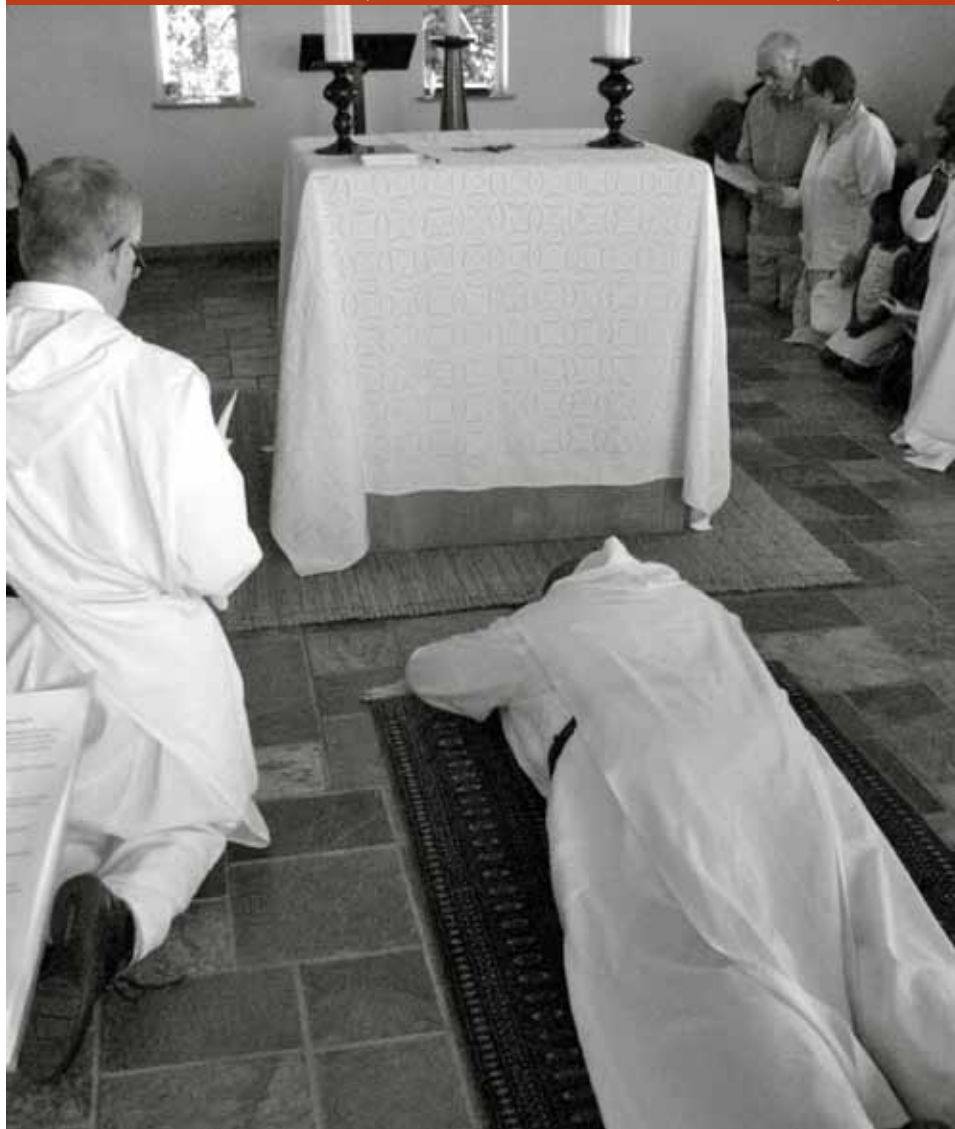


Uxolo

Volume 12 No. 2

October 2010

The Newsletter of Mariya uMama weThemba Monastery



A Pentecostal Sign of Hope

A prayer was answered for our community on the 8th of May 2010. It dates all the way back to when Desmond Tutu invited our Order to South Africa in 1989. The first South African has now made his Life Profession to the Order of the Holy Cross. Br. Daniel Lüdik with the Order's friends and his sister witnessing, said that



Br. Daniel Lüdik, OHC (left) with our Superior, Br. Robert Sevensky, OHC



Br. Daniel's profession cross is blessed by the Superior.

he seeks the mercy of God and of the Order. And Br. Robert Sevensky, the Superior of the Order, and our community embraced him. The prayer was and still is that we would nurture and establish South African vocations into the Order of the Holy Cross, and Br. Daniel has now opened the door for other South Africans to step through.

