◆ **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.*

# Confirmation 2026

Registration for the 2026 Confirmation programme is now open! If your child is in Year 3 or older and baptised, parents are invited to attend an information session from 5:00pm—6:00pm on Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> April. This will be a wonderful opportunity to learn more about the program and the journey toward receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation.

All program dates and registration details are available online at [maroochydioreparish.com.au](http://maroochydioreparish.com.au). We look forward to welcoming families as they begin this important step in their child's faith journey.

## You are Welcome

Every week across our parish family, we welcome so many people to our Eucharistic celebrations – some are baptised Catholics returning to Mass after a time away – **welcome back!** For some who join us this weekend, this has been part of a journey of faith, trying to put the pieces of the jigsaw puzzle into place – **we hope you find in our community what you are searching for!** Others who join us this weekend are simply responding to an invitation and have decided to spend an hour with us this weekend – **thank you for being part of our celebration today!** For us, the Eucharist is a sign of unity and the source and summit of our faith life, which helps explain our reverence for receiving Holy Communion and why we have guidelines around the receiving of Holy Communion. There may be many reasons why a baptised Catholic will not receive Holy Communion before celebrating the Sacrament of Reconciliation, but that does not preclude them from coming forward and receiving a blessing. Simply cross your arms over your chest as you approach the minister to receive a blessing.



Likewise, if you have not been baptised or welcomed liturgically in the Catholic Church we also invite you to come forward for a blessing at Holy Communion time. The journey to become part of our parish family is through the RCIA process and in a couple of weeks time, we will extend an invitation to anyone who wants to discover more about what we believe, to join us on that journey.

Visit our **Facebook** page! You will receive updates on what's happening within the parish, religious articles and content of interest. It is also a way we contact you with urgent news. **"Like"** our Facebook page, and you will be kept notified of new posts and help to promote the parish page to more viewers. Just go to [www.facebook.com/stellamariscatholicparish/](http://www.facebook.com/stellamariscatholicparish/) and click on the 'thumbs up' under any of our posts. Why not 'share' it with a Facebook friend also?

## On the journey — Where life meets faith

We welcome into God's Family, the Church,  
**Mila Battistin, Zion Salafai, Charles Wright and Rudi Wright**  
who will be baptised this weekend in our parish.

We pray for all those who have died, especially this week we remember **Patrick Hennessy**.  
May his soul 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.**

## SISTERHOOD

## Our Parish Women's Ministry

We are excited to welcome everyone to our **first Sisterhood meeting of the year** on **this Tuesday, 17<sup>th</sup> March**. It's a wonderful opportunity to reconnect after the break and warmly welcome both **familiar faces and newcomers**.

As we journey through the **Lenten season**, come and enjoy a time of friendship, reflection, and encouragement together. **All are welcome** — we look forward to seeing you there!

## Safeguarding Training

If you're a volunteer in a ministry that requires a Blue Card or Police Check, thank you for all you do! To keep up with the recent changes in Safeguarding Legislation, it is a mandatory requirement for Blue Card and Police Check holders to renew their training every two years. For anyone who isn't able to complete the preferred online training through Arch-learn, the Maroochydore Parish Safeguarding Team is offering face-to-face training, **9:45am, Friday, 27<sup>th</sup> March** at **Stella Maris Church (right after the 9:00am Mass)**. This will take place in the Annex by Priests' residence with a duration of approximately one hour.

To register, email, [lsr.suncoast@bne.catholic.net.au](mailto:lsr.suncoast@bne.catholic.net.au).

## Dinner Invitation

Every year, the Archbishop hosts a dinner at *Wynberg*, his residence in Brisbane, for those who are discerning a vocation to the priesthood or religious life. This year, Archbishop Shane will host a dinner for women on 30<sup>th</sup> April and for men on 11<sup>th</sup> June. If you would like to receive an invitation to join Archbishop Shane, please contact Fr Peter or Fr Isaac by sending an email to the Parish Office.

