

Stella Maris Catholic Parish

Twenty First Sunday in Ordinary Time

Weekend of August 22 and 23, 2026 Year A

First Reading: Isaiah 22:19-23; Second Reading: Romans 11:33-36 Gospel: Matthew 16:13-20

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

THE JOURNEY CONTINUES

This weekend across our parish family we celebrate the First Holy Communion of 109 younger members of our community. For some reason, for those of us who are older, or not so much older, it is a time of memories. Our First Communion day remains vivid in our imagination and memory – the anticipation, the special clothing, the fuss made by parents and grandparents, the first communion breakfast and no doubt the pictures of us looking incredibly holy and pious! It is almost as if along our life journey we have the stepping stones that speak to us frequently about our life, the choices we make, the people we are striving to become, and our God who never ceases to surprise us.

So, for our First Communicants and their families, these past five weeks have been a journey of faith. They began by discovering that they are **welcome** and **belong** to our faith community. The children explored the different parts of the Mass, learning how it is important it is faithfully **gather** and **remember** – after all, that is what Jesus asked us to do! They then focused on the Liturgy of the Word, where we are invited to listen to the Holy Word of God. What became clear was that God speaks to each one of us through Scripture and that listening carefully is an important part of participating in Mass.

The next week was focused on the Liturgy of the Eucharist. Part of that focus was concentrated on the Last Supper and Jesus' invitation to **remember** him. As a group we reflected on the ritual and gestures of the Mass and how the symbols are intended to elevate our awareness of God presence here and now. All of us were rediscovering that our God is a God of love who is part of our **journey**. We learnt that Eucharist means **thanksgiving** and, most importantly, about the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist.

The following week focused on preparing our hearts to receive Christ. The 109 candidates learnt about God's **forgiveness** through the Sacrament of Reconciliation and celebrated their First Reconciliation.

In the final week the focus was on the practicalities of receiving Holy Communion. The importance of reverence and the very personal and profound moment it means to be in communion with Christ and with one another. Importantly, the challenge of receiving Jesus was also explored with the timeless invitation to be sent out on **mission** – to become what we receive - to share his love by caring for the poor, the sick, the elderly, our friends, neighbours, those who are struggling at the moment and importantly, each member of our family.

So you see, for all of us, there is something **ageless** and **unchanging** in what we celebrate today. In remembering our own First Holy Communion we are not simply transported back to memories of the past but are grounded very much in the present and are reminded of the privilege and the challenge that flows from once again gathering as a **pilgrim** people on the journey of faith.

Fr Peter Brannelly

Our **Annual Women's Retreat** is on next weekend and we are excited to welcome journalist and prominent Australian Catholic, Geraldine Doogue, as our guest speaker. Geraldine will reflect upon her on faith journey and how it has guided her throughout her career and been a foundation both in good times and in the struggles. A retreat is not a key note address or some flashy motivational talk but a chance to reflect on the journey of faith, the challenges of being a person of faith, and the choices that need to be made to reflect the invitation God gives each one of us to become more like the person we are created to be. Geraldine will help us on that journey! While we are fully subscribed we do a few spaces left and they are reserved for the younger members of our community – **so this is a special invitation to the younger women and young mothers of our parish to join us next Saturday** – your faith journey is important and an essential part of our parish faith story. Please accept this invitation and call Carrolyn Watt on 5443 3488 to be an important part of our retreat day.



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 24

- RCIY (4:00pm, The Annex)
- Adoration (4:30pm, Stella Maris)
- Benediction (5:15pm, Stella Maris)
- **Mass** (5:30pm, Stella Maris)

Tuesday, August 25

- **Mass** (9:00am, Stella Maris School Chapel)
- FUNERAL: Marion Crothers (11:00am, St Mary's).
- Craft Group (1:00pm, St Peters)

Wednesday, August 26

- **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 27

- **Mass** (8:30am, St Peter's)
- SVPD Meeting (following Mass, St Peter's)
- FUNERAL: Roy Thompson (11:00am, Stella Maris)

Friday, August 28

- **Mass** (9:00am, Stella Maris)
- Craft Group (9:30am, Stella Maris)
- Community Meal (6:00pm, Stella Maris)

Saturday, August 29

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

Sunday, August 30 *22nd Sunday in Ordinary Time*

- **Mass** (6:30am, Stella Maris)
- **Mass** (7:30am, St Peter's)
- **Mass** (8:00am, St Catherine's) (*Children's Church*)
- **Mass** (9:00am, Stella Maris) (*Children's Church*)
- **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.

