

Stella Maris Catholic Parish

Twentieth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Weekend of August 15 and 16, 2026 Year A

First Reading: Isaiah 56:1,6-7; Second Reading: Romans 11:13-15, 29-32 Gospel: Matthew 15:21-28

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

**Go to our parish
webpage to live stream
our 9:00am and
5:00pm Sunday Mass**

GOING DEEPER WITH OUR FAITH

In my homily last weekend, I spoke about something that I suspect is true for many Christians: we can grow and mature in almost every area of our lives while our faith sometimes remains at a primary-school level. We grow professionally, raise families, navigate relationships and responsibilities, and become knowledgeable about the things that interest us. Yet when it comes to faith, we can still rely on what we learnt as children. Perhaps we haven't allowed our faith to mature with us, resulting in a mismatch between the adult questions we are asking and the childhood faith we are using to answer them. Last weekend I used the image of the beach, the shallows and the deep, drawing on Jesus calling Peter to step out of the boat in faith. So, what might going deeper look like?

Moving Beyond the Beach

The beach is where we watch from a distance, comfortable with what is familiar and within our control. Perhaps we identify as Catholic, but Mass has gradually disappeared from our lives. We believe in God and pray when something goes wrong. There is faith there, but we're standing on the shoreline.

So what's the next step? Begin with five minutes of prayer each day. Turn off the radio in the car, give thanks while doing the household chores, or have a coffee... a coffee with Jesus. Talk to God as we would a friend. Come to Mass. Read the Scriptures. Ask a question. Come along to a formation opportunity such as Veritas.

We often hear that 'God loves us', but it's difficult to have a deep relationship with someone we hardly know.



Moving Beyond the Shallows

Many of us are probably here. We come to Mass. We pray. We believe. Faith matters to us, but perhaps we've become comfortable or lukewarm. Perhaps we could read a Catholic book, listen to a Catholic podcast, join a Bible study, go to Reconciliation more regularly, or spend time in Adoration. Invest fifteen minutes in daily prayer, (be creative, there are 1001 ways to pray) but remember to have some time in silent contemplation. Consider serving or joining a ministry. Visit someone who is lonely. Volunteer with the church or wider community ie the Friday Community Meal or St Vincent de Paul. Ask "Where could God use me?"

Moving into the Deep

The deep is where faith begins to cost us something and becomes central to how we live. Prayer becomes the backbone of our faith (I recommend 30-60 minutes). Instead of only asking what we want from God, we begin asking: "God, what do you want from me?" Going deeper might mean forgiving someone, confronting something in our lives inconsistent with Church Teaching, discerning our vocation, giving generously, or remaining faithful through suffering. Deep prayer means that we surrender our will and ask *thy will be done*. Trust God when we cannot see the way ahead and continue to pray even when God seems silent.

Wherever we are in our faith, the important thing is that we keep growing. God loves us where we are, but continually invites us to grow into the best version of ourselves. Do not be afraid to constantly journey deeper in the faith. Pilgrim well,

Fr Gerard Lai

Our **Veritas Group** meets for half an hour after the 5:00pm Mass on the first and third Sunday of the month. Veritas is Latin for truth. All of us, whether we are born and bred Catholics or new on the road of faith, are ultimately searching for the truth! Our Veritas group gathers simply to look at some of the rituals, habits, things we do as Catholics that probably confuse the onlooker and taken for granted by most of us. What happens in the confessional, why the statues, what is a tabernacle, what are the Stations of the Cross, why doesn't the priest preach for 40 minutes? Our **Veritas Group** meets after the 5:00pm Mass this Sunday evening – *please join us as we search together and try to make sense of the journey of faith.*



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, August 17

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

Tuesday, August 18

- **Mass** (9:00am, Stella Maris School Chapel)

Wednesday, August 19

- **Mass** (7:00am, St Mary's)
- **Mass** (9:00am, St Catherine's)
- Pray & Play (9:30am, The Annex)
- Scripture Study Group (9:30am, Zoom)
- Latin Prayer Group (6:00pm, Stella Maris)

Thursday, August 20

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

Friday, August 21

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

Saturday, August 22

- 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, August 23 *21st Sunday in Ordinary Time*

First Holy Communion Weekend

- **Mass** (6:30am, Stella Maris)
- **Mass** (7:30am, St Peter's)
- **Mass** (8:00am, St Catherine's)
- **Mass** (9:00am, Stella Maris)
- **Mass** (9:30am, St Mary's) (Children's Church)
- 10:10 (3:00pm, Stella Maris)
- Junior Ministers (3:00pm, Stella Maris)
- **Polish Mass** (4:00pm, St Mary's)
- **Mass** (5:00pm, Stella Maris) (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.



