



Br Anselm (Hamilton) Sayer OSB

In the early morning hours of June 23, Feast of the Sacred Heart, Br Anselm suffered a massive heart attack and died in his monastery cell at Inkamana Abbey after receiving the sacrament of the sick. He was seventy years old.

Br Anselm was born on 11 May 1947 at Greytown in the province of Natal. He was given the name Hamilton Etienne and baptized in the local Anglican Church. Soon afterwards his parents, Wharton and Barbara Sayer, nee Hansmeyer, moved to Cape Town where Hamilton's brother Miles was born. In 1954 the family left South Africa and settled in England. Hamilton attended primary school at St Andrews, Wells, in Somerset. The family returned to South Africa in 1960 and Hamilton began his secondary education at Hilton College in Natal. After graduating with matric exemption in 1965 he did the compulsory military service. In 1968, he enrolled at Natal Teachers' Training College. Upon receiving his Teachers' Senior Diploma (with distinction) he decided to continue his studies at the University of Cape Town where he graduated in 1973. A year later, he completed a BA Honours degree. It was during his time as a student in Cape Town that he began to attend Holy Mass and eventually was received into the Catholic Church.

Br Anselm started his teaching career at Cape Town High School. Later he taught English, History and Religion at St Joseph's Marist Brothers College in Rondebosch. In this Catholic school environment he began to think seriously of dedicating his life to the service of the Church. In mid-1985 he applied to enter the National Diocesan Seminary. After a year at St Paul's Seminary he transferred to St Peter's Seminary and eventually to St John Vianney National Seminary in Pretoria. Late in 1988 he left the Seminary on his own accord. "I could not, in all honesty, envisage myself as a diocesan priest," he later explained the reason for leaving the Seminary.

After his departure from St John Vianney Seminary, he followed a course in Far Eastern studies with special emphasis on art and culture. Subsequently, he visited South Korea and wrote a book on his experience in that country. Apart from writing and giving language classes to immigrants, he played an active role in parish life at Sea Park in Natal where he had settled in 1995.

In 2002 he contacted the abbot of Inkamana and expressed his desire to try his vocation as a Benedictine monk. After visiting Inkamana Abbey a year later, he decided to enter the monastery. In his application he wrote: "I feel strongly that God has been calling me for some time to serve him as a monk. It manifested itself in a measured but steady realisation that, no matter how earnestly I involved myself in Church affairs and parish activities, Christ was asking for something all-embracing from me." Upon finishing his period of postulancy, he was received into the novitiate on 1 July 2004. On 3 August 2006, he took his temporary vows and, on 3 September 2012, he pronounced his solemn vows. In between, he spent two years at Ampleforth Abbey in England.

As a confrere, Br Anselm was very generous in using his manifold talents to the benefit of our monastery community. He taught at Inkamana High School and instructed the candidates in formation. He also was the boarding master of our boys' hostel for several years. More recently, he was appointed novice master and put in charge of recruiting candidates for our monastery. In all these functions Br Anselm displayed a great sense of responsibility and firm dedication to his calling to the Benedictine monastic life.

We commend our confrère to your prayer. May God grant him eternal life in heaven. R.I.P.

The funeral Mass was celebrated and followed by burial in the monastery cemetery on Wednesday, 28 June 2017, at 11:00 a.m.

Inkamana Abbey, 23 June 2017

Fr John Paul OSB
Prior Administrator