To all visitors, family members traveling from far and wide, and friends joining us this First Holy Communion weekend

— **WELCOME** —

Thank you for celebrating the Eucharist with us today.

CRAFTY INVITATION

The Stella Maris Craft Group's next get together is at 9:45am this Friday, August 28, in the Bliss room (after the 9.00am Mass). No need to have a craft in mind, there are plenty to choose from and we will help you. Even just come along for a cuppa and a chat. Everyone is welcome, why not bring a friend? The St Peter's Craft Group meets at Coolum, at 1:00pm, this Tuesday, August 25.

APPEAL

The annual Catholic Campaign will be held across our parish next weekend. It will be our chance to think beyond the borders of our parish and support agencies that reach out and support the homeless, the marginalised, the elderly, our future priests in formation and families in dire circumstances.

BACK TO NORMAL

With our First Holy Communion program successfully coming to a conclusion this weekend it gives our parish family a chance to return to its normal routine. One obvious sign of this is our weekly Children's Church that has been interrupted during the Holy Communion programme. Returning next Sunday at our **8:00am Sippy Downs** Mass and at our **9:00am & 5:00pm Maroochydore** Masses and also at the **9:30am Buderim** Mass, all primary-aged children 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. If you would like to be involved in this ministry please contact Carrolyn Watt a call at the parish office 5443 3488.

IN MEMORIAM

This Saturday marked the 8th anniversary of the death of our foundation parish priest Fr Harry Bliss. Fr Bliss was pastor here at Stella Maris from 1978 to 1989 and was instrumental in building St Peter's at Coolum and Stella Maris primary school. May he rest in peace.

HOME VISITATION

Over the past two years, the statue of our Blessed Mother has been welcomed into many homes within our parish community. Every week, a family has taken the statue to their home, and it has provided the focus for the prayers of the family, their neighbours and friends. Can she find a home under your roof for a week? If you are interested or would like more information, please contact Veronica, 0451 593 397, or email, veronica.baatjes@gmail.com

A JOURNEY TO MEDJUGORJE

Join Fr Gerard as he shares about his recent pilgrimage to Medjugorje, the well-known Catholic pilgrimage destination in southeastern Europe associated with reported apparitions of Our Lady.

Friday, September 04 – Stella Maris Church

9:00am – Mass & Anointing (optional)

10:00am – Morning Tea *kindly sponsored by Holy Cross Funerals*

10:30am – Presentation; Concluding at 11:30am

Come along for Mass, morning tea, fellowship and stories about Medjugorje!



WHERE FAITH AND LIFE MEET

We welcome into God's Family, the Church *Alonzo Corotan, George Davis & Daly Peacock* who will be baptised this weekend.

We pray for all those who have died, especially *Marion Crothers and Roy Thompson*.

Marion's funeral rites will be celebrated at St Mary's, Buderim this Tuesday 25 August at 11:00am. Roy's funeral rites will be celebrated at Stella Maris this Thursday, August, 27 at 11:00am. May their souls **Rest in Peace**.

SAVE THE DATE

MEN OF STELLA MARIS PARISH



You are invited to join us for our regular Men's Breakfast at **7:45am sharp, next Saturday, August 29** 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.

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

How quickly a school term ends and we are already preparing our next school holiday programme. This school holidays our

"FUN DAYS WITH GOD"

will be following St Francis and will be focused on Creating Hope and Caring for Creation.

This is the Maroochydore Catholic Parish holiday program for the September School holidays. It is one day of exciting fun filled activities; craft, bible stories, songs, prayer, drama, plays and games, all based around St Francis of Assisi, Laudato Si' and God's beautiful gift of Creation.