Br. Daniel grew up in Namibia and was living in Lüderitz when he was first introduced to our monastic community through our website. He was looking for monasteries in South Africa, an unusual thing to do for an Afrikaner with a Dutch Reformed background, and found us almost immediately. After numerous visits, he entered into the community in 2005.

He talks about his vocation as desire, true desire. So his profession was a deeply personal event for him and not something

to be described as profoundly spiritual but concrete and real.

Having the background that he does, Br. Daniel brings a unique perspective to a community of men from varied cultures and backgrounds. He would like to think that his vow and commitment to a group of monks with diverse languages and cultures perhaps serves as a Pentecostal sign of hope to a nation struggling with racism and xenophobia. To him it is also a responsibility.

But most of all, he treats this new beginning in his life as a privilege, not just to be the first South African to make his Life Profession in the Order of the Holy Cross, but just to simply be a monk.



Each member of the monastic community offers him the Peace.



Br. Daniel with profession cross is now in life vows in the Order of the Holy Cross.

When he is to be received, he promises before all in the oratory stability, fidelity to monastic life and obedience. This promise he shall make before God and His Saints. - Rule of Benedict, Chapter 58

And They Keep on Coming.....

-Br. Timothy Jolley, OHC

Since Holy Cross School began last January, more parents have arrived to ask if there might be space for their children.....if not this year, what about next year? Parents have been very clear to us that they prefer their children to be educated close to home where the monks are known and trusted, the teacher and resources are excellent, and daily teaching



Sanelisiwe, one of our pre-schoolers, stands in front of our new Holy Cross School combi purchased by the Order of the Holy Cross.

goes on without interruption. They want their children to learn and play in a safe environment. They want their children to be here, and they see to it that school is the priority. Children are rarely absent from class, and Ntombekeya Myeki, the

teacher, has a perfect record. Clearly, the challenging vision of the “cup of cold water” (Matthew 10:42), presented to the Order of the Holy Cross, is the direction in which God is calling us. I often say to myself as I watch the children play or greet them when they arrive in the mornings, “This is right. This is absolutely right!” The children are happy, eager to learn and anxious to get to school each day. A little boy, whose mother planned to keep him away because he had flu, raised such a protest that she bundled him up and sent him anyway! If for whatever reason one of the children is absent, the remaining 11 want to know where the missing one is. And, when that one returns to school, the raucous greeting from the others is a beautiful sight. (Great is the rejoicing over the



Masixole sits in the hot seat at the dentist's office. As part of their learning experience, the children learned just how unthreatening the dentist can be.

returned sheep! - Matthew 18:13)

The secret to the school's immediate success in its first year can be credited to the good, creative teaching, ample resources and small student/teacher ratio. Ntombekaya is helped by her assistant, Nomhamhase Soxujwa, and Travis Shields, a volunteer sponsored by the Episcopal Church in the USA through their Young Adult Service Corps programme. Travis has been a valuable asset to the school, taking chores as they come and serving where he is needed. Each Thursday morning Br. Josias teaches Bible stories and prayer.

It is my experience that when Christian vision is true, others

will naturally want to be a part. They catch the incarnational reality of the vision because they see it, and want to be touched by it. Love, as we see in the Book of Acts, is an invitation to others to bring the possible, the talked about and the hoped for, into reality; the creation of the Kingdom, I would call it. This truth is certainly what we see here. A local optometrist has tested the children's eyes. A dentist has checked their teeth. All of them have been assessed by a psychologist for preparedness to learn. When they were studying wild animals, a game preserve donated a drive to see the real thing! They have seen Grahamstown from the top of the Observatory Museum. One child was given clothing by a school in town. Teaching supplies have been recycled to us from local schools. Another school wants to talk to us about bursaries for the children when they leave us. Women in one parish made dolls, and another gave books and supplies from her farm school that was closed by government. A neighbour gave us used tractor tyres to fill with

sand for the playground. The Grahamstown Fire Department hosted the kids one morning at the station where they were taught fire safety and studied the equipment. The South African Police Service came out to the school to teach the children by using puppets how to be aware of suspicious strangers offering favours, what is inappropriate touching and holding and how to contact the police if the need arises. Financial



