

Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard



**NEWS LETTER
No. 25**

**Christmas 2005
New Year 2006**

The **Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard** is an Association of the Roman Catholic Church, a South African Public Benefit Organisation and the Relief Organisation of the Order of Malta in South Africa.



Christmas 2004 in Blessed Gérard's Church in Mandeni, South Africa

May the faith of the light which continues to shine no matter how dark its surroundings are inspire your heart to shine against all odds.
May the faith of the shepherds who followed the message of the angels to go to Bethlehem inspire your heart to follow Gods message.
May the faith of St. Joseph who never gave up although nobody wanted to give him a place to stay inspire your heart to persevere.
May the faith of Mary who agreed to become the handmaid of the Lord inspire your heart to serve God without restriction.
May the faith of baby Jesus who entrusted himself into the hands of men to be born into poverty inspire your heart to entrust your life into God's hands.
May the faith of the saviour who became man inspire your heart to be filled with the grace of being created in God's image.
May our faith in Christ make Christmas what it is: The feast of faith that Christ is with us!

**May the glory and peace
of the incarnate saviour fill your life
in this Christmas season
and on every day of the New Year 2006!**

It's July and the night is cold. The parents of baby Noxolo are celebrating some unknown and unimportant event. They have been drinking heavily again. The mother of Noxolo is very drunk and when Noxolo begins to cry she gets very cross.

Noxolo's mother and her boyfriend are unemployed they find it very difficult to be able to feed their children. But night after night they find enough money to get drunk. One has to ask if they do this so as not to face the reality of their starving children and the hunger pains in their stomachs. They live in a precariously positioned shack made of milk cartons, cardboard boxes and some sticks and stones. The shack is so close to the road, when the trucks go past they can feel the vibrations of the wheels.

This night in July was a particularly bad night. The children had been crying all day. It was cold and wet and they had no food. Noxolo's father came home from searching for work already drunk. Noxolo's mother started arguing with her father and a huge fight broke out. The other children hid away, but unfortunately little Noxolo, at two months old, could not.

Her mother got into such a rage that she began to beat Noxolo until her back and buttocks were black and blue. There was such mayhem that the neighbours came to see what was happening. Events moved hastily after that. The police came. After listening to reports from the people living in the surrounding shacks, that this beating of Noxolo was a daily occurrence, they charged Noxolo's mother with

"Noxolo" A totally non-Christmas Christmas story

child abuse and took her to prison.

Of course they could not leave Noxolo with her drunken father and so they brought her to the safety of Blessed Gérard's Care Centre. Noxolo's mother was quite cold and unrepentant.



The next morning the doctor attending Blessed Gérard's Care Centre gave Noxolo a thorough examination. The decision was taken that Noxolo would stay in the Hospice section of the Care Centre to receive intense nursing and love and to monitor her over the next couple of days, when she was transferred to Blessed Gérard's Children's Home.



Noxolo is still living with the other children in the Children's Home and is thriving. She will remain in our care until the court case has been heard and a decision has been made. She is a

beautiful little girl and is thriving through all the love, care, good food and security, which she gets in Blessed Gérard's Children's Home.



The Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard

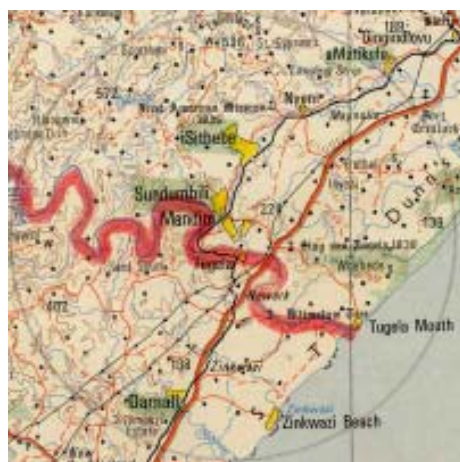
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The headquarters of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard are in Mandeni in the province of kwaZulu/Natal.

The sad fact:

Mandeni is the AIDS capital of the world!



Mandeni's suburb, the township of Sundumbili, was called the "AIDS capital of kwaZulu/Natal", in the South African Magazine "Drum" in 1997. A representative test, amongst factory workers, in the industrial complex of iSithebe, already in those early days, showed a HIV prevalence rate of 88%. In January 2004 76% of the HIV tests done in Sundumbili Clinic, a government medical facility, were positive. Thus the Mandeni area has gained a sad world record which nobody is proud of and which nobody would consider suggesting for the Guinness book of records, either.

The shocking fact is that the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard is right in the centre of the pandemic and that the public and private health care systems are absolutely overwhelmed by the magnitude of patients. The Church cannot and must not stand aside shrugging its shoulders, but must mobilise all available resources. In the time since the tsunami disaster in East Asia the world public but first and foremost the church has shown unprecedented solidarity and that even today miraculous achievements are possible if everybody co-operates and contributes whatever is possible. So did the disciples in those days at the multiplication of the loaves when they contributed all they had in their hands. Christ then performed the miracle, so that everybody got what he needed. The AIDS wave in Southern Africa is a much worse disaster than the tsunami wave, because it did not cause just a single flood, but the country is permanently flooded by AIDS. The level is continuously rising and there is no hope for an ebb tide in the near future.

According to UNAIDS, there are close to 26 million people living with HIV in Sub-Saharan Africa and nearly 2.5 million died from AIDS related diseases in 2005.

Taking into account that in 2004 76% of tested people were HIV-positive in the catchment area of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard means that in the Mandeni area alone, close to 200,000 people are about to die from AIDS within a few years.

