

Stella Maris Catholic Parish

Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Weekend of July 11 and 12, 2026 Year A

First Reading: Isaiah 55:10-11; Second Reading: Romans 8:18-23 Gospel: Matthew 13:1-23

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 Parish Office

Adjacent to the Stella Maris Church,
Maroochydore

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9:00am—2:00pm Weekdays

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At Your Service

Fr Peter Brannelly
Fr Gerard Lai
Bishop Brian Heenan
Bishop Emeritus

Young Adults

Join us this Sunday night, 6:00pm at Stella Maris for a formation night with guest speaker: Anita Zinkel. Anita is the leader of our Sisterhood women's ministry and will be joining us to talk about Sustaining the Faith: Expanding on Luke 10:38. ***So please join us and why not invite a friend?***

A Sower Went Out To Sow...

Those six words that start this weekend's Gospel and form the title of this front page are rather profound. We usually hear the story with Australian ears and therefore imagine with Australian eyes immense fields of wheat shimmering under the warm sun with light breezes and combine harvesters.

However, the first hearers of the parable of the sower were subsistence farmers who etched out a meagre living from their small, rocky, overworked and under productive piece of dirt. Usually, little rock walls would identify one person's piece of land from another's. The first hearers did not need much of an imagination to picture the different soil and growing conditions and the daily challenges they faced.

Sure, it is the soil that immediately gets our attention. The pathway soil, the rocky soil, the thorny soil, and the good soil each represent a certain type of heart with which hearers receive the word of God. The question I would normally ask is, **"What type of soil for the word of God do I represent?"**

That question and the answer we arrive at are very important and tell us a lot about where we are along our faith journey. But before we do that, there is something else about this parable that we so often miss. While it is true that it is about being open to God and the seeds he sends our way, the parable is also about God's eagerness to share those seeds! Think about it!

The sower does not discriminate. The sower does not pick and choose. The sower scatters the seeds anywhere and everywhere. In fact, the sower is recklessly generous beyond measure, knowing that all the seeds that he scatters stand a chance of reaching good soil. No doubt the scattering of the seeds is bad farming practice, but it tells us a whole lot about the extravagant generosity of God that plays no favourites and does not discriminate!

That is important because I don't think any of us are as clear cut as pathway soil, or rocky soil, or thorny soil, or good soil. The truth is we are a mixture of all, and our lives and actions reflect that mixture. So much so that sometimes, even among the thorns of our confused and complicated life, God's seed can surprisingly find rich soil. How often do we look back and are amazed by our generous and rather selfless actions, our out of character bravery or ethical stances, our ability to see the big picture in a given situation and act accordingly?

The fact is, the sower doesn't change. The seed doesn't change.

What changes is the soil!

The Word of God is alive and active in our lives and the life of our faith community. Our challenge this week is to consciously cultivate the soil of our lives so that the seed can take root and bear a rich harvest.

May your endeavours in the garden of the Lord bear a rich harvest this week,

Fr Peter Brannelly

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, July 13

- Adoration (4:30pm, Stella Maris)
- Benediction (5:15pm, Stella Maris)
- **Mass** (5:30pm, Stella Maris)

Tuesday, July 14

- **Mass** (9:00am, Stella Maris School Chapel)
- Craft Group (1:00pm, St Peter's)
- Knights of the Southern Cross Meeting (7:00pm, Stella Maris)

Wednesday, July 15

- **Mass** (7:00am, St Mary's)
- **Communion Service** (9:00am, St Catherine's)
- Pray & Play (9:30am)
- Scripture Study Group (9:30am, Zoom)
- Latin Prayer Group (6:00pm, Stella Maris)
- First Holy Communion Parent Information Night (5:00pm, Stella Maris)

Thursday, July 16

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

Friday, July 17

- **Mass** (9:00am, Stella Maris)
- Grief Support Meeting (following Mass)
- Community Meal (6:00pm, Stella Maris)

Saturday, July 18

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

Sunday, July 19 *16th Sunday in Ordinary Time*

- **Mass** (6:30am, Stella Maris)
- **Mass** (7:30am, St Peter's) (*Children's Church*)
- **Mass** (8:00am, St Catherine's) (*Children's Church*)
- **Mass** (9:00am, Stella Maris) (*Children's Church*)
- **Mass** (9:30am, St Mary's)
- **Mass** (5:00pm, Stella Maris) (*Children's Church*)
- Veritas (following Mass)

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.