Pumba Game Reserve (on the way to Port Elizabeth) graciously gave the children a free game drive while teaching them about the animals of the wild.

gifts come from South Africa and abroad to help with expenses. The Order of the Holy Cross, through our Chapter in June this year, donated a small bus and is helping towards next year's operating expenses. And, a foundation in the US has made a grant for three years to partially underwrite wages and resources. We pray that by the time you read this issue of *Uxolo* the Department of Education of the Eastern Cape will have registered Holy Cross School as an independent school. Once the school is registered, we will be able to apply for funding from a wider range of sources in South Africa. Lastly, many people have given of their wisdom, experience and time to help us provide these children with the best education possible. Little wonder why the parents keep asking us.....

Providing virtually free, private education of the quality for which we strive is quite costly. Were we to charge fees, they would be about R17,000 per child, and that amount only covers the teacher's wages and those of her assistant. Chapter decided in June that we would help support Grade R for the academic year 2011 but felt that we were not able at this present time to commit to the expense of a new building to provide the additional classroom space to add Grade 1 to the school next year. A committee

of Chapter has been established to explore sources of ongoing funding and endowment for the school and to report to Chapter in June 2011. If all goes well, we should be able to expand to Grade 1 in January 2012.

Together the vision grows. A child, who would otherwise have little chance, now can dream of a future. God's people are meant to be free people. Education is a path out of poverty, violence and the endless cycles that grind the lives of children into hopelessness and despair. Little wonder that the suicide rate amongst children in South Africa is rising. Love must act, and, as always, Love must act now. Tomorrow will bring challenges of its own! And, be assured, they will keep on coming.....



The Holy Cross School Pre-School Class 2010

Scholarship Fund Update

~Br. Robert, OHC



Bongiswa Simayile was just accepted to Victoria Girls High School.



Lindikaya Mali will begin at Graeme College in January.



Travis Shields, the Young Adult Service Corps Volunteer from the US, assists in the school and the After-School Programme.

We have had a number of our young people complete their tertiary certificates and university degrees. Congratulations to Phelela Kalipa, Bonga Joka, who will be ordained in the Presbyterian Church in October, Ntsika Kitsili, who has completed his teaching certificate, Nandipha Mtatana, and Sakumzi Mtatana. Bongiswa Simayile has been accepted into Victoria Girls' High School. Lindikaya Mali and Siphosethu Booii have been accepted into Graeme College. Methuli Mfiliba will be graduating from Adelaide Gymnasium and is in the process of applying to university.

We are grateful to our brothers at Holy Cross Monastery in West Park for sponsoring Sethu. Lindikaya also has a sponsor for Graeme College.

The After School Programme continues to provide homework and remedial help to our children. Travis Shields, the Young Adult Service Volunteer from the US, works at Holy Cross School in the morning and the After School Programme in the afternoons. Travis, with his science and music background, along with his energy and dedication, is a wonderful addition to our team. He lives at the guest house and will be here until May 2011.

To Be a Sponsor ...

I recently returned from the US where I was able to secure sponsors for two of our learners. What is a sponsor? It is a person, or a group of people, such as a parish, who commits to support one of our children or young people in their education. Ideally, that commitment lasts through their educational career and covers the cost of school and hostel fees.

We have been blessed with a number of generous individuals and groups who have made such a commitment. Sponsorship is also possible for a limited period of time such as for an academic year. It may



You could be sponsoring students like these who are supported by our Scholarship Fund. Shaun Piti (left) and Bongisani Soxujwa (right) both study at Templeton High School in Bedford.

also involve either school or hostel fees. The financial range varies depending on the school and level of education from R1800 to R60,000 (\$250 to \$8000 US). For those at university, living and travel expenses are included.

Sponsorship offers the opportunity to have a relationship with

a specific child, although some sponsors prefer to remain anonymous. Every term the sponsoring person or group is sent the school report. There is also the option to communicate directly, encouraging and sharing in their learning and growing.