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

All of us have memories of our First Holy Communion. Some of us who are older remember the very early start, with our First Holy Communion being celebrated at the 6:30am Sunday Mass. We all knew the day was special because of the fancy clothes we were decked out in and the photos of us all dressed up and looking very holy. Then of course, following Mass, there was the First Holy Communion breakfast. *Nothing like a bottle of Fanta so early in the morning!* Times change, traditions adapt, but hopefully for the 109 younger members of our Parish Family, next Sunday, as they celebrate their First Holy Communion, it will be full of meaning, memories and a lifelong appreciation of the gift of the Eucharist and all that it means.

Next weekend's celebrations is the culmination of a journey of preparation that began five weeks ago. Last Wednesday at Stella Maris they celebrated their First Reconciliation. So, as their First Holy Communion quickly approaches we keep them and their families in our prayers – trusting that we might be a Parish family that nurtures and sustains their faith. *At our First Communion Masses next weekend please make welcome all visitors who are joining us and please note that there will be reserved seating for First Holy Communion families.*

A JOURNEY BEGINS

When it comes to faith, it makes no difference where you start – it is where you finish that matters! While our parish family has been focused on our First Communion programme and preparing our younger members to receive their First Eucharist – at the other end of the scale, we have begun a new RCIA journey for adults who are discerning their faith and exploring what we believe as Catholics. The initialism **RCIA** simply stands for The **R**ite of **C**hristian **I**nitiation for **A**dults. We keep the over 35 candidates in our prayers along with their catechists and sponsors. As a Parish we remember that we have an important role in their journey by not only keeping them in our prayers but also by our witness and the positive example we provide by being people of faith.

RACE TO THE FINISH

As we approach the business end of the footy season there are those who have pulled away from the crowd and are leading the table board of our Parish NRL footy tipping completion. *Is it skill or luck?* There are of course those who have been throughout the season painfully consistent in their tipping. *They are the ones who have tipped with their hearts instead of their head!* So as we get closer to the finals the more robust the completion. Leading the pack is **Kocattips** on 124 points closely followed by **TimH1970** and **Tolka Rovers** on 122 points and **Biggendenboy** on 121 points. Rounding off the top 7 on 120 points are **Khill**, **Jackies Tips** and **Lynchmark**. However, the ones to watch on 119 points are **Casey Dee**, **TigerBart** and especially **BBee** who is yet to play her Joker! The proceeds of our tipping completion goes towards assisting our youth to attend the annual Ignite Youth gathering in Brisbane over the weekend of September 24-27.

THIRSTY WORK

Thank you to everyone who saved up your bottles and cans and brought them to the trailer at Stella Maris on the first weekend of the month – this month, through your thirsty work – we raised \$236 which will support our youth program. 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**.

WHERE FAITH AND LIFE MEET

We welcome into God's Family, the Church **Francis Bowden, Billy Telford & Angus Major** who will be baptised this weekend.

We pray for all those who have died, especially **Helena Kubik and Tobenna Nwokeke**. 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



BLOOM WHERE YOU ARE PLANTED

Our **Annual Women's Retreat** is quickly approaching and the final touches for the day are slowly falling into place. We are excited to have journalist and prominent Australian Catholic, Geraldine Doogue, as our guest speaker. Geraldine will reflect upon her own faith journey and how it has guided her throughout her career and been a foundation both in good times and in the struggles. We would like to especially invite the **younger women** and **young mothers** of our parish to join us on the day – your faith journey is important and an essential part of our parish faith story. We want you to join us on Saturday, August 29 so please accept this invitation and call Carolyn Watt on 5443 3488 or Anita via email atzinks@gmail.com for more details.

SAFEGUARDING TRAINING FOR VOLUNTEERS

Safeguarding Training is an Archdiocesan requirement for those volunteers who need a Blue Card or Police Check for their ministries. The Parish Safeguarding Team will be holding face to face training at 10:00am, Monday, September 7, in the Bliss Room at Stella Maris Church for those who have not completed their online training. If you have any questions, please call a member of our Safeguarding Team who are in the Parish Office every Monday from 9:00am to 1:00pm. Please register your attendance by emailing: lsr.suncoast@bne.catholic.net.au



SAVE THE DATE

MEN OF STELLA MARIS PARISH

You are invited to join us for our regular Men's Breakfast on **Saturday, August 29 at 7.45am** sharp in the Bliss Room. Our speaker for the morning will be our own **Fr. Gerard Lai** who will share his own unique faith journey and how God has changed his life. Please note the earlier start to allow Fr. Gerard time to be in the Church by 8:30am for confessions.

The purpose of our Men's Breakfasts is to provide an opportunity for us as men to come and hear from fellow parishioners, (who might sit next to you in the pews each Sunday), about how Jesus has made a difference in their lives. It is also an opportunity to share our personal faith experiences as well as encouraging each other in our spiritual walk. 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 \$5.00 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, August 28.