Facing this massive disaster, which surpasses all epidemics in the past, the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard could not sit back and just watch, but decided to do whatever is in their power, to push the tidal wave of HIV back and to support the victims of this unique tragedy.

There are up to five patients a day dying from AIDS in Blessed Gérard's Hospice alone. Thousands have been cared for through home based care, day care and inpatient care. Far more than 1000 patients have been rendered palliative care enabling them to die in dignity and peace.

- According to UNAIDS (as of end of 2005) Sub-Saharan Africa is the home to slightly more than 10% of the world population, but to 60% (25.4 million) of HIV infected people worldwide.
- 13.5 million of these are women and 3.2 million are newly infected;
- 2.4 million people died in Sub-Saharan Africa from AIDS related diseases in 2005, more than 20 million in the last 25 years.
- No other country in the world has more people living with HIV than South Africa with 5.6 million HIV-infected people.
- The South African Broadcasting Corporation reported on 30 March 2005, that specialists estimate that by the year 2010, a total of 5 million people will have died in South Africa from AIDS. That means that in 2010, two thirds of the South African population will die from AIDS or AIDS related diseases.

- From 2001 until 2011 the birth rate will decrease by 25% and in the same time the death rate will increase by 33%.
- By 2010 seven million people in South Africa will be infected with HIV. These estimates are based on the most recent statistics from the United Nations and "Statistics South Africa".
- The increase in life expectancy, which had been noted since the middle of the 20th century, has turned around since the mid-nineties and will continue to decrease in the next two decades. In 2000 the life expectancy of a newborn South African was at 56 years; in 2010 it will be just 41 years.
- Between 1997 and 2002 the number of deaths in South Africa increased by 57%; in the age group of the 25 to 49 year old people the increase was at 116%.
- 18 million AIDS orphans will live in Sub-Saharan Africa by the year 2010.
- Every six seconds one more person is infected with HIV somewhere in the world.
- Every ten seconds somebody dies from AIDS somewhere in the world.

Statistical overview

	kwaZulu /Natal 2005	South Africa 2003	Sub-Saharan Africa 2005 60%*	Germany 2003	World 2005 100%
HIV infected people		5.600.000	25.800.000	43.000	40.300.000
including women (15-49)		3.100.000	13.500.000	9.500	17.500.000
including children (0-15)		230.000	1.900.000	-	2.100.000
including babies		26.228	-	-	-
including newly infected		-	3.200.000	-	4.900.000
including HIV infected		-	-	-	-
orphans (0-17)		660.000	9.600.000	-	11.500.000
AIDS orphans (0-17)		1.100.000	12.100.000	-	15.000.000
AIDS-deaths		370.000	2.400.000	< 1.000	3.100.000
Percentage of HIV infected people in the total population	40%	29,5% (2004)	7,2%	0,1%	1,1%

* i.e. 10% of the world population live in Sub-Saharan Africa, but 60% of the people living with HIV.

[Sources: UNAIDS, South African Department of Health, SABC, HIVAN, AVERT]

The Relief Organisation of the Order of Malta in South Africa, the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard, responded to the concentrated and enormous need of the South African AIDS pandemic in a manifold way:

As early as 23 May 1994 an

HIV/AIDS education programme

commenced. Specially trained educators inform the public through talks and presentations but also through the media of film, broadcasting and internet - about AIDS and how to live positively with HIV.

The Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard opened a newly built

Hospice

on 3 September 1996.

It is the aim of Blessed Gérard's Hospice in Mandeni, to bridge the gap between hospital and the patient's home. Hospitals there often have no other choice than to discharge patients before they can really look after themselves. The families are often unable to cope with the care of their relatives, because they lack the confidence, skills or facilities to do so.

The Hospice assists patients, who are no longer helped in hospital because of a poor prognosis but who also cannot be adequately nursed in their own home. It is the main objective of Blessed Gérard's Hospice to care and counsel persons afflicted with HIV/AIDS, including the counselling of their families in this regard.



Combating HIV in the AIDS Capital of the World

The Hospice has a **fourfold function**:

Training.

The hospice is a training centre for the public offering courses in home based care, caregivers courses, AIDS-prevention- and -care, therapeutic counsellor's courses and First Aid training.

Home based Care through mobile home nursing teams.

Mobile home-nursing teams who supplement and support the family's home based care are trained and dispatched.

Day Care

The hospice is also a Day-Care-Centre for sick people. This enables the working family members not to have to give up their employment to avail themselves for nursing their relative, but they can bring the patient to the Hospice before going to work and take him/her home afterwards.

Inpatient Care

The hospice accommodates inpatients and provides general nursing and special palliative care through its 40-bed inpatient unit, which makes it the largest hospice in the whole of South Africa.

The inpatient unit is used

- for terminal patients approaching death. Hospice Care is palliative care where cure is not possible. It is essentially holistic care aiming at the patient as an individual with a body, mind and soul and comprises therefore effective pain control, maintaining adequate nutrition, prevention of bed rest complications, plenty of tender loving care, counselling, occupational therapy, social care and pastoral care.

- when a patient is discharged from hospital, but the family cannot care for their relative at home. The hospice will make sure that the patients will take their medication and get all the other treatment, occupational therapy and exercises necessary to help them to recuperate. In these cases we invite a relative to come in with the patient and train him or her on his own relative as a kind of in-service-training. These family members usually just need a few days to get used to the care of their relative and can take him or her home afterwards. Our home based care will then be supervised and supported by our mobile home nursing teams.