If you would like further information on sponsoring one of our children or young people, contact me at robert@umaria.co.za. I'd be happy to explore the possible options with you.

No one is to pursue what is better for himself, but instead what is better for someone else. - RB Chapter 72.

The Third Successful Reading Camp at Assegaai Trails.

--Kary McConnachie (Reading Camp co-ordinator)

Its hard to believe that the team has managed to complete three successful and happy reading camps. With the last experience now being analysed, we are beginning to receive some interesting feedback that is most encouraging. Once again teachers are intrigued by the fact that these



As part of the Reading Camp experience, the participants were treated to a free day at Kariega Game Reserve in line with the theme of wild animals.

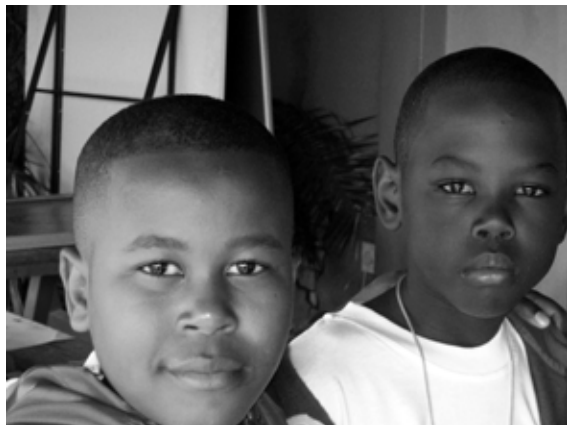


The children were also challenged on an obstacle course on Basil Mills' (shown here) farm.

children go to reading camp as shy learners in the classroom situation, but return with enough confidence to tell their classmates all about reading camp. Again and again teachers and parents report that their children only want to read when they return – anything they can lay their hands on!

Zimi was such a reserved and nervous boy when he came to our first reading camp back in 2008. His counselor Drew was really concerned that Zimi was not going to stay at camp. With everything being all so different and new, it seemed that the whole camp experience was going to overwhelm him. Within a day all that had changed. Zimi became a really seasoned “reading camper” – he joined us for our mini camp in March 2009, then again for the full camp in July 2009. Each time he became a great help with the new campers. Then we heard that Zimi’s guardian had left Grahamstown and Zimi was living with his father. He

was sometimes seen in town with a group of friends during the summer months and there was concern that he had fallen in with the wrong crowd. But then I had to deliver Zimi's bronze award certificate, that he had won for his art at the Eastern Cape Eisteddfod, to his school and there found a happy smiling Zimi. His teacher then told me that



Zimi (right) with Okuhle (left). Zimi is one of Holy Cross Reading Camp's many great success stories.

something exciting was happening with Zimi: he had begun writing poetry and was "taking off" in all his work. When I asked him if he would join camp again as a counselor when he turned 16, his eyes sparkled and he immediately confirmed that he would be there.

The impact our camp has had on our young counselors has also been remarkable. These young people gave so much of themselves during the week of camp activities and, although they were tired and worn out, they still managed to smile and tell us how reading camp had changed their lives forever. I will never forget looking into Savannah's tear-filled blue eyes on the last night when she told me how sad she was that it was all over and how worried she was about her favourite camper, Joshua, and the life he had to return to the next day. "I just want to make his life perfect for him all the time!" It is how we all feel, but the realization that you were able to make a difference in someone else's life, no matter how short, makes all the hard work worthwhile.

We are so grateful to the United Thank Offering of the Episcopal Church of the United States for their sponsorship to help make this year's successes and impacts not just a possibility or a dream but a living reality.

Receive, Lord, as you promised, and I shall live; do not disappoint me in my hope.
-Psalm 118 as quoted in the Rule of Benedict, Chapter 58.

From the Novice Master

--Br. John, OHC



I have been continuing to travel, speaking about the monastic life. In early September, Br. Josias and I returned to Rosettenville to attend the *Vocare* weekend for the Diocese of the Highveld at St. Peter's Retreat House. The programme is an excellent way to introduce young people to various vocations in the church as well as giving them tools and spiritual insights into Christian discernment. Br. Joisas and I were there to present the monastic and religious life as a vocational option in the church.

