

A Letter from Brother Daniel OHC, Prior of the Holy Cross Monastery

30 June 2019

Since our last newsletter, quite a lot has happened for us. Our Council has approved the closing of the work of the Order of the Holy Cross here at Mariya uMama weThemba Monastery and the opening of a new work, that of St Benedict's Priory, at Volmoed, near Hermanus in the Western Cape. I am sure that this move will raise questions from you in terms of the future of the school and of the OHC presence in South Africa.

As far as the school is concerned, we are in the process of subdividing and rezoning the land on which the school buildings are located. This will give the school title to its own land and help it progress towards full independence. Subdivision-and-rezoning is a time-consuming process and might take up to two years, but we have been assured of a positive outcome. The school is also in the process of expanding to become a complete primary school. Grade 4 was added at the beginning of 2019, and a new grade will be added annually until the full complement of Grade 7 is enrolled in 2022. To accommodate the new classes, the old monastic enclosure is being converted into classrooms as I write this. This was made possible through a very generous donation from the Oppenheimer Trust. The progress towards full independence of the school is being further aided by the good work of Love Must Act (<https://www.lovemustact.org/>), the US charity that has taken over the fundraising for and administration of the school. They would also be grateful for any financial support for the school that you might be able to give.

What this means for the monastic community is that we will move to Volmoed, to live alongside the existing ecumenical residential community as a contemplative monastic presence. This move will take place at the end of August 2019, so that we can settle in during September. Being at Volmoed will give us many opportunities for ministry and for new ways of presence; however, we do not go there with any fixed agenda. We will initially just continue our prayer life and see what grows out of that in terms of possibilities that will present themselves.

We are very grateful that our current property will be managed by the Diocesan School for Girls on a long-term lease. They will use the property for outdoor activities, confirmation weekends, and so on. They also have the intention of continuing to offer the space for retreats.

All of the above means that our guesthouse in its current form will be closed as from 1 July 2019. Any inquiries for future use should be directed to DSG.

We are so grateful for the many ways in which God has been present to us and through us during our time here as a monastic community in its various configurations. We so appreciate the support we have received from so many, and the relationships we have established, particularly with the local community around us. The Associates of Holy Cross who have been close to this monastery deserve special mention in this regard.

To set us on our way in an appropriate manner, we will have a Thanksgiving and Farewell Eucharist in the Chapel of St Peter on the Rocks on Saturday 24 August 2019, to which all are invited. We will send out a proper invitation closer to the time, but please note the date in the meantime...

Please keep us in your prayers during this time of transition. Your prayers are particularly asked to help us in the discernment process at Volmoed, that we will be able to hear God's call in a deeper way and to respond appropriately.

Grace and peace.

Daniel, OHC