

August 2024 News from St Benedict's Priory

At the beginning of August, in his capacity as the Vocations Director for southern Africa, Br Luc travelled to KwaZulu Natal and the Eastern Cape, to make home visits with three men who had enquired about possibly joining our monastic community and whom he has been accompanying in initial discernment. These visits helped clarify that one man does not seem to have a vocation to our way of life, one is not yet ready to take the next steps, and one will continue in the discernment process, perhaps making a visit here to spend some with us relatively soon.

Br Daniel also travelled during the month, in his case to visit with an elderly nun in Gqeberha (Port Elizabeth) in the Eastern Cape, with whom he has had a close friendship developed over many years. It seems she does not have much longer before she departs for her heavenly homeland, and so it was good for them to have some time together again. She is the last remaining member of her Order in South Africa, an Order that faithfully held this country in prayer through the end of apartheid, which added a special poignancy.

We were pleased to welcome an enquirer from Zimbabwe to spend a week getting to know us and our situation. Praying and talking and eating and just being together are important components of discernment about a possible vocation to our monastic way of life.

Rev Michael Battle brought another of his Tutu travel seminar groups to Volmoed from the USA. Br Roger spent some time with the group, discussing how monastic spirituality and prayer might sustain a secular vocation as a way of responding faithfully to the presence of God in the world.

Br Roger represented the Priory at Volmoed Council meetings and workshops, as well as at the Volmoed Trust AGM. He also attended a meeting of the Holy Cross School Trust board.

Br Josias continues to deepen his ministry of presence at the Ithemba special needs centre in Zwelihle. He is introducing various Special Olympics activities (such as bocce ball) to the young people there. Br Josias is also growing his relationship with the Associates of Holy Cross in South Africa and supporting them in their spiritual journeys.

Various guests on retreat at Volmoed joined us for some chapel prayers. Brothers continued their ministry of individual spiritual accompaniment, both in person and online.

As I write this, Br Luc is travelling to our Holy Cross Monastery in the USA. While there, he will do some preparation for his new role as the Order's Assistant Formator for South Africa. The timing of his travel was determined by the restrictions on his current South African visa. He is hoping to be able to extend it somewhat after he returns to us.