This October and November I look forward to visiting the Western Cape area. I will be spending a day with a formation group in the Diocese of Cape Town and then attending a vocations day in Macassar for the Diocese of False Bay.

If other parts of the province would like me to speak about the monastic life, I would be most interested to talk with you about the possibility. Please contact me. My email is john@umaria.co.za and telephone number is (046)622-6465. I thank all of those who have invited me so far.

Another good way to introduce the monastic life particularly to men who are interested in exploring a monastic vocation is our Enquirers Week. It is a chance to participate in our prayers, learn about our community and its work, learn a little about the monastic tradition, especially the Benedictine way of life, and have an opportunity to talk to the brothers about their own lives in community. Look out for when they are scheduled in this publication, on our website www.umaria.co.za, through advertisements in diocesan newsletters and through your bishop. Or you can contact us to let you know when the next one will be.

In late September, we were blessed to receive Roger Stewart into the Novitiate at the monastery. He has begun his postulancy, which is a period of six months, and then, if all goes well, he will be clothed as a novice. You can read more about him on page 19.

Some Visitors at the Monastery

We have been blessed by a number of visitors at the monastery.

In August the Rev. Elizabeth Broyles spent a few weeks with us. She knows us through her association with Holy Cross Monastery in West Park, New York.

She helped us with a Benedictine Experience for a group of priests from the Western Cape area who have formed a prayer and support group together. They engaged in our daily rhythm of prayer as well as a study of the *Rule of Benedict*. They also had time to work in our gardens.

And in September, for the first time, we had the Women's Academic Society of Africa, which is a support group for women who are working on their theses at Rhodes University. We were so glad that we could offer the peace and quiet for them to work and meet together.

The Minister General for the Society of St. Francis, Br. Clark Berge, SSF came in September for some rest and renewal. It was a pleasure offering him a brief respite in his very demanding travel schedule to the friaries of SSF throughout the world.



Four priests came to us for Benedictine Experience in August.



The Women's Academic Society of Africa from Rhodes University spent a weekend at the monastery.



Br. Clark Berge, SSF (right), shown here with Br. Josias, visited us in September for a few weeks.

IZZIT?

News of the Community



Timothy: In June I made a long trip to the United States, first to Memphis, Tennessee to visit my mother who is in assisted living and to assist in selling her home of over 50 years. I grew up in that house, and many memories went with the new buyer. My brother, my oldest friend and I took one last walk about the property before saying goodbye. From Memphis I travelled to West Park, New York where I attended the annual Chapter of our Order. It was good to see brothers from all over. During Chapter Br. Randy Greve,

OHC made his Life Profession as a monk of Holy Cross complete with Texas food and fireworks in the evening!! It was a great celebration.

Almost immediately after Chapter I returned home. The World Cup was on; the Grahamstown Festival was moved to accommodate it, and the schools were set free early, ostensibly to celebrate the World Cup. Mostly the kids just wasted valuable learning time doing nothing. They were ready to return to school when it was all over! The Holy Cross Reading Camp happened just before our 10-day Long Retreat. By the time the retreat began, we were ready for ten days of prayer and rest!

On 2 June, I turned 65 and officially became a pensioner! I had signed up for Social Security, the American version of a state pension, and now receive the monthly payments into our bank account in Grahamstown. It's not much money, but it does pay the community's monthly premium for the medical aid. There is always a trade-off!

A good deal of my time has been spent trying to stay warm in the coldest winter since I came to South Africa! We have burned a forest in the Common Room fireplace and kept Eskom happy with electricity payments. Never have I worn so many clothes at the same moment as this winter, and I am very happy to see the

warmth of spring on the return. This time of the year we used to see the return of the rains, but the serious drought conditions are endangering crops and the usually copious spring flowers.

And, there is always the good news! Young people who have been supported by the Scholarship Fund are completing tertiary education. One went off to Switzerland to study and teach for a month. More secondary learners have been accepted to Victoria Girls School and Graeme College. Holy Cross School, as you will see in the article, has been a wonderful adventure for us all.

More people come to worship with us on Sundays, and it is forever a surprise to see who will show up. Such a rich mixture of people, music, languages and worship styles. The Day of Pentecost must have been something like that....

