



Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard

Newsletter No. 8

Easter 1996

My dear friends,

We all know the biblical story of the prophet Jonah, who spent three days in a whale until he was released back into life. Ever since Christ rose from the dead on the third day after his death, Jonah's stay in the whale's stomach was interpreted as a prophetic anticipation of Christ's stay in the tomb, which he left alive.

We also feel often like in a whale's stomach, encapsulated by the darkness of hopelessness, caught by the suction of sin and unable to save ourselves. St. Paul called this, to be crucified with Christ. Terrible, if that's it!

But it is not! "In our union with Jesus Christ he raised us up with him..." (Eph 2.6). I consider this the most wonderful sentence in the bible.

God did not make Christ's resurrection an individual event of Jesus life, but he made us share in Christ's resurrection, too. Easter is the daily event in my and in your life, where we share Christ's New Life in our union with him. Sharing this life is neither a state, but a daily task, nor an individual event between Christ and you, but our responsibility to make all people share in it. This is, what our brotherhood's real aim is: To give life to those in the shadow of death through faith, hope and charity and thus make Easter happen for them.

May the joy of Easter become reality for you, in you and through you!

[Fr. Gérard](#)

Our readiness and ability to assist as a Relief Organisation in Disaster Control and Civil Protection proven.

On the morning of Friday, 26th January, 1996, the Department of Water Affairs issued a flood warning for all people living along the Tugela River, amongst others. The local civil protection authorities were instructed to evacuate people living in the low-lying areas along the river, especially in the Tugela Rail area. When it was imminent that the Tugela river would flood parts of the Sundumbili Township, the management committee and the Director of Charity Works of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard held an emergency meeting to discuss what we, as a relief organisation, could do to help.

We had planned to set up two places of safety for people possibly being evacuated from their threatened area. One shelter was to be prepared using the church buildings of the Catholic Church in Sundumbili, which is presently the largest room in Sundumbili. Another shelter was to be set up in Mandini using St. Anthony's Catholic Church in Anderson Road. The Sundumbili shelter could have given room to approximately 250 to 300 people and the Mandini shelter may have had a capacity of 150 to 200 people.

Our contingency plans included setting up a co-ordination centre at the offices of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard and task groups for organisation & logistics, medical care, personal care, catering and transportation in each shelter.

From our 82 local active members

- 28 were not suitable (age or distance)
- 10 were in reserve and
- 44 were planned to be called out.

When we contacted these 44 active members

- 07 could not be reached by phone
- 06 had other commitments and
- 31 were ready and prepared to help.

In case of need, our 10 members in reserve plus the 7 members without phone would have been called in.

When we were convinced, after contacting our members, that both shelters could really be set up, we approached both the Mandeni Transitional Local Council emergency cell phone and the Superintendent Protection Services Officer, Mr. Blackie Swart, to express our readiness to help, if asked to do so by the local Civil Protection authorities. Our readiness was gladly acknowledged both by Mr. Swart and the emergency officer in charge.

We are happy to report that although this was a very informative exercise and pinpointed many talents amongst our active members, the big floods which had been predicted, did not materialise.

Thank you to all of you who so readily volunteered to be on standby the whole of that particular weekend.

Blessed Gérard's Care Centre

Big donation of equipment received



A forty foot container full of equipment for Blessed Gérard's Care Centre was received on February 29, 1996.

Our good friend and member Daniel E. Meehan had been offered a donation of used hospital beds and over-the-bed serving tables and other medical equipment by the West Allis Memorial Hospital in Wisconsin (USA) on November 9, 1996. The fax line between Mr. Meehan's and our office became extremely busy ever since and by the day of arrival of the donation a whole file was filled with correspondence. When we received the container on February 29, 1996, we unloaded 18 beds, 19 bed side tables, 20 chairs, 19 over bed tables, 6 stretchers, 3 stretcher chairs, 2 patient rollers, 1 bench, 1 table, 1 typewriter, and other medical equipment for a replacement value of close to half a million Rands. We would like to express our most sincere gratitude to Mr. Daniel E. Meehan, the West Allis Memorial Hospital, the Federal Association of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta, the South African Red Cross Society (Mr. Ian Gould) and Henred Fruehauf Trailers (Pty) Ltd. (Mr. Ray Matthews) for their most valuable support.