## MEN'S BREAKFAST

You are invited to join us for our regular **Men's Breakfast** from 8:00am - 9:15am, Saturday, 21<sup>st</sup> March at in the Bliss Room. **Please note the new starting time of 8:00am.**

If you've never been to a Men's Breakfast, they provide opportunities for sharing our personal faith experiences and hearing what God is doing in the lives of men in our parish, as well as encouraging each other in our spiritual walk.

Our speaker for the morning will be St Catherine of Sienna parishioner John Ioane. John, a married father of two children, was once a Seminarian and will share his faith journey and how God has changed his life. A light breakfast consisting of cereal, muesli, fruit, yoghurt, toast and spreads is included. Juice, tea and coffee are also provided. To help cover costs, a donation of \$5 cash (payable at the door) would be appreciated. Perhaps you could invite a neighbour or another parishioner.

**NOTE:** Disposable bowls, plates, cutlery and cups are provided; however, you are welcome to bring your own. For catering purposes or for further information, please RSVP Rob Hoy on 0401 498 059 by 12:00pm, Friday 20th March.

## NET Update

Hey parishioners, it's the NET team! Just giving you all an update on what we've been up to this past month. We arrived on the 14<sup>th</sup> of February and since then have felt so welcomed by everyone we have met. We have loved exploring all the sunny coast has to offer especially with the company of the Young Adults taking us surfing, for ice cream or just to hang out!

Speaking of the young adult community it was awesome to see so many come to our open house last Wednesday. We had almost 40 young adults (+ Father Isaac) drop in to say hi and bring a plate of food. It's also been incredible getting to know the young adult community, hanging out for praise and worship sessions, going out for coffee or even a trip to sunshine plaza. Everyone has been amazing and we look forward to growing the community.

Moving to the youth, 10:10 has kicked off for this year and we have started strong. Our first youth group we had almost 30 kids come for some pizza, fun and Jesus! If you know any school age students that don't already come or haven't for a while we would love for them to come along for some more fun, snacks and faith formation!

We have also been working hard at Siena Catholic college doing school ministry, helping in classrooms, jumping in on training sessions for sport and meeting some amazing kids around the playground. Alongside Siena we have been running some retreats at Padua college in Brisbane, Stella Maris primary school and Siena primary school for grades eleven, five and six. We have loved meeting and journeying with the kids!

We would also love to thank every member of the parish for their generosity and welcomeness towards us. We feel so loved and so much at home. We have introduced ourselves at all the parishes so far, so if you've missed us or want to say hi feel free if you see us around to come and say hello, we would love to meet you all and hear your incredible story.

An update from us as a team we have had many beach trips, climbed Emu Mountain and gone fishing. We have loved exploring the local area both as a team and with assistance from parishioners and seeing some parishioners out and about, especially the Yochi trips.

Some upcoming events you can expect us to be at are Sunday masses around the Stella Maris Parish, Youth group, events leading into Easter and some young adult events. Some specific events we will be attending and promoting is Reco Rally on March 27<sup>th</sup> for Highschoolers and Young adults, Ignite Launch on May 16<sup>th</sup> and Ignite Conference from September 24<sup>th</sup> - 27<sup>th</sup>. Please pray for us in our ministry for the coming year and don't forget to come say hi if you see us around.

God bless, Maroochydore NET Team

# 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



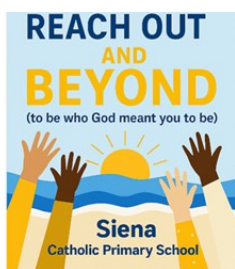
### Year Level Covenants

At the beginning of our school year, our Siena school community gathered in the Lord's presence to celebrate Mass, seeking God's abundant blessing and guidance for the school year ahead. In 2026, our chosen theme, 'Reach and Beyond – to be who God calls us to be!' invited us to grow closer to Christ by reaching out to others in words and actions and striving to go beyond in our academic pursuits.

Each year level had prepared a covenant, pledging to reach out to others by mirroring Jesus' love for all and to go beyond in their academic ventures.

During the Mass, at the offertory procession, year levels brought forward their covenants for Father Isaac to bless. Each year level pledged to live their promise daily.