Date: Tuesday, September 22

Time: 9.00am - 3.00pm Children may be dropped off from 8.40am, with our program beginning at 9.00am.

Parents and friends are welcome to join us for a short closing ritual at 2:45pm. Our official pick-up time being 3.00pm.

Where: The Bliss Room – just along from the toilets at the Stella Maris Church

Who: Children between the ages of Prep to Year 6.

Cost: \$10.00 per child with a maximum of \$20 per family.

What to bring: Children are to wear comfortable "SunSmart" clothing and need to bring their own water bottle, morning tea, lunch and hat. (Just like they would for school)

As always, spaces are limited and it is important to reserve your place as soon as possible. Simply follow the link via the QR code. Please note that registrations close on Tuesday, September 15, however, last time we reached our numbers well before the closing date, so register A.S.A.P if you don't want to miss out.

If you have any queries, please feel free to contact Bernie Baillie at bbailie811@gmail.com



MUMS & DADS GRANDMUMS & GRANDDADS

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.



Especially on this First Holy Communion weekend we understand that there are many visitors joining us who are not Catholic – *you are most welcome*. When it comes time for Holy Communion you are welcome to come forward and cross your arms to receive a blessing. Thank you for being with us today.

🎉 Calling all Young Adults aged 18–30! 🎉

Come along for an awesome night at the NET House! The theme is "**country**" so bring something to share and invite a friend. Starting

6:00pm, for more details contact

maroochydore@netministries.com.au or

@net.maroochydore on socials.

All YA are welcome. See you there.

THE CHALLENGE BEFORE US

If life is all about timing then at the moment our parish could do with a little better timing! We have evolved into the largest parish in Queensland and every weekend across our four churches we welcome over two thousand people through our doors. If we continue being who we are called to be this number will only increase! 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 who we are.

The downside of those numbers, especially at Maroochydore, can also be seen in the struggle to find a carpark – each week it seems to get harder and harder. Up until now we have been fortunate to be able to access every bit of parking around Stella Maris, most of which is on private property. As Maroochydore continues to develop into the major commercial and administrative centre of the Sunshine Coast, the redevelopment of the area around us will continue and all those car park options will disappear.

Your Finance Committee was well aware of the impact of the development around us at Stella Maris and that is why two months ago the decision was made to take out a loan and purchase the corner Maroochydore Road and Baden Powell Street property that came up for sale. It was a strategic investment for the future and we thought we had time to address that loan before embracing the next challenge. Unfortunately, our timing is out and that next property, the key to our future, is now up for sale! The asking price is somewhere between 8 and 9 million dollars.



It is obvious that this property is key to our future – the possibilities it will provide is only limited by our imagination and how we respond to the future needs of our community. Last Tuesday your Finance Committee convened to look at our options, and since we have already a 5 million dollar debt, they are very limited with our current planned giving. It is impossible to get an extension on our current loan. Over the next couple of weeks we will look creatively at how we can put in an offer on the property, but in the meantime, **if you have any suggestions or solutions we desperately want to hear from you!**

I once heard that the beginning to understand the meaning of life is a bit like planting a tree, knowing that you will never sit under the shade of its branches! No doubt, for those who handed on the faith to us, bought the land, built our schools and churches, they understood that it would be us who benefited from their vision, determination and sacrifices. Perhaps it is our turn now to likewise look into the future, with confidence and faith, plant a tree and know that the next generation will sit in the shade of its branches.

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

Fr Peter Brannelly

(Fr Peter Brannelly, Bev Nunan, Peter Donelan, Kieran Fawcett, Tim Hishon, Fr Gerard Lai, Lorraine Nolan)

Every Sunday afternoon, 3:00pm at Stella Maris, our parish **10:10 High School Youth Group** gathers – if you are in high school come along and join us! Coordinated by our NET team, it is an afternoon of fun, faith and friendship, with a bit of food thrown in! Don't be shy – we would love to hook up with you meet you.

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.**

