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Girls' school celebrates 117 years

**Maris Stella held a special assembly on Friday to celebrate its 117th birthday.**

9 mins ago



Deputy headgirl Nicol Randeria, headgirl Megan Montocchio, His Eminence Cardinal Wilfred Napier, deputy headgirl Olivia Keirby-Smith and Sister Colette Holmes.

MARIS Stella celebrated its 117th birthday on Friday 20 May, with a very special mass led by Cardinal Wilfred Napier, who celebrated his 75th birthday recently.

Supported by Father Peter Lafferty, the school's Chaplain, and Father Sabelo Mkhize, Holy Trinity's Parish Priest, His Eminence reminded the Maris Stella pupils and members of the congregation that just as the caterpillar transforms into the beautiful butterfly, so God is not finished with us yet and we must open our hearts to His plans for us.

This Holy Family Catholic School in Stephen Dlamini (Essenwood) Road, Durban, was founded by Pierre Bienvenu Noailles and the Holy Family Sisters over a century ago. Sisters of the Holy Family Congregation arrived in Natal in 1864, shortly thereafter they opened a school in Broad Street, Durban. The original building on the Maris Stella site in Essenwood Road was constructed in 1897, and the Maris Stella Convent School was officially opened in 1899. Steady growth in enrolment during the earlier part of this century demanded the creation of additional facilities. Their Chapel was built in 1923, and the Centenary Hall opened in 1964, marking the 100th anniversary of the arrival of the Holy Family Sisters in South Africa.

During the 1960s and 1970s, the number of Holy Family Sisters diminished so that in 1982 the Sisters decided that the school would henceforth be managed by a Board of Governors representing the parents of the girls at the school, and including the principal and a member of the management team. The ethos and traditions of the Sisters still permeate the school today, even though there are no Sisters living in the building. The Sisters still show a lively interest in school matters and representatives attend most school functions, with Sister Colette Holmes in attendance Friday's mass.



Maris Stella girls go ahead of Father Peter Lafferty, the school's Chaplain, Cardinal Wilfred Napier, and Father Sabelo Mkhize, Holy Trinity's Parish Priest, in the assembly.