



Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard

NEWS LETTER

No. 19

Pentecost 2000

Clare Kalkwarf will be invested as a member of the Order of Malta

It is with utmost joy and pride to share the good news with you, that **the Sovereign Council of the Order of Malta has decided in their meeting on 17 May 2000 to receive our founder member, Vice-President and manager, Mrs. Clare Kalkwarf, as a member (Donat of Devotion) into the Order of Malta.** The Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard is most honoured and grateful, that Mrs. Kalkwarf's exemplary devotion as a Dedicated Member of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard as the South African Relief Organisation of the Order of Malta has been acknowledged in such an extraordinary way. She will be the first South African to be invested as a member of the Order of Malta. **The ceremony will take place on Sunday, 9 July 2000, at 10:00 a.m. in Blessed Gérard's Church in 61 Anderson Road, Mandeni, South Africa.** The investiture will be officiated by His Excellency, the Grand Hospitaller of the Order of Malta, Albrecht Baron Boeselager. The celebration will at the same time be the Blessing and Opening of the new building of Blessed Gérard's Community Development Centre and the Additions to Blessed Gérard's Care Centre and Hospice and the official inauguration of our two new projects: Blessed Gérard's Disaster Relief Project and Blessed Gérard's Children's Home. This newsletter wants to introduce you especially to these new projects. The official invitation is attached. Your presence will be highly appreciated!



Mrs Clare Ann Kalkwarf

Founder Member, Vice-President and Manager
of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard
in her cape as a Dedicated Member of our Brotherhood.

The Relief work of the



Emergency Corps of the Order of Malta (ECOM) for victims of the
Flood Disaster in Mozambique 2000
supported by the South African Relief Organisation of the Order
of Malta, the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard





Area:



Activities:

Medical Care: ECOM has erected a field hospital / dispensary to assist several thousands of displaced people medically. They supplement the services and work closely together with Chibuto Hospital.

Health Education: ECOM emphasises disease prevention and gives instructions on how to avoid health hazards, especially infections like malaria, cholera and AIDS.

Water purification: The Austrian army had taken on the huge task to provide the people in the Chibuto area with clean water. They had produced more than a million litres of drinking water by 30 March 2000. When they leave the area by mid April 2000 there will be a major urgency to substitute their service. ECOM

plans to drill a borehole there to avoid that people will return to consume unclean water and get sick.

School: ECOM has identified the need that the children in the camp must continue their school education, not only to keep them out of mischief, but also to avoid the disadvantages of an interrupted education. The Austrian army is currently constructing a bush school and ECOM organises its running and the teaching aids. Among the displaced people are local teachers, who volunteer to do the teaching.

The Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard as the South African Relief organisation of the Order of Malta has been asked to support the activities of ECOM. We happily have provided them with one of our 4x4 emergency vehicles for transport and we provided them with big tents, field beds, medicine boxes, tables, chairs and administrative equipment for their field hospital.



Handing over our emergency vehicle to ECOM team leader Karsten Eigenbrod at Mandeni, RSA

Pictorial report of the visit of the President of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard to Mozambique



Arrival at Maputo airport with tents, field beds, tables, chairs, medicine boxes and administrative equipment



Loading of the relief goods into an UN airplane



Chibuto teamleader nurse and paramedic Stefan Simon



Karsten Eigenbrod and Father Gérard shortly before takeoff to Chibuto



Unloading at Chibuto airstrip



A truck from the Austrian army transported the relief goods to the camp



ECOM doctor Klaus Biermann and ECOM nurse Teresa Lleo-Alama with the BBG emergency vehicle in the base camp of the Austrian army at Chibuto airstrip



The BBG emergency vehicle fills up petrol in the base camp of the Austrian army



The Limpopo river changed into a massive lake



Displaced people found shelter in tents



unused buildings of a former farm



or just in the shade of a tree



The Austrian army took over the water purification



The ECOM took over this field "hospital"
in the Chibuto refugee camp



the "Casualty department"





the "ICU"



Dr. Klaus Biermann



in the "treatment room"



the "wards"



The Chibuto ECOM team:

Nurse and paramedic Stefan Simon (Germany), nurse Teresa Leo-Alama (Spain) and doctor Klaus Biermann (Germany).