An assisted hearing loop has been installed at Stella Maris – please contact the Mass coordinator or sacristan to access the system.

How quickly school holidays finish! With school resuming this weekend, our parish family gets back to its normal routine. We welcome back our **NET team** after their mid-year break, and all our youth programs resume next weekend. This Wednesday, we have the **Parent Information meeting** which kicks off our **First Holy Communion** programme and Children's church resumes. Finally, as we wave farewell to all the school holiday makers, we want to thank everyone who assisted in any way in making last weekend's **hospitality** so delicious!

YOU ARE MOST 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 programme**. In the meantime, if you want to discover a little more about who we are and what we believe, why not join us at our next Veritas meeting?

Veritas is our ministry to those who are seeking to understand what we believe as Catholics and some of the customs and traditions that most of us take for granted. Quite often, our simple rituals can confound the onlooker until they are explained! For all those searching, you are welcome to make Veritas part of your journey. We gather on the first and third Sunday after the 5:00pm Sunday evening Mass. Our next meeting will be next Sunday – all are welcome- why not invite a friend?

A DEAD CERTAINTY

If you have not already collected your Funeral Preparation Pack, they are available at the entrance to the church. The purpose of the preparation envelope is not to be taken home and collect dust. It is to be opened, reflected upon and discussed with your loved ones. Please fill out and then return to the parish office (or some obvious place at home), where hopefully it will not be opened for many years to come. When the time does come to open it, your details will give your family reassurance and some direction on how you want to celebrate your life. Don't procrastinate!

WHERE FAITH AND LIFE MEET

We welcome into God's Family, the Church *Antoni Moczulski, Isabelle Cleaver, Lacey Elliot, Benjamin Fielding, Murphy McNee, Alannah Stone, Lucy Vella & Mia Vella* who will be baptised this weekend.

We pray for all those who have died especially *Zena Phillips* and *Tom Hawkins*. 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

FIRST HOLY COMMUNION ENROLMENT NOW OPEN

Enrolments for First Communion are now open for children in Year 4 or older who have completed the Sacrament of Confirmation. The form can be completed online at maroochydoreparish.com.au. The Parent Information Night will be held at 5:00pm, **this Wednesday**, July 15, in Stella Maris Church, Maroochydore. Please note: parents only are required to attend this evening. We look forward to supporting your child on this special step in their faith journey.

SISTERHOOD – OUR PARISH MINISTRY FOR WOMEN

As we look forward to our annual Women's retreat in August, this month we are excited to welcome Sarah Coleman as the July Sisterhood guest speaker. Sarah has a masters in Neuroscience and speaks regularly on behavioural neuroscience and Christian theology. She is a gifted speaker and teacher and presents an engaging presentation on practising peace. Combining scripture and neuro science she outlines key spiritual practices for mental health, guarding your heart and mind and understanding wholeness. So, mark in your diary **6:00pm, Tuesday, July 21**. *Why not invite a friend?*

MUMS & DADS - GRANDMUMS & GRANDDADS

Now that school is about to resume, every Wednesday morning from 9:30am to 11:00am, parents with smaller children gather at Stella Maris for our Pray & Play group. It is an excellent opportunity for young children to interact with each other while at the same time for adults to share their wisdom and in the process, have some fun. Grandparents are especially welcome to share their experiences and stories while at the same time enjoy the energy and inquisitiveness of those just starting out on the great adventure of life. Please join us this Wednesday!

JUNIOR MINISTERS

Each Sunday of the school term, around 30 Junior Ministers gather from 3:00pm to 4:30pm to learn and have fun. They receive training so they can serve during Mass (altar servers, reading, managing the PowerPoint, taking up collections and acting as welcomers). This parish ministry not only helps the students develop valuable skills but also enriches our parish community and is specifically designed for children in primary school who have made their Confirmation.

