

July 2024 News from St Benedict's Priory

After the excitement and activity of our Order's annual Chapter gathering here at Volmoed in the first half of June, our monastic community's annual 8-day winter retreat in the second half of July was a much-appreciated time of quiet reflection. During the retreat, we follow a reduced schedule of chapel prayer, and apart from the mid-day meal in common we spend much of the time in solitary silence, allowing for longer periods of prayer and study and attentiveness.

Before enjoying our own retreat, several Brothers were involved in retreats for others. Br Aelred led a retreat for 3 women, confirming that this is a ministry he feels called to being more involved in. Br Roger accompanied a Volmoed guest on her retreat.

After our community's winter retreat, Brs Aelred and Roger travelled to Somerset West to meet with Bishop Stafford Moses of the Diocese of False Bay. The encouraging conversation established a stronger connection with the local diocese. We discussed ways in which our monastic community could be more present and available to the diocese, including through the offering of quiet days, retreats and workshops for clergy and lay ministers and parish groups as well as individual spiritual accompaniment.

Towards the end of July, Br Aelred's birthday occurred on a weekend. Several family members were able to come through from Worcester and Malmesbury to enjoy the afternoon with him. We were pleased to welcome them to our Vespers prayer in the evening before they departed.

Numerous other Volmoed guests also joined us for various chapel prayers. In particular, the VYLTP Reconciliation group attended Lauds and the Eucharist at the beginning of their week at Volmoed.

We once again were pleased to welcome the Volmoed staff and residential community to celebrate the Feast of St Benedict with us. The festal Eucharist at noon in the main chapel was followed by a fine catered meal for all in the Volmoed dining room.

We hear that Br Scott is settling back into life with the Holy Cross Monastery community in the USA and finding his place there again. Br Mpumelelo is embracing his experience over there with that community enthusiastically. He is even putting his sewing skills to good use.