The ECOM team had to start their work with the bare minimum of supplies. **The Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard is proud, that we could enhance the efficiency of their work through lending them an emergency vehicle and supplying them with proper medical tents, field beds, Medicine containers, tables and chairs and administrative materials.**

CNN.com reported on

- 11.03.2000: "Chibuto, 160 km (100 miles) north of the capital Maputo, is host to tens of thousands of displaced Mozambicans and has also been used as a base for relief helicopters to refuel."
- 02.03.2000: "A flash flood on Sunday drowned the towns of Chokwe, Xai-Xai and Chibuto, north of Maputo."

- 22.02.2000: "In the Chibuto district, officials are threatening to use force to move people who refuse to leave their homes and farms. Some are reluctant to abandon their cattle, the main source of wealth in the region."

The Dallas Morning News reported on 19.03.2000: "CHIBUTO, Mozambique - Despite a massive multinational effort to distribute food to Mozambican flood victims, thousands of people are going hungry, aid workers said Saturday. An estimated 360,000 people, driven from their homes by the worst floods on record in this southeast African nation, are housed in aid camps in central and southern Mozambique."

"**Feed the children**" reported on 18.03.2000:



"Chibuto camp, 100km north of Maputo. The water in the background is over 2 metres deep. This was previously agricultural land."

reported on 28.02.2000: The latest flood hit Chokwe Saturday night, and left many residents of the town clinging on to rooftops and trees for survival. The waters running rapidly down the flooded Limpopo Valley, hit Chibuto district Sunday.

The Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard is proud, that we could help directly and effectively at this hotspot of need and such have started our new project:

Blessed Gérard's Disaster Relief Project.

We plan now to get equipment and supplies readily stored in Mandeni, to be able to help immediately and even more effectively in case of another disaster in Southern Africa.

The acute phase of Relief Work is now about to be ended, but ECOM does not just withdraw. They plan a long-term programme of health education and medical assistance. Our Emergency Vehicle is still in Mozambique, but we expect it back soon.

This is to introduce our second new project to you:

Blessed Gérard's Children's Home

Gérard Junior



Just after his arrival



Four months later

The passages of our Care Centre & Hospice ring out with the laughter and squeals of a little boy of approximately three years. But this was not the case five months ago when he was brought to our facility.

Junior was a typical case of kwashiorkor (malnutrition). He had sores all over his body, had a respiratory infection, was far behind in his physical and mental development and was psychologically affected by the trauma of having been abandoned, not once but thrice: Junior's mother is not known and his father abandoned him. He left him with the mother of his divorced wife, who is not Junior's mother and disappeared. There he was totally neglected and God knows, what else happened to him: When he came to us, his body was covered with wounds, he was severely malnourished (kwashiorkor), did neither walk nor talk and all he wanted was food and love.

Our first aim was to cure him of his kwashiorkor and to heal his wounds. This proved to be the easier part of his treatment. However, after intense care and lots of love, he soon began to thrive. We made contact with the social workers who are trying to place him in foster care, where he would grow up in a family atmosphere. But this is proving to be quite difficult. In the meantime he continues to stay with us. He has put on several kilograms and a few centimetres in height since July. He has begun to talk and is slowly learning to trust some people. There is hope for him!





Gérard Junior [and Senior ;-)] today

Junior was baptised in the Easter Vigil 2000 and got the baptismal name Gérard after Blessed Gérard, the founder of the Order of Malta and patron saint of our brotherhood.

Bongani John



This is little Bongani aged 3½ months.

Bongani was brought to us on a Friday evening by his grieving grandmother. She was grieving for her daughter who had died two months earlier from AIDS and this was her baby. The grandmother had not known that her daughter was pregnant as she lived in Johannesburg. When the father of Bongani brought him to KwaZulu/Natal for his grandmother to care for him, he informed her that he could not look after the baby as he was unemployed and was unable to buy the right kind of food for Bongani. Sugar water was all the nourishment the baby was receiving at the time and he was suffering badly from malnutrition. To make matters worse he told the grandmother that Bongani was also HIV-positive. She was devastated and did not know which way to turn. She took him to the local hospital where it was entered on his card “marasmic baby – immunocompromised. I do not think hospital admission will change the outcome and have

advised the grandmother that the baby is terminally ill.” They were then sent home to cope as best as they could. This proved to be very difficult because the grandmother had to work and did not have the time to care for a tiny, sick baby.

Fortunately for her, her employers knew of our organisation. Of course we agreed to look after him. But the poor little boy, at 3½ months was already in full blown AIDS. All we could do was to show him as much love as possible and keep him comfortable.