In Year 4, we promise to reach out with kindness, compassion, and courage to everyone we meet. We commit to growing beyond our comfort zones, using our gifts to make our classroom and world a better place. With God's guidance, we will strive each day to be the people he created us to be.



## Stella Maris Primary School

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



Over this current two-week period, students in Year 3 and Year 5 at Stella Maris School will take part in NAPLAN, a national assessment that looks at students' skills in reading, writing and numeracy. NAPLAN is a normal part of school life and reflects learning developed over time. Year 3 students complete the Writing task on paper, while other tests are completed online. Year 5 students complete all assessments online using familiar school devices.

Students are not expected to study for NAPLAN. Teachers support them by helping them feel calm and confident, encouraging them to simply do their best. At Stella Maris, student wellbeing is always our priority. We ask our parish community to keep our students, families and teachers in prayer, that our children may be blessed with peace, confidence and perseverance as they participate in NAPLAN.

This year, Stella Maris School is pleased to offer students the opportunity to participate in Dance Energy, an extra-curricular dance program delivered on site after school 2 days a week. Dance Energy offers classes in acrobatics, jazz and hip hop, supporting students' physical wellbeing, confidence and creative expression. Through movement, students develop coordination, strength and teamwork while experiencing the joy of dance.

We are grateful for programs like Dance Energy that enrich student life at Stella Maris and support the holistic development of our children.

## Siena Catholic College

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



Project Compassion continues to gather wonderful momentum at Siena as our community lives out the call to prayer and service this Lenten season. This week, Catherine House led our fundraising efforts with their Kenilworth donut sale, which proved to be a huge success with more than 400 donuts sold. It was wonderful to see such strong support from students and staff, with all funds raised going towards Caritas Australia and the important work they do supporting communities in need. Next week, the fundraising continues as Ozanam House hosts their much loved Oz Ice Cream sale, with all proceeds again supporting our Caritas appeal.

It has also been wonderful to see our students embracing the spirit of Lent across the College through prayer, acts of service and generous participation in our Caritas initiatives. Their enthusiasm and willingness to support others have been a beautiful reflection of the Lenten call to live out our faith through compassion and action.

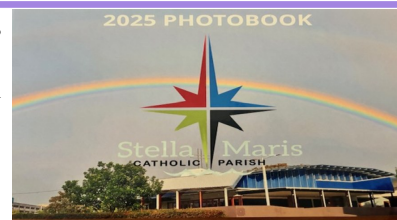
This week, several staff members also had the opportunity to attend the recent Mini Mission, beautifully led by Father Richard Leonard. Those who attended shared how enriching the evenings were, particularly his reminder that Lent is not simply about giving things up, but about the freeing nature of letting go of the distractions and habits that prevent us from growing closer to God and one another.

We have also been blessed to have the NET Team actively involved in life at Siena. Through classroom visits, youth ministry support and their involvement in our music ministry, they bring great energy, joy and authenticity to our college. Their presence encourages students to see faith as something lived out in everyday life.

In such a diverse and busy parish family, so much is going on that sometimes, we can miss some of the good news of our community!

At the entrance to the church, you will discover our **Parish Photobook for 2025**, which attempts to capture some of the ministries and events of our journey of faith during the past year. If you get a chance, please take a look at it after Mass today.

During the year, if you take any photos of parish events or gatherings, please send them via email to our Digital Manager, Georgia Whiteley, [media.suncoast@bne.catholic.net.au](mailto:media.suncoast@bne.catholic.net.au).



## New to the neighbourhood ?

We live in such a mobile society. Apparently, data from the census revealed that Queenslanders had one of the highest rates of residents, who have changed addresses in the previous five years. Also, the Australian Bureau of Statistics mentioned that Queensland was the most popular destination for Australians to move to from other states.

**So, sitting beside or in front of you might be someone new to our parish family – make sure that you make them feel welcome!** If you are new to the parish, please pick up a welcome pack at the entrance of the church so that we can formally welcome you to your new community. **On Thursday, 23<sup>rd</sup> April, we are hosting a "New Parishioners Cocktail Party"**, which is really just a fancy name for a gathering at the presbytery to welcome you.