On 9 July 2000 the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard inaugurated a

Children's Home,

to give a home to abandoned, neglected, malnourished, abused, sick, handicapped and orphaned children, who otherwise would have no future. Many of them are HIV positive themselves and some are already in the AIDS phase. Others have lost one or both parents through AIDS and if there is really nobody within the family, who could take care of the child and no foster parents can be found, the children's home accepts them happily and renders all the loving care, which they would lack otherwise. A new building which can accommodate up to forty children was opened on 15 December 2002.



Since September 2003 a totally new, large and comprehensive task was taken on by the Hospice, when the South African Catholic Bishops' Conference decided to utilise the most capable Catholic health care facilities in South Africa to establish the "Highly Active Anti-Retroviral Therapy" (HAART) Programme. Blessed Gérard's Hospice became the third institution in the whole of South Africa to get involved.



- We offer HAART to poor AIDS patients free of charge.
- We are one of the very few non-governmental, but government-approved institutions, involved in free AIDS treatment.
- We receive financial help through the support of the USA's President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief in Africa (PEPFAR), via the Catholic Relief Services Consortium (CRSC) and the South African Catholic Bishops Conference (SACBC).
- This funding just covers the cost for medication and laboratory tests, but a large part of the cost has to be financed by the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard ourselves.
- Taking into account that the antiretroviral treatment of one AIDS patient costs close to 200 US\$ per month – including all expenditure for diagnostics, preparation, counselling, efficacy and adherence monitoring – it is a major strain on the financial resources of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard.
- There are more than 350 people enrolled in the "Highly Active Anti-Retroviral Therapy" (HAART) Programme, the first dose of antiretroviral medication was administered on 17 September 2004 and in the meantime there are more than 100 AIDS patients on regular treatment and the numbers are increasing steadily.

Thuli

by Sr. Liz Coetzer

To many we are the last beacon of hope in a dark world. They come in, off the street, looking for acceptance and help.

Thuli was one like that. She was weak and tired. She was very open with us stating, from the first moment, that she was HIV positive, and needed our help. For the past few weeks she had been suffering with diarrhoea and vomiting and nothing seemed to help. She was feeling desperate.

We admitted her into our hospice. A few days later when she was feeling better, she said she wanted to join our HAART programme. We were very happy to be able to help, and she was soon well enough to attend our HAART readiness classes. After the course ended, she started on her Anti retroviral regime.

She was ready to go home soon after starting. Her system was tolerating the medicines well, and she was feeling stronger.

About one month after she left us she came back. She was not well. She was vomiting and suffering with a very bad headache. A few days after re-admitting her to our hospice, we transferred her to Stanger Hospital. There, after various investigations they diagnosed her with cryptococcal and TB meningitis. She was a very ill lady.

About three weeks later, we received a call from the hospital telling us they had done all they could for her and requested that we take her back to the hospice again. We readily agreed.

Thuli came back to us. We could not believe it was the same person. She was unable to walk. She could not even sit up. She was partially blind and she was not eating.

A long road lay ahead. Thuli had the will and we encouraged her and worked hard with her. Her family were also supportive and came to see her regularly. We started seeing small changes. She knew where she was and she got her sight back.

Slowly she started sitting up and then we were able to sit her in a chair for a short while. Before too long she was taking a few steps around the bed.

Six months later, with quite a few little setbacks, having persevered she had regained most of her strength and thus all our hard work was rewarded.

There came the day when Thuli was well enough to go home. She was strong and able to walk on her own. It was so rewarding for all of us. Thuli is a very special person with a lovely smile. It was a privilege to be part of the team of dedicated, hard working caregivers and to be able to help someone like her.

A Tribute to Menzi

by Sr. Sheilagh Schröder

Coming to work for Blessed Gérard's Care Centre was literally an answer to a prayer. I had been working part time in the United Kingdom as a private nurse and thoroughly enjoyed the work and travel that it entailed. But there came a time when my priorities changed and I desperately wanted to come back to South Africa permanently again. Employment in the area where I live is hard to find in the nursing field. While home for a month last August, I was approached by one of the staff, Sister Elizabeth Coetzer, as to whether I would be interested in joining her working there. I could not believe it and gave her an emphatic yes, without hesitation.

Well, here I am almost one year after starting, telling you about a little boy, who crept into my heart. Management was approached by a Social Worker from the Eshowe area about a little malnourished toddler who had been in and out of hospital. He, like so many others, was HIV positive and had a skin condition associated with AIDS. He was admitted to the Blessed Gérard's Hospice before Christmas 2004. His skin problem meant that he was continually shedding layers of skin, which at times would crack and bleed. This made him fractious and therefore he loved nothing better than a cuddle. One day when I was off duty, he was crying, and when asked what he wanted, he said he wanted "Gogo" (Zulu for grandmother). Not understanding who he meant, he was asked: "which gogo?" He said the "Umlungu gogo", meaning me, the only white, grey haired member of the staff. I was very touched. He subsequently crept into the core of my heart.



All the children we look after become special to us and - thank goodness - they have found a place where they get plenty of love and security.

When they die, like Menzi did in July, it is so sad and we mourn like parents for these little people. I have no grandchildren of my own, so after Menzi died, I wrapped his little body in a shawl that my mother had made for my children.

There are so many AIDS orphans in our area and the money donated to keep our Centre going, goes a long way to making the many children like Menzi end their days surrounded by love and peace.

