

## July 2025 News from St Benedict's Priory

One of the highlights of the past month was the annual celebration of the Feast Day of St Benedict, which we shared with the resident Volmoed community and the Volmoed staff. A festal Eucharist at noon was followed by a fine catered meal. The awareness that this would almost certainly be the last such celebration we would host at Volmoed in this way added a certain poignancy to the occasion, and we took the opportunity to express our gratitude for the hospitality and support we have experienced during our time here. Br Josias received Rev Dr Robert Marankey from Cape Town as an Associate of Holy Cross during the Eucharistic celebration.

Another local Associate spent the following weekend at Volmoed, attending our chapel prayers and the Sunday Eucharist. She met with Br Josias during her visit here.

Br Josias' involvement at the Ithemba special-needs centre shifted to the Hermanus boxing club, where he has installed a table-tennis table and is busy teaching the young people from the centre some of the skills involved in playing the game.

The second half of the month featured our annual eight-day winter retreat. As always, this was a time of spiritual refreshment for the monastic community, a time spent in deeper quietness with a reduced schedule of chapel prayer and limited interaction with the outside world, allowing greater solitude for individual prayer, study and reflection.

We congratulate Br Aelred, who completed the Spiritual Direction Training Program he has been attending over the last nine months when he participated in the final intensive weekend module of the online course. This is quite an accomplishment as the time differences with the USA required extended late-night online interactions during each of the nine intensive weekends.

Br Aelred also had a significant birthday towards the end of the month. A sizeable group of family members were able to be at Volmoed to help him celebrate the occasion.

We welcomed the return of Br Ephrem to Volmoed, who was one of the contingent from our Holy Cross Monastery in the USA which attended the Order's Chapter gathering here in June last year. He is the Junior Master for the Order and is enjoying having more in-person time with the three Junior monks in this community. The arrangement for the weekly classes has thus reversed, with the three Juniors in the USA now attending online while Br Ephrem teaches the class on this side. He will be with us for a month.