Amidst all this activity, I love to walk the beautiful property we are blessed to live on. I watch the fish eagles and buck in the valley and enjoy the clouds on the hills. The Psalms about nature come alive for me, and I am grateful to be here.



John: In June, Timothy and I along with our Superior flew to the US to visit family and to attend the annual Chapter meeting of the Order of the Holy Cross. My family are doing so well. My parents are happy in their new life in Indiana and my sister and brother-in-law are busy, sometimes hectic, but also just as happy. The nephews are strapping, handsome and full of life in their teenage years. One of them is even writing poetry, which of course is gratifying to me.

Then, our Chapter meeting was held in West Park, New York. Of course, it was good to see all the brothers again, especially Br. Andrew. He is adjusting well to being back at West Park. The Chapter meeting was productive and enlightening, and we were pleased with some of the decisions we made as an Order about our school.

Upon returning to the US, we hit the ground running. But in

August, I was able to squeeze in two weeks holiday at Cintsa staying at a house of a good friend and just relished the ocean. I do appreciate these hills just outside Grahamstown, but my affinity is for the sea. I even got to see dolphins body-surfing. Such whimsical creatures. I read, wrote pages and pages, walked, even cooked, which is unusual for me.

Shortly after I returned, Josias and I went up to Rosettenville near Johannesburg to attend the Diocese of the Highveld's *Vocare* programme. The hope is that we could bring *Vocare* to the Diocese of Grahamstown with the help of the *Vocare* programme in the Highveld diocese. We'll see.

While we were there during a bit of free time, we also visited Buyani House, which is an initiative begun by members of Anglican congregations in Benoni. It is a Christian support centre for "those who have given up hope", providing amazing services. For the poor, they provide counselling, health care, nutrition programmes, opportunities to cultivate and work food gardens, help to orphans and vulnerable children and gift giving and food packets, among many things. The house is only about 18 months old and I was quite impressed with what they have been able to accomplish in such a brief time.

We are all happy to have Roger Stewart with us. I look forward to accompanying him as he journeys into our life. Some enquirers have been showing interest and asking about us, and I look forward to meeting them.

Daniel: It is time for another Izzit, indeed. The major item on my agenda is my Life Profession. What a wonderful occasion that was! I was fairly certain that the event would have been just another step in an already firm conviction of the monastic life. Yeah right. I was not prepared for the amazing sense of a deeper awareness of the responsibility the life vows have placed on me; with the resulting sense of deep joy and oh dear, what now? However, God is good and the journey remains rich.

I spent my pre-profession retreat with the Sisters of the Society of the Precious Blood at Masite in Lesotho, and had an absolutely wonderful time



with them. Their hospitality was as always, so gracious and generous. They truly went out of their way to make my retreat as worthwhile as possible and I will hope to visit them again at some point. If you are in the area, do try to visit them, you will not be disappointed.

By the time you read this, keeping the first paragraph in mind, it will be in the past, however, I am off on my annual holiday for two weeks on the 6th of September. I will be visiting with family in Cape Town and we will spend a week in the Drakensberg. I am really looking forward to it.

Thank you all for your prayers in our work.

Robert James: I am writing within 24 hours of my return from a visit to the US. I was able to have time with family and friends, as well as visiting our brothers at Holy Cross Monastery. I returned home grateful for the sustaining relationships in my life both outside and inside the Order.

In the midst of the visit I was able to raise some funds for our scholarship program, as well as publicize our efforts. A moving part of the visit included a 50th Anniversary

celebration of the consecration of the present church of my former parish in Stone Ridge, New York. The church complex was renovated and completed during my time as rector.

Alison Quinn, the current rector, has done a splendid job in leading the parish forward. It was a grand liturgical and social event and I was happy to be included in it, as well as to reconnect with so many old friends.

My primary work continues as a priest in our community, as well as the sacristan, and oversight of our Scholarship Fund and After School Programme. My art work continues to progress and provides a great balance in the rhythm of my life here. I have written our Superior to request Life Profession and will be interviewed by the Council in a few weeks. If all goes smoothly the Profession will take place on 1 January.