Our administrator of goods, Geoff Kalkwarf, unloading the equipment together with our members Conrad Khumalo, William Yeo, Ferdi Rouillon, Riccardo de Stefano and other helpers



The foundations of Blessed Gérard's Care Centre

THE LAYING OF THE FOUNDATION STONE

Saturday, 2nd March, 1996, was the date set for the quarterly Associate Members meeting. These meetings serve the purpose of spiritual guidance, animation and encouragement to become involved in the activities of the Brotherhood, training for the charitable tasks of the Brotherhood, cultural education and brotherly getting together. This we achieved and much more.



The foundations of Blessed Gérard's Care Centre were almost complete and so we decided to take the opportunity and lay the foundation stone during this meeting. Many V.I.P.s were invited including our main sponsors in this area. It was wonderful to see so many members attend this function (despite the incredibly hot weather!) and I would like to express our appreciation to Mr. Allen Young, General Manager of [SAPPI](#) Kraft, Mandini, and to Mr. Michael O'Donovan, Natal Regional Director of our Anglican Sister Organisation, the [St. John Ambulance](#), for taking the time to attend this function.



Mr. Haglich, the building contractor, manufactured the foundation stone, a concrete container, into which we placed documents and various other items which we thought might be of interest to someone opening this stone some time in the distant future:

1. The [certificate for the laying of the foundation stone](#),
2. copies of the floor plan and elevations of the Care Centre,
3. a copy of the [foundation document](#) of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard,
4. copies of the private [promises of our dedicated members](#),
5. a copy of the formal [decree from the Bishop of Eshowe](#), acknowledging the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard,
6. a copy of the approbation of the Brotherhood through the Grand Magistracy of the Order of Malta in Rome,
7. a copy of the recommendation of Blessed Gérard's Care Centre by the Bishop of Eshowe,
8. a copy of the Notarial Lease of the property for Blessed Gérard's Care Centre,
9. a copy of the [Code](#) and [Prayer](#) of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard,
10. a photograph of the dedicated members,
11. personal letters from dedicated members and the building contractor,
12. the brotherhood medal and the old and new badge,

13. an English and a Zulu newspaper from March 2, 1996
14. and the contemporary coins of South Africa.

These items were all sealed into the stone with concrete and the stone was placed in the centre, beneath the floor of the [chapel](#).



Mr Luigi Haglich, the building contractor, seals the foundation stone with (right to left) the architect, Mr Leon Kalkwarf, Dr. Paul Thabethe, Mr. Geoff Kalkwarf, Sr. Nokuthula Thabethe, Mrs. Yvonne Renaud, Mrs. [Clare Kalkwarf](#), Fr. [Gérard Lagleder](#) onlooking.

As we think, that this document is interesting for all our members, we print it here:

Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard

Certificate for the laying of the Foundation Stone of Blessed Gérard's Care Centre

On this second day of March in the year 1996 after Christ's birth,

- in the 18th year of the Pontificate of His Holiness Pope John Paul II.,
- when Frà Andrew Bertie was the [Grandmaster](#) of the Sovereign Military Order of St. John of Jerusalem, of Rhodes and of Malta,
- Mansuet Dela Biyase [the Bishop of Eshowe](#),
- Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela the State President of the Republic of South Africa,
- Dr. Frank Mdlalose the Premier of the Province of kwaZulu/Natal,
- Goodwill Zwelethini Zulu the King of the Zulu,
- Fr. Gérard Tonque Lagleder O.S.B. the President of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard

the Foundation Stone of Blessed Gérard's Care Centre is laid.

Architect:

Leon Patrick Kalkwarf B. Bdg. A, B. Arch. U.P.E., Durban

Building Contractor:

Luigi Haglich, Design & Construct c.c., iSithebe

May the idea of Blessed Gérard Tonque, when he founded the Sovereign Military Order of St. John of Jerusalem, of Rhodes and of Malta, as a brotherhood of people, totally dedicated to serving the poor of Christ in the hospital of Jerusalem, be revitalised in this

**Care Centre, through the Brotherhood which, in his honour, is
named after him.**

TUITIO FIDEI ET OBSEQUIUM PAUPERUM

**May the motto of the Sovereign Military Order of St. John of
Jerusalem, of Rhodes and of Malta, whose South African Relief
Organisation the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard is, become reality
in this building.**

May God's Blessing come down upon and remain in this work.