“What Have I Done to Deserve This?”

What most people do not see

Mpume was a beautiful sixteen year old girl; she was living with her mother, three siblings and three cousins, (the children of her deceased aunt) in the remote hills of kwaZulu/Natal. Her father was working in Durban and her mother worked in the village 15 kilometres away from their kraal, as a maid. Her father seldom came home and infrequently sent money, so there was little to live on. But because they lived in the rural area, they could grow their own vegetables and maize, they had some hens and a goat. Life was quite good and the family was happy. They each went about their daily routine. Her mother, Lindeni, usually wakes up at 4.30 in the morning; she makes some porridge for the children so that they would not go to school hungry, she washes the dishes, sweeps the floor and puts out the uniforms for the little ones to wear to school. There were no shoes to go with the uniforms because they had no money for shoes. Food was more essential. She sighed quietly to herself as she looked at the seven children all sleeping on the grass mats. They looked so peaceful.

She woke Mpume up, the oldest child. “Come and help me” she said. “We need to fetch some water for the family, before I leave for work”. Mpume got out of bed, dressed in the only clothes she had, a little cotton dress and a light jersey. It was cold at that time of the morning. Mpume and her mother left for the river. Down, down, down they went. It was slippery in the morning dew. Finally they reached the river. Lindeni was late for work and asked Mpume to carry the water back to the hut while she walked the 2 kilometres to where the busses stop, which would take her to work.

Mpume was alone. The sun was just about to come up. Ah, the beautiful African dawn! She was not afraid. She had done this so often before. Mpume dipped the last 25 litre container into the river to fill it. Suddenly there were footsteps behind. Before she could turn around, Mpume was on the ground, shouting and screaming for help. A hand over her mouth, a voice in her ear, so close she could smell the stale breath of the drunken man, “Keep quiet or I’ll cut your throat”. Mpume was petrified. The man tore at her thin cotton dress and holding the knife to her throat continued to violently rape her. It was all over so quickly, but for Mpume time stood still. She lay on the bank of the river for an endless period, in shock, bleeding and afraid. She felt dirty. She felt guilty. “Why me?” “What have I done to deserve this?”

It was this day that changed the life of Mpume’s whole family. Her father had been home to visit six months ago. Her mother was pregnant again with the fourth child and on her way home from work she called in at the clinic for her regular check up. She was constantly sick. This was not how her previous pregnancies had progressed. What was wrong? While she was at the clinic, the nurse did the obligatory HIV test. The nurse was quite nice when she told Lindeni that she was HIV positive and this was why she was always sick. The fear in her heart was not evident to anyone else. She put her head down and slowly made her way home. Wrapped up in her own worries and anxieties she did not notice that Mpume was very quiet and had blue marks on her face, neck and arms and that her little cotton dress was torn. Later that night she was restless and afraid and could not sleep.

During the dark hours as she lay thinking about the future of her children and what would happen to them and trying to overcome her anger directed at her husband, she heard the soft sobbing of Mpume. Selflessly, she rose from her bed and went to Mpume. “What is it, my child?” she asked. Mpume broke down and between the sobs she told her mother what had happened at the river that morning. Lindeni did not know what to do. She held Mpume in her arms and together they cried. They cried about the fact that Mpume was wounded as much in her heart as in her body. They cried about the myth that a man could be cured of AIDS by raping a virgin. They cried until there were no more tears left.

In the morning the two left the little children with Mpume’s twelve year old sister, instructing them to stay inside the hut and not let anyone in. In pain, their bodies sore and tired, they walked hand in hand to the police station many kilometres away. There they were told the procedure for dealing with a rape case. But what worried Mpume and her mother more was whether she was pregnant from the rape and if she had possibly contracted HIV. The legal proceedings were a blur, Mpume was still in shock.

Six weeks later in the local clinic Mpume’s worst fears were confirmed. The nurse told her, that she was pregnant and that she had contracted HIV. The anger that she felt in her heart was almost unbearable. One morning, she sat on the river bank watching the water flow by, not talking to anyone, completely absorbed in her thoughts. The river looked so welcoming. If she walked into the deep water, she could just float away and never come back and all her troubles would be over. She got up slowly, walked to the water and just kept walking.

“Mpume, come and help me carry”, her mother’s request came just in time. Mpume turned round, tears rolling down her cheeks. It was then that her mother realised what her daughter had planned. “She needs help”, she thought, “but where do we go? The police will not help, the clinic sisters are too busy, and the social workers are 80 kilometres away”. Lindeni tried to phone her husband to tell him all the bad news. His employer told her that her husband had been admitted to a hospital in Durban with severe symptoms of tuberculosis three months before. Lindeni was devastated: “What do I do? Who will help me? Where do I go? I have no money! The children are hungry! Mpume and I are both pregnant and both of us are HIV positive. What a state of affairs!”

Lindeneni was at the river doing the washing one Sunday afternoon. All the women from the hills around were there too. There was lots of talk. Much of it was about sick children, husbands who did not come home, boyfriends who had other women in the towns and AIDS. One of the ladies was very brave and even though she knew that she risked her life and her status in the community, she admitted that she was HIV positive. She had heard about a place in Mandeni where one could go for help. Lindeni listened attentively. She knew she could not afford to die, she knew that she had to be there for her children. She worried about her husband although he had brought this on his family. But she did not have the time nor the energy to go and see him. So she pushed all thoughts of him to the back of her mind. Mpume’s health and that of her unborn baby, her own unborn baby and that of the other five children, were foremost in her mind. “This place” the lady was saying “is in the village of Mandeni. It is called Blessed Gérard’s Care Centre. There you can get help if you have AIDS or anything else.” Lindeni decided to go and see for herself. But she was scared. She used her last cent to get transport to Mandeni.

