

CHAPLAINS CORNER

Warm Greetings!

This month has flown by and held very special events. It began with a young man who attended our Taize Youth Day events, who had previously visited the Benedictine monastery in Makhanda. He reconnected with the brothers here, and began a journey of discernment. On 4 March he was admitted in the Order of the Holy Cross as a novice, in what is called a 'clothing service' where he received his habit, belt and scapula (outer covering). We can now call him Br Edwin Kriel. It was meaningful, beautiful, very special, with his family and some friends attending. A first for us at Volmoed, and I provided the piano music for the service.

Soon after, I left for New York and the monastery of the Holy Cross, for my 8 day silent retreat and the final profession of Br Luc as a monk. It was winter and it snowed! The place was deeply and wonderfully quiet, both inside and out. The monks were hugely welcoming and delighted to have me



there from Volmoed, along with Seth and Merrishia Naicker, from out Volmoed Youth Leadership Program. Br Daniel was also there. The Gregorian chants at the prayer times each day was beautiful. My much needed retreat was restful, looking back at what seems now to be the first phase of my life at Volmoed, and beginning a second phase.

I feel continually drawn to this ministry of accompanying individuals and groups on retreat. It will need a shift, to spending more time in quiet and contemplative prayer, which will be challenging, but this seems a clear direction for me.

The Shalem course for which I registered, on Transforming Communities through Individual and Group Retreats, will strengthen the experience I have with more tools and materials. It starts online next week and I am excited about it!





I returned from retreat into a wonderful week! On Human Rights Day, I was part of a VYLTP event in Hermanus, where a mural of the Arch had been painted with a local artist and one of our young artists, and it was unveiled. Our drummers were there, and Edwin Arrison, John de Gruchy and myself participated. It had been a serendipitous connection at Peregrines of the artist and our young people, all because of a delay due to a flat tyre! What a wonderful story and mural it is.

Then came a wonderful connection with a group retreat and an individual retreatant. Both of these were affirming of my sense of call. The Desmond and Leah Tutu Legacy Foundation launched a new program, Leadership for Humanity, here at Volmoed. Seventeen young entrepreneurs and activists from the Western Cape and some from Johannesburg and Zimbabwe, engaged in a week of learning and practice of the leadership values and principles of Archbishop Tutu. I was asked to provide pre breakfast reflection, and walking meditations. Each morning started with a yoga body prayer created by a friend of mine. We then walked to a different beauty spot of Volmoed each morning, in silence, meditatively, noticing and paying attention to sounds, sights, smells and trying to stay in the present moment. This was new for all of them! I so enjoyed roaming around Volmoed in this way, walking silently with a group of young people, pausing and being still at the Grotto, at the top dam, at the leper graves, at the pond at the chapel. I also spent an evening around the fire with them, in the boma, telling stories about the Arch and connecting those to his values and leadership and spirituality. It was a profoundly meaningful week for them and for me.



The week with the retreatant was a deep joy, a gift. It is humbling to walk with an individual and meet once a day with them, listening to their story and their journey, listen to the Spirit to see what to suggest for Scripture readings and responses, and then see how the Spirit leads in the silence. Creation, creativity, shadow and light, freedom, joy, and more, are often part of the profound journey. I look forward to more of this ministry.

Now as we head into Holy Week, we have a Taizé Youth Day on Palm Sunday weekend, and I will be helping the brothers with their Palm Sunday and Holy Week services, as Br Daniel is away, and then at St Peter's, Hermanus, on Easter Sunday. A privilege as always.

Huge gratitude for all the gifts of Lent this past month. Huge gratitude for friendships renewed and new connections with new people. Thank you for your prayers and support in so many ways, I value it enormously.

Prayers for you all as we enter Holy Week and walk the road to the cross with Jesus. We walk in faith and trust that the resurrection will bring new life and joy out of the ashes and pain of death.

Love,
Wilma