Signed at Mandeni on this 2nd day of March, 1996

The Dedicated Members of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard

G T Lagleder President	C A Kalkwarf Vice- President	P Z T Thabethe Medical Superintendent	N M Thabethe Director of Charity	G Kalkwarf Administrator of Goods	Y Renaud Project Co- ordinator
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AMENDMENT OF OUR STATUTES

The Council of the Dedicated Members decided on 27th February 1996 to amend the statutes of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard. These amendments were approved by the competent entity, i.e. in our case the Hospitaller, of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta in Rome on 4th March 1996 and thus came into force on that date:

Insert after "4.2. The Council of the dedicated members elects from amongst itself the Executive Council, without prejudice to the provisions of No. 4.4.": **Honorary Dedicated Members are not eligible for election.**

Insert new number 4.5.: **4.5. The President's Council**

The Executive Council may nominate appropriate personalities to form the President's Council. The President's Council is an advisory body of experts to facilitate and support the President and the Executive Council in their decision making process.

Amend grammar mistake in No. 5.1.2. Probation time for candidates for the Dedicated Membership

The Dedicated membership is preceded by a probation period of one year **during** which the candidate is introduced into the objectives and spiritual background of the Brotherhood and **during** which he or she takes part in the activities of the Brotherhood.

Insert new number: **5.1.4. Honorary Dedicated Membership. Associate Members, who have supported the Brotherhood to an exceptional degree, may be granted Honorary Dedicated Membership through a majority vote of the Council of the Dedicated Members. Dedicated Members of Honour have all the privileges of Dedicated Members, except the right to vote in the Council of the Dedicated Members.**

Add to No. 5.2.1. **The Active Associate Members may be assigned to groups under the leadership of a group leader, who is nominated by and responsible to the Executive Council. Such groups would not be independent of the main body and would participate fully in the association's activities.**

Change No. 8 Vestments to: 8. **Insignia and vestments. All members wear the Brotherhood medal on a red braid.**

At special functions the Dedicated Members of the Brotherhood wear a black cape with the badge in front of the left shoulder.

The Active members wear a short sleeved white pilot style shirt with the badge on the left breast pocket.

Active members may wear a black blazer with bronze Maltese Cross buttons and the badge on the left breast pocket.

Dedicated Members wear a black blazer with silver Maltese Cross buttons and the badge on the left breast pocket.

Members of the Executive Council wear a black blazer with gold Maltese Cross buttons and the badge on the left breast pocket.

Insignia and Decorations, as far as they are approved by the SMOM, are worn on top of the left breast pocket above the badge.

Amend grammar mistake in No. 1.3. of the Particular Norms: 1.3. The Executive Council meets as such, when the actual need arises. Its members keep close contact **with** each other and thus lead the Brotherhood jointly.

Buy a brick* for Blessed Gérard's Care Centre Competitions

Congratulations to Mrs. Inge Kirsch from Augsburg on winning the trip to South Africa in the "Brick competition" held in Germany. We express our sincere sympathy to you on the death of your mother. Mrs. Kirsch has to look after her father now and has returned the prize to us. The lucky winner is now Fritz Graf Strachwitz from Stuttgart. We look forward to meeting you and we hope you enjoy your journey to our country!

Congratulations to Eshowe Engineering, on winning the computer equipment in the "Brick competition" held in South Africa. We wish you many happy hours in cyberspace!

A total of DM 46,860.00 and R11,220.00 was raised through this fund raiser for Blessed Gérard's Care Centre. Thanks again to all who either helped to sell bricks or bought some. It has been a stout effort. T H A N K Y O U to the donors of the prizes!

Visitors

We had the great privilege of meeting and hosting Fr. Volker Futter , a Benedictine Missionary Monk from Schuyler in USA, over the Christmas Season. Fr. Volker is visiting South Africa for a lengthy period of time to see what work the missionaries are doing in South Africa. Thank you, Fr. Volker, for sharing this special time with us.

Other visitors from Germany were Fräulein Birgitt Dittner, Frau Margarete Dittner and Herr Claus Janitz. As well as, Fräulein Renate Eiberger and Hanspeter. We took great pleasure in showing them our work in Zululand, and we thank them for taking an interest.