As Lindeni entered the Care Centre she looked into the glass doors. She was shocked at what she saw mirrored in the glass: She saw an emaciated woman whose clothes hung on her, although she was in the last stages of her pregnancy, with dark blotches on her skin and a skin rash. She saw someone who was weak and lacking in energy. She saw herself.

But she was surprised. The building was so nice and bright and clean. The people were laughing. There were some white people and lots of Africans and they were all so happy.



A nice lady took Lindeni into a little room where they could talk privately. Lindeni could not believe this because she had never been treated like this before. Everyone was so nice. The lady talking to her spoke in a soft, understanding voice, she did not seem to be in a hurry. The

nurse took her time. Lindeni felt confident and told the nurse everything that had happened. The nurse from Blessed Gérard’s Care Centre assured her that she would get all the help she needed. First she explained about the treatment called antiretroviral therapy, which will help Mpume and Lindeni to become healthy again and to live. There was no question that they would accept this help which was being so kindly offered. Lindeni asked how much she had to pay and was astounded when she was told it would not cost her anything, because there are good people who donate money to the Care Centre, so that they can provide their help without charging the patient.

Secondly, the nurse called another nice lady and she explained to her that she could get a grant from the government and gave her all the information she needed to apply for it. She then asked Lindeni how many children she had and what their ages were. She advised Lindeni to apply for a child care grant for them too. It would take her about three months before she might receive the grants from the government. She asked Lindeni if she had enough food at home. Lindeni was embarrassed but told the truth and said no. She was too sick to go to work and her husband was in hospital. There was no food at all. “Do not worry, we will help you. We will give you food parcels, which will sustain you and your children until you receive your grants”, said the nice lady. The nurse then asked Lindeni to bring Mpume to the Care Centre as well, so that both of them could consult the doctor in Blessed Gérard’s Care Centre.

Lindeneni and Mpume came to Blessed Gérard’s Care Centre. They are being monitored by the medical professionals in Blessed Gérard’s HAART Programme. Lindeni has had her baby, a wonderful little girl who, we hope and pray, may not have contracted HIV from her mother. Mpume underwent some intense counselling and is now happy about the baby which she is carrying, but she is determined to go back to school after the baby has been born. The man who raped her has since died from tuberculosis and meningitis, both of which are opportunistic infections related to AIDS. Lindeni and Mpume still get all the help they need and continue to progress.

**A most sincere "Thank you!" to all the donors
who enable us to help Lindeni, Mpume
and hundreds of others!**

“Where is My Mother?”

I am really excited, I am about to see what is outside my mother's womb. But I am also a little scared because I heard my mother talking to a friend the other day and she said “I don't want this baby, I wish it was dead. My mother is going to disown me when she finds out I am pregnant”. I don't know what she meant, but it made me feel afraid. I also feel sad that my grandmother does not know that I am here and my mother says that my grandmother does not want me either. It's also getting very squashed in here because I think my mother does not have any big clothes. She squeezes me into her tight jeans and short belts. Sometimes it is very uncomfortable. Hooray, I can hear the nice nurses talking. We must be at the clinic now. I wonder why mummy is crying and screaming. Ooooh! It is scary! “One last push” says the nurse.....and....

Wow, it's bright outside and a little cold. The nurse has put me into something that is soft and warm – but it is not like being inside my mother. I have not seen her yet because the nurse is going to wash me and weigh me. Ouch, she just gave me an injection. “This is a BCG injection” says the nurse to my mother, “it will prevent your baby from contracting Tuberculosis”. I think I want to go back to where I came from! Now the nurse gives me to my mother, she is soft and so pretty, but there is something wrong – she does not hold me. She tells the nurse to put me in the cot to sleep. “What a beautiful baby girl” says another nurse who has just come on morning duty. I feel proud that she thinks I am beautiful. The nurse is telling my mother that she must take me home. Now I can meet my grandmother.

Mummy picks me up and takes me to the bus stop near the big shops. I do not feel safe because my mother keeps giving me to other people. She leaves me with one of the shopkeepers so that she can go to the toilet. I wait and wait and mummy does not come back. The lady who is looking after me gives me a new blanket and holds me and talks to me. She seems very nice. What is she doing now? She is phoning the police – I have not done anything wrong, I am only five hours old. “Alright” she tells the policeman, “I will phone Blessed Gérard's Children's Home”. What is going to happen to me? Who are the people from the children's home and where is my mother?



Someone is picking me up. They are strong hands, but soft and I feel safe. But I am hungry. Where is my mother? The strong hands belong to Father Gérard. He hugs me to him and talks softly to me. He reassures me that I am loved and that I am wanted. The nice ladies in the shop are very happy that I am going to Blessed Gérard's Children's Home. But where is my mother? I am hungry and I am tired and I have not had a proper bath yet. I am still all sticky. Aunty Clare is undressing me to make sure that I have not been hurt. She is gently taking my blanket and baby suit

off. “This is a new born baby!”, she says, she saw the fresh cord, newly clamped, which had been my life line to my mother. Where is my mother? Father Gérard and Aunty Clare seem to be very kind. They are trying to decide how to trace my mother for me. “The clinic is the place we must go, that is where this beautiful little girl must have been born. Perhaps the nurses will remember her,” says Father Gérard. We are in the car now, it is fun.



