

## October 2023 News from St Benedict's

Gradual recovery from the devastating storms of late September continues, within the Western Cape generally as well more locally within the Hermanus area and specifically in the Hemel-and-Aarde Valley including here at Volmoed, where efforts are underway to clean up the riverbanks (which has also provided material for neighbours to use in repairing roads on their properties) though the main access road onto the Volmoed property remains impassable. The lengthy detour along a dusty unpaved road with increased traffic volumes is still necessary for travel into Hermanus, though work on opening the main road through the bottom of the valley has begun. The electricity supply remains somewhat unstable, and there are water restrictions for townspeople as the water supply is still constrained.

Br Roger travelled to Mariannahill Monastery Retreat House in Pinetown KZN to attend the annual meeting of the Council for the Religious Life, together with representatives from most of the other religious communities in the Anglican Church of Southern Africa, as well as the Liaison Bishop who facilitates the interaction between the Council and the institutional Church. The meeting took place over two days in early October, and included reports from each community about its life and work, as well as discussion of challenges that exist within communities and between communities and the church. We also prayed and ate together and had times of fellowship, all of which strengthened the supportive relationships among communities.

Br Scott continues to serve with Br Roger on the Board of the Holy Cross School Trust. Br Daniel is spending some time each week assisting in the Volmoed office. Specifically, he is helping with the organization of the annual Volmoed colloquium which takes place in early November. Br Daniel continues to serve with Br Roger on the Volmoed Council.

Br Edwin is at our Holy Cross Monastery in the USA for several months, participating fully in the life of that Novitiate. Shortly after his arrival there, he accompanied them to a conference for new members of religious communities at a convent guest house on the coast of Massachusetts.

Br Josias has been busy with another round of marking of assignments from Theological Education by Extension (TEE) students. Mpumelelo has been supplementing his initial monastic formation programme with sewing tuition generously provided by Isobel de Gruchy.

Guests attending our chapel prayers have included several individuals staying at Volmoed as well as a couple of retreat groups, one a group of clergy from the Archdeaconry of Elsie's River, the other a group of young Anglicans. Various members of the monastic community made themselves available for individual meetings that provided opportunity for the clergy to talk about their lives and ministries with someone who would listen attentively. Brothers also continued to provide spiritual accompaniment and guidance to those requesting this, whether in person or online.