This we achieved by managing his spiralling fever, controlling his ever-present cough and easing his pain. Everyone in the Care Centre & Hospice grew to love him during his short time with us. 26 days later God called him to his eternal place in Heaven. Just before he died, he was baptised and got the baptismal name John after John the Baptist, the patron saint of the Order of Malta.

Unbeknown to him, Bongani, as little as he was, changed all our lives and we will never forget him. Our deepest sympathy goes to his grandmother, who cared so much.

Lungile



Lungile's mother had suffered from Tuberculosis during pregnancy and Lungile had to undergo months of treatment apart from her mother. Lungile's mother never established the natural emotional bonds between mother and child, in fact she considered Lungile a burden and neglected her severely. The social workers of the local welfare department asked us to admit mother and child and we spent months to try to combat Lungile's malnutrition and even more difficult to prevent her mother from abandoning Lungile and try to make her accept responsibility and care for her child. After undergoing an AIDS test Lungile's mother left with her child and we have never heard from her since.



N.N.





Her mother had died from AIDS and had been buried the day before we were called to help. N.N. is badly malnourished and may be HIV positive as well. All she needs is lots of love and food. She is provided with both: Love from her granny and food from Blessed Gérard's Feeding Scheme for malnourished infants.

N.N.







N.N.'s mother suffers from AIDS. N.N. had obviously been affected as well. She was severely malnourished and dehydrated. She was transferred to hospital just after these pictures were taken and died a few hours later.

N.N.



N.N.'s father and mother died from AIDS. His uncle took care of him, but he was malnourished.



After three weeks of intensive nutritional treatment he could be discharged into the hands of his uncle again (see picture).

Flora Nokubonga



Nokubonga's mother was upset with Nokubonga's father, because he did not support her to look after their daughter. She brought Nokubonga to the father and left with an unknown destination. All what Nokubonga's father did, was to feed her on sugar water and go the Government Social workers to get help. The Social workers saw the father being too irresponsible and transferred Nokubonga to us. She is perfectly healthy and developing very fast and well. She gets lots of tender loving care and has become a little sunshine in our lives. She was baptised in the Easter Vigil Service at Mandeni on Easter 2000 and got the baptismal name Flora after St. Flora of Beaulieu.

N.N. and N.N.

The Government Social Workers brought us two abandoned boys on 15 May 2000, who were found outside a shopping complex full of filth and dirt. This finally sparked off the decision to start a Children's Home to institutionalise what we are doing anyway.

N.N. and N.N. came together with their mother to us on 16 May 2000. The mother suffers from Lung Tuberculosis and awaits the results of her AIDS test and the children have been affected at least with the tuberculosis as well.

The above sad stories and the fate of many more children in our area, who are neglected, abandoned, abused or orphaned, made us decide to start a new project:

Blessed Gérard's Children's Home.

It will be a new home for children who otherwise would have no future.

Latest breaking news:

Blessed Gérard's Children's Home

was started on 15 May 2000

by dedicating part of Blessed Gérard's Care Centre and Hospice for this purpose and by employing two caregivers full time (one of them to live in).

We urgently need to erect a suitable building and ask you to kindly donate generously to help us building!

Making your donation

It might help our **South African members** to know that you may pay your membership fees directly into our banking account. The most convenient solution for both sides would be if you organised a stop order on your account. Our banking details are as follows:

Name of Account:	Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard
Type of account:	Current Account
Bank:	First National Bank
Account number:	529 4004 0349
Branch:	Mandini
Branch code:	22-04-29-43

Please ensure that you put your personal details on the deposit or send the information directly to us, so that we can credit your membership fee account correctly.

Thanks to the generosity of the Benedictine Mission House in Schuyler, Nebraska, we can now offer you a convenient way of making donations towards our work, **inside the United States**, with the possibility of declaring your donation on your tax return.

Cheques should be made out to "Benedictine Mission House" with a remark **"for the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard, RSA"**
(Please do not forget this!)

These should then be sent to: Benedictine Mission House
P. O. Box 528
Schuyler, Nebraska 68661

People who have made a donation of more than \$200 will receive a tax certificate immediately from the Mission House and donors of smaller amounts would receive one at the end of the tax year, if they want to declare their donations on their tax returns.

The "**Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard Newsletter**" is the official mouthpiece of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard and is edited by the Management Committee of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard.

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