Now we are at the clinic. The nurses are really excited to see me “Oh, I remember this special baby, she was born this morning! Where is her mother? Do you know that her mother did not even want to hold her?” says the nurse. I wonder why my mother does not want to hold me. I am hungry and I am tired, please take me home!



Father Gérard and Aunty Clare take me to a lovely warm and welcoming place. This must be Blessed Gérard's Children's Home. The care givers are also nice to me.



They bath me, wrap me in a soft blanket and give me a lovely warm bottle of milk. I can sleep now. But where is my mother? I am happily dreaming of my mother and my grandmother when I wake up with a fright. Aunty Clare is picking me up, what is happening? Why did she wake me up? Where is my mother? Aunty Clare holds me lovingly and carries me to a room where there are some people. They are talking. What are they saying? Father Gérard is talking, he sounds unhappy. Then I hear a familiar voice. It is my mother. Here is my mother. But why did she leave me with the shopkeeper four hours ago. Does she not understand that I was afraid?



Aunty Clare hands me to my grandmother, who sees me for the first time. She looks nice. She smiles at me and hugs me. My grandmother wants me! I am happy at last after a strange and frightening adventure into the world. Thank you Blessed Gérard's Children's Home for looking after me so lovingly.

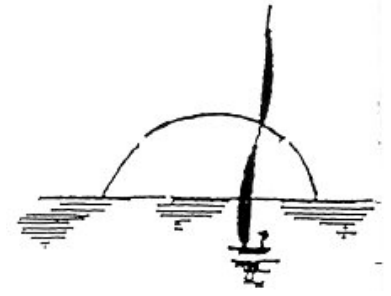
The “Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard - NEWS LETTER” is the official mouthpiece of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard and is edited by the Management Committee of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard.

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**We thank Mr. Haresh Ouderajh,
Stanger Weekly and Africa Web Press
wholeheartedly for printing
this newsletter free of charge!**

Blessed Gérard's Care Centre joined the



Hospice Association of kwaZulu/Natal

After having joined the International Association for Hospice and Palliative Care already in 2004 Blessed Gérard's Care Centre has now also joined the Hospice Association of kwaZulu/Natal. The Executive Council of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard had made a formal decision in its meeting on 14 July 2005, that Blessed Gérard's Care Centre should apply for membership in the Hospice Association. Our application was formally accepted at the Meeting of the HOSPICE ASSOCIATION OF KWAZULU/NATAL held on 2nd August 2005 at 09h30 at Highway Hospice, Durban.

We are very glad about this new development.

S'fundo



On 3 September 2005 an eight month old baby was found at the water pump in the local slum. Some young girls from the community, who had gone to fetch water, came across him. They picked him up and comforted him. One of them recognised the baby and fortunately, knew who the father is. They walked the four kilometres to the father's house, only to find that he was not there. Nobody knew where he or the baby's mother was.

Luckily for S'fundo, the young girls took him to the local police, who in turn brought him to



Blessed Gérard's Children's Home.

He lived and thrived in our care for two months. Two days ago a social worker phoned to find out if we had a child by the name of S'fundo. Having verified all the details of the baby, as we know them, the social worker confirmed that she had the paternal grandmother in front of her.

On 16 November 2005 the police and the grandmother came to fetch S'fundo.

The tears of gratitude at the reunion of the granny and baby were very moving to say the least. This is indeed a happy beginning for a new life for S'fundo.



Chronicle of the Year 2005

It is an old tradition in monasteries or mission stations that chronicles are written to record important events, comment on them and conserve memories for all future.

When looking through our picture archives of 2005 it came to our mind that it might be nice, if we would start such a chronicle from now on.

January 2005

Our active member Heather Kalkwarf came to be with her parents over the Christmas holidays, got engaged to her fiancé Martin Ashmore and went back to England on 16.1.2005.



Two foreign volunteers, Sr. Johanna Stadler (until 15.5.2005) and



Susanne Stauffer (until 29.8.2005) are still with us.

Johanna's parents had come for a visit on Christmas Day 2004 and stayed with us until 7.1.2005.

3.1.2005: Blessed Gérard's Community Development Centre re-opens after Christmas holidays.



7. - 8.1.2005: Fr. Gérard visits our member Fr. Severin Pschorn O.S.B. to celebrate his name day with him in Nqutu.

13.1.2005: Executive Council Meeting



19.1.2005: Blessed Gérard's Pre-Primary School & Crèche: Back-to-School.

20.1.2005: Dedicated Members' Meeting



21.1.2005: We celebrate the birthday of our foreign volunteer Susanne Stauffer.

24.1.2005: Bongimpilo Susanne is baptised in danger of death. Johanna Stadler is the godmother.



24.1.-1.4.2005 Course in Home based Care and Caregivers' Course

27.1.2005: Executive Council Meeting.

February 2005

1.2.2005: Clare Kalkwarf attends CATHCA meeting in Johannesburg

4.2.2005: Sr. Christine and a colleague of hers, two German Lutheran sisters, who run a HIV/AIDS home based care project in Swart Umfolozi came to visit us and experience our work.

8. - 14.2.2005: Visit by Sr. Johanna Stadler's sister and a friend

9.2.2005: Fr. Gérard and Clare Kalkwarf attend a lecture of the South African HIV Clinicians' Society at Entabeni Hospital in Durban about managing Tuberculosis and HIV.

11.2.2005: World Day of the Sick is celebrated with a service at Blessed Gérard's Church.

