

Warm greetings! It seems impossible that it is over four months since I started sabbatical and recovery time, drove out of Volmoed and went to Cape Town, and had a hip replacement operation at the end of March. I am now preparing to return to Volmoed next week.

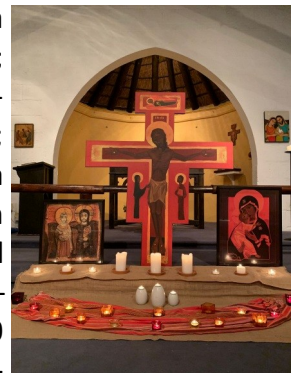
It has been a truly wonderful sabbatical and recovery season. Here are some snippets and highlights of the journey. The word that describes most of this time is GRATITUDE, for so many and so much. Especially the team of friends who looked after me in the first three to six weeks and those who visited. It is challenging to need help to do most of life's basic functions, and to receive it with grace. I also learned to find creative ways to pick things up without bending down.



The operation went well, thanks be to God and the surgeon and medical team. On Easter Sunday I was able to go up to the altar and receive communion, using crutches. Not so much fun was the power cut that day that meant I went down eight flights of steps using crutches. The only word to describe the shift from using two crutches to one is liberation! Oh the joy of being able to carry a cup or plate from table to kitchen by myself! I was then able to cook, though it takes much longer using only one hand. Physiotherapy and exercises were a large part of the last few months, twice daily for about two months and still once daily. Not my favourite but crucial for recovery. I have been in post recovery for the last month, now in physio rehab with particular exercises to strengthen my core and glute muscles that had become rather weak. Walking almost every day, weather depending, often with friends, has been great, and I am now back to swimming and some exercise at a local gym. I am now fitter than I was, and also a few kg lighter.



There are no adequate words to describe the many points of healing and joy along the journey, of course along with challenges that come with the process of healing. Besides the plethora of gratitudes and graces, there was healing of body, mind and spirit; liberation; rest; joy; synchronicities (on steroids!); time with family and my sister and husband visited from the UK for the past month; reading; quality time with friends; sitting in quiet; time to pray, reflect and journal; re-set; renewal; laughter. It was a time to 'just be' rather than 'do and produce'. There was the gift of time and much open space in my calendar. It was a deep joy to re-connect with Cape Town and long-time friends, some I had not seen since 2003 or before, when I went to the USA. My return was in Feb 2020 just before Covid-19, so I had moved to Volmoed and Hermanus but not really returned and re-connected to Cape Town.



Other enjoyments included the opportunity to visit various churches, including St Stephen's, Pinelands and spend time in their beautiful, old, thatch roof garden chapel; St George's Cathedral; St Thomas's for their 160<sup>th</sup> anniversary, where two of our Volmoed patrons attend; and the Dutch Reformed Church in Pinelands where Elna Mouton, retired Stellenbosch theology lecturer and first chaplain at the Andrew Murray Centre, was preaching and took the service.

I was also able to spend a few days at the Ha Phororo retreat centre in the North



-West, near Hartbeespoort Dam, where Rev Chris Schoneberg and a community of young people run the centre. I particularly enjoyed their Path of Silence and the Reconciliation chapel, and their twice daily Taizé- style prayers and devotions, that included silence and sometimes small group sharing around the Scriptures with those present.

A big thank you to all who prayed and sent healing energies and thoughts my way. It has been a remarkable experience. This month I return to Volmoed, with an official date of 1 September for starting chaplain functions. Your prayers for the transition would be appreciated, as I settle back

into my home, learn more about various changes at Volmoed since I left, including the departure of the monks at some point in the next months.

It is a time for discernment at various levels, as Volmoed prepares for the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary and VYLTP heads towards the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

There have been several Scriptures that have been meaningful in this time. The most recent is from Luke 5: 1-13, where Jesus says to Simon and others in v4: “Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch” after they had worked all night and caught nothing. When they did, they were astounded at the huge number of fish they caught. In v 10 -11, Jesus said to Simon: “Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching people.” When they had brought their boats to shore, they left everything and followed Jesus.” The call for me in this season has been to follow Jesus. It has been an adventure. I am excited and expectant to see how this adventure continues as the next weeks and months unfold.

Deo Gloria! Glory to God!

Love and blessings,

Wilma