**When writing or updating your will, please remember the mission and ministry of your parish family.
Everyone's generosity is appreciated and never taken for granted. Thank you**

A PLACE FOR EVERYONE TO BELONG

Pray & Play

Mums and dads, granddads and grandmas, perhaps this fun gathering is calling you? From 9:30am to 11:00am every Wednesday morning, 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 enjoying the energy and inquisitiveness of those just starting out on the great adventure of life.

Children's Church

Every Sunday 8:00am Sippy Downs, 9:30am Buderim and 9:00am & 5:00pm Maroochydore we have Children's Church. All our younger children, at the start of Mass, are sent forth with their catechist to celebrate a more age appropriate reflection on the Gospel before returning to the church towards the end of the Eucharistic Prayer. From little things great things grow!

Junior Ministers in Action

Our Junior Ministers Youth Group meet 3:00pm every Sunday in the Bliss Room. The Junior Ministry is open to all younger members of the parish from Years 3 to 6 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. They are busy preparing to lead our Sunday night Mass next weekend. While our primary focus is on serving others, we also ensure there's plenty of fun to be had with friends!

10:10 Youth Group

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! For more information, please contact maroochydore@netministries.com.au or see Fr Gerard.

Sunshine Coast Catholic Education

Siena Catholic Primary School

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



Dancing with Joy: Prep–Year 3 Dance Lessons

Throughout Term 3, our Prep to Year 3 students have been enthusiastically taking part in weekly dance lessons each Wednesday. Guided by the talented instructors from Dance Iconic, Sarah and Katie, each year level is learning its own choreography in preparation for a special showcase for parents during the final lesson of the six-week program.

These lively 40-minute sessions are an engaging part of the Arts curriculum, giving students the opportunity to develop coordination, teamwork, resilience and the ability to follow instructions—all while having a wonderful time. It has been a joy to see the children moving with confidence, and the teachers “busting out the moves” alongside them have added even more fun to the experience. Who knew learning could be so much fun!



Stella Maris Primary School

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



Stella Maris School is pleased to share an exciting update on our proposed Undercover Court Complex. The project has reached a significant milestone, with detailed design and cost planning now well advanced as we prepare to seek Council approval and final approval from Brisbane Catholic Education.

Designed to support our growing community, the new facility will provide students with a high-quality, weather-proof space for sport, physical education, assemblies, performances, learning activities and community gatherings throughout the year. The development also includes new male, female and accessible amenities, dedicated storage areas, modern audio-visual infrastructure and an upgraded canteen. The significant project will be funded through school resources, community contributions and donations. Stella Maris continues to work closely with Brisbane Catholic Education to ensure this investment serves future generations of students and families.



Siena Catholic College

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



This week students in different year levels engaged in activities that challenged them to consider where they are on their faith and life journey.

Our Year 9s engaged in an encounter session with the NET team on the theme of ‘Good and Evil’. Through a variety of activities and witness, they were asked to consider what is taking them towards God and whether there is anything that is distracting them from being the best possible version of themselves. The students enjoyed this time out for both fun and reflection.

The Year 11s participated in a Leadership Day on Wednesday, where they had the opportunity to explore their leadership potential, to discover their passion and to be courageous in their decision making. They now look forward to the more formal components of the leadership process.

Finally, the Year 8s joined parishioners on Wednesday morning for the St Catherine’s Community Mass. This was a great chance to come together as a cohort before they head off on camp next week. In his homily, Fr Gerard encouraged them to be people who keep others at the heart of all that they do and to be courageous in the face of injustice.

Any Vietnamese parishioners who would like to catch up with Fr Joseph Hien for Sacraments are warmly invited to attend First Saturday of the Month, Reconciliations at 8:30-9:30am or Monday evening Mass at 5:30pm.

BEST PRACTICE

The protocol for all our Eucharistic Ministers who take Communion to our sisters and brothers who are sick, housebound, in hospital or nursing homes, is before you place your pyx on the offertory table, please record your name and the names of those whom you are going to see (the folder is at the entrance of each church). This important ministry always takes place on the day, ideally following when commissioned at the end of Mass, and only commissioned Eucharistic Ministers are allowed to take the Blessed Sacrament from the church.

Available at the entrance of all four of our churches, we have new **information envelopes** containing details about our **Parish Planned Giving** programme and the many ways you can support your parish and our **Endowment Fund**, which will provide your parish family with financial security into the future. For new and returning members of our parish, there is a **Welcome Pack**. It contains valuable information about your new parish. Please feel free to take an envelope home with you today. The parish **Funeral Preparation Pack** is also available at the entrance to the Church. To all new members of our parish community, you are welcome—*thanks for being part of our church family.*