16.2.2005: Clare Kalkwarf attends a strategic NGO meeting of the Department of Health in Stanger.



16.2. - 1.3.2005: Our active member Father Michael Eich from Rüsselsheim/Germany comes to visit and volunteer.

18.2.2005: Thomas Scheen, the Africa Correspondent of the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, visits us to write an article "Über Aids reden sie nicht - Ein Hospiz im südafrikanischen Industrieort Mandeni pflegt Todkranke" about our work.

19.2.2005: Blessed Gérard's Children's Home makes an outing to Harold Johnson Nature Reserve.



23.2.2005: Dr. Malebo Maponyane, Project Manager of the SACBC AIDS office, and representatives of Toga Laboratories visit Blessed Gérard's Hospice HAART Programme to discuss their co-operation.

25.2.2005: Father Gérard visits our sick member Fr. Severin Pschorn in Nqutu.

25.2.2005: Mrs. Kalkwarf gives a talk about ARVs at Sappi factory in Mandeni.

26.2.2005: Father Gérard and Fr. Michael Eich go to Nkandla, to celebrate the 70th birthday of our member Sr. Eobarda Ries O.S.F.



March 2005

1.3.2005: Mr. Fisher, the General Manager of SAPPI Kraft factory in Mandeni, Mr. Carelson and René Grobler visit Blessed Gérard's Care Centre.



3.3.2005: Fr. Gérard gives a talk about the work of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard, the Hospice and the HAART Programme at Ithala in iSithebe.

4.3.2005: Meeting at Stanger Hospital about the planned government ARV roll-out at Sundumbili Clinic.

4.3.2005: Dedicated Members' Meeting: A new Executive Council is elected for another two years, whereby all existing office bearers were re-elected in their portfolios: Clare Kalkwarf as Vice-President and Administrator of Goods, Dr. Paul Thabethe as Medical Superintendent and Sr. Nokuthula Thabethe as Director of Charity Work.

6.3.2005: Holy Mass with anointing of

the sick at Blessed Gérard's Church.

7. - 9.3.2005: Franz Ruhland and his wife come to visit us.

8. - 17.3.2005: Dr. Gabela attends a course in paediatric anti-retroviral therapy in Nairobi/Kenya.

9.3.2005: Bongimpilo Susanne is dying.



10.3.2005: Our Medical



Superintendent Dr. Paul Thabethe celebrates his 60th birthday.

12.3.2005: Meeting with Lorraine from the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC).

12.3.2005: Children from Blessed Gérard's Children's Home attend a performance of the Passion Play in Durban.

17.3.2005: Executive Council Meeting.

18.3.2005: Meeting with Tshepo C Maluka and Lucy Maotonyane from the South African Human Rights Commission.

19. - 21.3.2005: Clare Kalkwarf attends the CATHCA Conference and AGM in Bloemfontein and is re-elected to their Board of Management.



19.3.2005: A delegation from the Descartes High School in Neuburg/Germany with Mr. Friemel visit Blessed Gérard's Care Centre.

20.3.2005: Iain T. Benson from the British Association of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta (BASMOM) visits Blessed Gérard's Care Centre.



22.3.2005: The Rotary Club of Mandini presents Fr. Gérard the "Vocational Service Award" in recognition of his dedicated involvement and valuable contribution in giving service to the local community.



Malta (BASMOM) visit Blessed Gérard's Care Centre.

24.3.2005: The HIV committee of SAPPI Kraft factory of Mandeni visit Blessed Gérard's Care Centre.

26.3.2005: Meagen, Jody, Cameron, Jade, Gerald, Siyabonga, Njabulo, John and Sihle from Blessed Gérard's Children's Home are baptised during the Easter



Vigil Liturgy at Blessed Gérard's Church.



28.3. - 2.5.2005: Our active member Gunnar Schröter comes back to Blessed Gérard's Care Centre for the fourth time to volunteer.



30.3.2005: We celebrate the birthday of our nursing auxiliary Mrs Dorothy Wynne.

30.3. - 4.4.2005: Caregivers' Course: The best student is the former mayor of Mandeni Sam Zwane.



April 2005

2.4.2005: 18:00 Holy Mass for the dying Pope John Paul II in the chapel of Blessed Gérard's Care Centre. The Holy Father died at 21:37 in the Vatican.



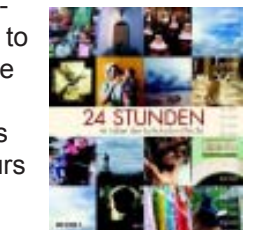
3.4.2005: Requiem Mass for Pope John Paul II in Blessed Gérard's Church.



5.4.2005: Dieter Schlesinger from Munich University visits Blessed Gérard's Care Centre, with 27 students, on a geographical excursion focussing on the HIV/AIDS pandemic in South Africa.



12.4.2005: Per-Anders Pettersson comes to Mandeni to make pictures for the book "24 hours in the life of the Catholic Church".



14.4.2005: Political/Economic Officer Jack Hillmeyer from the Consulate General of the U.S.A. in Durban comes with a State Department officer from Washington, DC to visit Blessed Gérard's Hospice HAART Programme which is partly sponsored with PEPFAR monies from the U.S.A., Blessed Gérard's Hospice, Blessed Gérard's Community Development Centre and Blessed Gérard's Children's Home.



15.4.2005: Our Dedicated Member Yvonne Renaud comes with her husband Louis from Nelspruit to visit Blessed Gérard's Care Centre.