Josias: After the Grahamstown festival I spent my holiday with friends in Pietermaritzburg and in Durban. On the way, I got to meet the Rev. Dan and Trisha le Cordeur who gave me a lift from Grahamstown to Pietermaritzburg. In the middle of August however, we received the sad news of Dan's death. This was rather a shock. You meet a person for a few hours and the next thing you know they are gone. May his soul rest in peace, and God bless his family and friends.

During my time in Durban and Pietermaritzburg I watched some games of the soccer World Cup. I never thought I would see myself at the fans park one day. On the last days of my vacation, one of my hosts, Janet Trisk, took me to Howick Falls. The place is near the small town of Howick, which is about 24 km north of Pietermaritzburg. They have a great view of the land and the falls and it's a good site for tourism. We also went to The Mandela Monument that marks the place where Nelson Mandela was arrested. I also worshiped at the Rev. Thulani Zikhali, my other host, and Janet's parishes in the midst of all that and got a chance to visit the old age home where Janet ministers.

After my holiday it was time for our winter long retreat. I was working on the book called "Load Shedding" edited by Liz McGregor and Sarah Nuttall. The book has some interesting stories and insights. At the end of the retreat we had the Rev. Elizabeth Broyles from the US staying with us for a month. On Monday the 9th of August (Women's Day) Travis, Elizabeth and I went for a game drive at Pumba Game Reserve. We had a lovely day and the food, splendid!

Then on the 17th to the 22nd of August we had the Benedictine Experience week here at the Monastery and the four men that participated were a good bunch of folks. Br. John and I went to Johannesburg for the *Vocare* weekend conducted by the Diocese of the Highveld. It was great for me to catch up with friends from previous *Vocare* weekends and to meet other people as well.

God bless!

Our Newest Member



Roger Stewart entered the Postulancy in our community in September. He comes to us from Melville, Johannesburg, and has been working as a software developer for the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research for the last 15 years. Roger first visited us in April of 2008 when he was unexpectedly present for Br. Robert's First Profession and visited us a number of times

since that occasion. We are delighted that he has chosen to join us and look forward to having him in our community. Please pray for him as he takes the first step in this milestone journey in his life.

Poetic Ambitions

a poem by Br. John Forbis (inspired by Cintsá)

What would it take to grasp the
wind,
to hook it on the point of my pen
and slap it down onto a white page,
to fence the beast in
with the angles and cursives of a
minute script?

After lines are drawn,
dimensions and placements refined
will I have really trapped it?

It seems docile now but dangerous,
cunning enough to slip through
meter breaks,
agile enough to sail
over any image,
fierce enough to smash
any cage of verses, lines, words.

Could I ever stall the tides,
as if the vast rhythms and cycles
could be absorbed
by the fibres of a page?
Could one small tendril
of a wave's crest
reach into mid-air,
held there

and printed, bound by glue or staples
complete with a painting
of someone standing on a cliff,
hair and coattails streaming behind,
water crashing on rocks below?

Mariya uMama weThemba Monastery

PO Box 6013

Grahamstown 6141 South Africa

Tel: (046) 622-8111 - Guesthouse

(046) 622-6465 - Monastery

Fax: (046) 622-6424

Email: guesthouse@umaria.co.za

Website: www.umaria.co.za

PBO#: 930/000/363

NPO#: 036-811

Uxolo is the isiXhosa word meaning peace. Benedict teaches his monks to "seek peace and pursue it". This quest has been the hallmark of Benedictine monasticism since the 6th century. We strive to continue to bring peace to not just ourselves but to all who come to us.

On the cover: As part of his Life Profession ceremony held in the Church of St. Peter on the Rock on the 8th of May, 2010, Br. Daniel lies prostrate on the floor while a hymn invoking the presence of the Holy Spirit is sung..

Contributing to Our Monastery

Please send your gift to:

The Prior
at the address to the left.

For our banking details, please email timothy@umaria.co.za or ring (046) 622-6465.

If you are in the United States:

Please send your gift to

Ms. Barbara Fiore
Order of the Holy Cross South Africa Fund
Fiduciary Trust Company International
600 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10020-2302

Please contact us or look at our website for details about tax exemption.

Requests

If you would like to know how you can remember the monastery in your will, please contact the Prior.