HIGHSCHOOL YOUTH GROUP

Every Sunday afternoon, 3:00pm at Stella Maris, our parish 10:10 High School youth group gathers, and all students are invited. It is an afternoon of fun, faith and friendship, with a bit of food thrown in! Inspired by John 10:10, "I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full"; why not bring your friends and be part of something awesome? For more info, contact: maroochydore@netministries.com.au

A BIG THANK YOU

On the first weekend of every month, we have a trailer at the lower carpark accepting all your empty bottles and cans. We take your empties to the local Containers for Change, and the process supports our youth program. Thank you to Knights of the Southern Cross, who completed the process by taking the trailer full of bottles and cans to the local Containers for Change depot. This month we raised \$289.40. **Alternatively**, A better way to support this initiative is to take your bottles and cans directly to one of the local Containers for Change centres and quote our number **C10193859**. Every little bit helps! Thanks for your continued thirsty support.

We welcome back our NET team after their mid-year break and retreat – everyone is looking forward to the second half of the year with great anticipation!



Last Thursday over 60 junior ministers gathered at Stella Maris for our holiday programme "Fun Days with God". Thank you to Bernie Baillie, the NET Team and adult helpers who made the day so successful

DISCOVER YOUR CALL TO MISSION: UPCOMING MODULE 4

Have you ever stopped to wonder about the true purpose of the Church, and how your unique gifts fit into God's plan? Starting the week of August 17, the Archdiocesan Centre for Catholic Formation is launching Module 4: A People on Mission. This inspiring nine-week course runs on Monday nights from 7:00pm to 9:00pm. It is designed to help you move your faith from the pews and into your everyday life. **How to Participate?** We are looking to gather a local group to experience this module together. If you are interested in attending or want to learn more, please get in touch with Carolyn Watt at sacraments.suncoast@bne.catholic.net.au to indicate your interest.



In May, across the Archdiocese, we had a Mass count to see just how many were sitting in our pews each Sunday. The results of the mass count help with future planning and the shaping and staffing of our parishes. What has emerged is that our parish is the largest Mass-going parish not just in the Archdiocese but probably also in the state, with more than 2000 people coming through the doors of our four churches each weekend. Those numbers are a reflection of the faith, energy and activity of our Catholic Family and the sense of belonging and commitment that is at the heart of our parish.

However, the downside to those numbers can be seen each weekend when finding a car park seems to get harder and harder. Indeed, some families pile into the car and head to Stella Maris only to drive around for 15 minutes in a vain attempt to find a park! Currently, we utilise every bit of street parking and the adjoining private office and shopping car parks. As more and more development takes place, one day, sooner rather than later, we will no longer be able to access that parking space. You can imagine what the loss of these car parks will mean to the viability of our parish!

Maroochydore will continue to evolve into the major commercial and civic centre of the Sunshine Coast, and Stella Maris will be right in the heart of this busy holiday destination. If we are to continue to grow and have the options in the future to meet the challenges of a changing community, we need to make some decisions now. We have a window of opportunity at this moment, but once it is gone, it is gone for good! The Finance Committee decided to purchase the property on the corner of Maroochydore Road and Baden Powell St for 3.9 million dollars. This acquisition is part of a bigger vision to secure our boundaries and provide options for the future.

It does mean going into substantial debt! Time is of the essence, and we need to pay off this debt as quickly as possible to enable us to move forward. We have established a dedicated account precisely for the repayment of the loan. To help this process, we will enter into a long-term lease on the property, with the income assisting with the repayments. While supporting the many ministries that flourish within our Parish Family, the repayment of this debt becomes the priority of our community.

Every parish is the recipient of the generosity, vision and sacrifices of those who have handed on the faith to them. We are no different here at Stella Maris, and we are grateful for the foundation that we have built our parish on. We now have the opportunity to continue this journey by providing options for the next generation of Catholics that will faithfully gather here at Stella Maris.

On behalf of the Finance Committee, thank you for your continued support.

Fr Peter Brannelly