Dates to diarise

24 June 1996	Feast of St. John	Celebration with all members
3 September 1996	Feast of Blessed Gérard	Blessing and Opening of Blessed Gérard's Care Centre

Setting up local groups of Active Members.

The training for our active members and identifying the needs of the people and then rendering the charity relief necessary can be more practically organised over a vast area such as the one in which we operate, if we form small groups of active members in the areas in which they reside:

These local groups will meet on a monthly basis and will take on the task of pinpointing problems and assisting those in need in their own areas. However, it is not intended that they will become independent of the main Brotherhood body. We are sure that by doing this we can increase the feeling of belonging to our brotherhood and its spirituality and ideals.

One group will be all the active members in the Mandeni & Mangete areas. Another group will be all the active members in the Sundumbili & Mambane areas. The group leader will be Mr. Odysseus Nhleko. A third group will be all the active members in the Mandikini & Whebede & Mhlubulweni areas. The group leader will be Mr. Johannes Hlongwa.

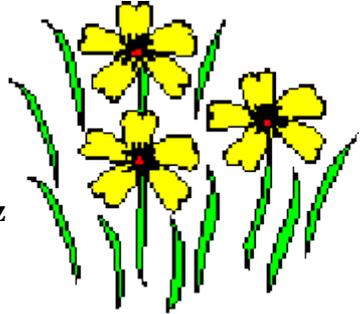
Congratulations to the group leaders and may God bless you and guide you.

Members' News

Birthdays:

We wish a blessed and very happy birthday to

- I.H. Maria-Theres Gräfin **Strachwitz** on her 70th,
- Frau Dorothee **Wroblewski** on her 70th,
- Mrs. Adelaide **Mbokazi** on her 65th,
- Mr. Ferdinand **Rouillon** on his 60th,
- Herr Otto Wilhelm Hoff on his 50th,
- Mrs. Estelle **Eiselen** on her 40th,
- Herr Josef **Pauli** on his 30th.



Obituary

Rev. Sr. Fidelia **Meier** O.S.B. was one of the first to join our brotherhood as a spiritual supporter and we know, that she had fulfilled her promise, to pray for our brotherhood regularly, very seriously. She died on 23 December 1995 in Tutzing/Germany. May God reward her for her faithfulness and may she rest in peace!

Best wishes

to Frau Jutta Betzler in her retirement in Kempten/Germany.

Welcome back to South Africa

- Many of you know Diane von **Wrede**, who spent six months living and working in Mandeni for our organisation. She is now living and studying in Cape Town. Diane, we wish you well with your studies and your new life in South Africa. We hope you will be very happy here!
- Welcome back to Ferdi and Margaret **Rouillon** who returned from the Seychelles..

WELCOME to all our new members:

Mr Eric Fehr, Mrs Christine Fehr, Frau Gertrud Miska, S.H. Franz Graf von Ledebur, Frau Marietta Indrich, Frau Szilvia Horvath, Herrn Dominik Fries, Herrn Ottmar Fries, H.H. Stiftskanonikus Heinrich Wachter, Frau Therese Jungsberger, H.H. Kaplan Bernd Franz Schaller, Herrn Oliver Neuwald, Frau Gertrud Löser, Rev. Father (Josef) Volker Futter O.S.B., Herrn Alfons Stadler, Fräulein Brigitte Eder, Herrn Bernd Stadelmaier, Mrs Rebecca Lungile Mthethwa, Mrs Veronica Langa, Fräulein Birgitt Dittner, Frau Margarete Theresia Dittner, Herrn Otto Wilhelm Claus Janitz, Frau Margit Stadler, Mr Schaultow William C. Geswindt, Mrs Carol-Lyn Johnstone, Mr Bhekizitha Kenneth Mthethwa, Mrs Constance Fikephi Mthethwa, Mrs Colleen Warton, Mrs Elizabeth Dudu Mntungwa, Mr Wilfred Moss, Mrs Christine Moss, Mr Jeremy Moss.

Statistics 14.3.1996	Active members	Donor members	Spiritual Supporters	Total
South Africa	80	40	11	131
Tanzania			1	1
Austria		1	1	2
Germany	8	133	31	172
Denmark			11	11
Great Britain			1	1
Italy	2			2
USA	3	4	2	9
Chile			1	1
El Salvador			2	2
Total	93	128	61	332

PS: A special Thank you to [Clare Kalkwarf](#) for compiling this newsletter!