15.4.2005: Sr. Edith from Eshowe comes to visit us with two relatives from Germany: Berthold Hepp and Ronald Radr.



16.4.2005: Students and teachers from

Interact at St. Catherine's High School in Empangeni visit Blessed Gérard's Care Centre and present a push chair for one of our paediatric patients and six high chairs for Blessed Gérard's Children's Home.



18.4.2005: A first in our history: A member of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard, Wilfrid Cardinal Napier O.F.M., takes part in the conclave in Rome which elects Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger as the new Pope Benedict VI. Informed sources were often quoted stating that Cardinal Napier scored well on the opinion polls for the election - he was considered one of the leading 16 cardinals for the papal succession - but we are glad that he returned to us because South Africa needs a man of his caliber.



19.4.2005: Lida Hill, from Rotary Mandeni, presents children's clothing.



21.4.2005: SEC Electrical of iSithebe invited us to their road show and donated a cheque to the value of R 1,000.00. Litecor-Avocar donated 5 emergency lights and ACDC Dynamics donated a computer UPS. Thank you!

21.4.2005: Dedicated Members' Meeting.

23.4.2005: Presentation of gifts by the Rotary Anns of Mandeni.



27.4. - 14.5.2005: Clare Kalkwarf takes part in the SMOM pilgrimage to Lourdes and visits her children in England.

May 2005



4.5.2005: Rotarians and Rotary Anns present gifts for Blessed Gérard's Pre-Primary School and Crèche.

7.5.2005: Fr. Gérard and Susanne Stauffer visit our active member Fr. Severin Pschorn at Nqutu.

10.5.2005: Fr. Gérard attends the management meeting of the Hospice Association of kwaZulu/Natal (HAKZN) to discuss membership.



14.5.2005: Blessed Gérard's Children's Home makes an outing to Ingwenya Game Reserve as a farewell to Miss Johanna Stadler.

15.5.2005: Departure of Johanna Stadler

15.5.2005: Our active member Leon Kalkwarf and his wife Joanne are full of joy at the birth of their daughter Lily Rose and so is granny Clare Kalkwarf.

16.5. - 24.6.2005: Miss Bernadette Cußmann, a niece of our active member, Abbot Godfrey Sieber O.S.B. came to Blessed Gérard's Care Centre to volunteer.



17.5.2005: Clare Kalkwarf arrives back from the United Kingdom.

18. - 19.5.2005: Caregivers' Course (Isibane)

19.5.2005: Dedicated Members' Meeting

20.5.2005: ACDC Dynamics presents a donated uninterruptible power supply (UPS).



23.5. - 22.7.2005: Home based Care and Caregivers' Course.

24.5.2005: Karen Hinton and Amra Chakravarti visit Blessed Gérard's Hospice to discuss possible membership in the HAKZN.

31.5.2005: Johan Viljoen and two ladies from CRSC visit Blessed Gérard's Hospice HAART Programme.

June 2005

1.6.2005: Clare Kalkwarf attends a CATHCA Board of Management Meeting in Johannesburg.



1.6.2005: Our active member Father Severin Pschorn O.S.B. suffers his fifth heart attack.



2.6.2005: Farewell to our sewing teacher Mrs. Florence Mdletshe from Blessed Gérard's Community Development Centre and welcome to the new sewing teacher Mrs. Mkhize.



6.6.2005: Our active member Father Severin Pschorn O.S.B. undergoes heart surgery (stent) at Entabeni Hospital in Durban.

7.6.2005: Presentation about the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard to René Grobler and the AIDS Committee of SAPPI Kraft factory of Mandeni.

8.6.2005: Our active member Father Severin Pschorn O.S.B. is transferred to Blessed Gérard's Care Centre as a patient.

9.6.2005: Floor tiles in bathrooms of Blessed Gérard's Children's Home re-done.

16.6.2005: Farewell of principal caregiver Sandy Porter of Blessed Gérard's Children's



Home and welcome of Susanne Stauffer as the new principal caregiver.

17.6. - 9.7.2005: Piers Birtwistle from the British Association of the Sovereign Military



Order of Malta (BASMOM) and our honorary dedicated member Lillian Molloy come to Blessed Gérard's Care Centre to volunteer. (Lillian wearing traditional Zulu attire)



20.6. - 8.7.2005: Lillian Molloy teaches two First Aid Courses to our active members.

24.6.2005: Departure of Bernadette Cußmann.



24.6. - 9.7.2005: Maximilian and Gabriele Rauecker from Traunstein /Germany come back to visit Blessed Gérard's Care Centre.



25.6.2005: Priestly Ordination of our Spiritual Supporter Member Father Alois Siphon Zikhali O.F.M. at Vanderbijlpark.



26.6.2005: We celebrate St. John's Feast, where Maximilian and Gabriele Rauecker are invested as Honorary Dedicated Members of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard.

27.6.2005: Outing of Blessed Gérard's Children's Home to Durban International Airport.

30.6.2005: Father Gérard and Clare Kalkwarf attend a Consultative Meeting on health with Cardinal Napier in Durban.

July 2005

1.7.2005: Our active member Bishop Mansuet Dela Biyase of Eshowe dies at Entabeni Hospital in Durban.



2.7.2005: Celebration of Father Gérard's 50th birthday.



2.7.2005: Father Gérard's birthday gift: The members of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard "incarnate" the Maltese Cross.

5.7.2005: Our active member Father Severin Pschorn O.S.B. is transferred to Blessed Gérard's Hospice and commissioned as Hospice Chaplain.



9.7.2005: Departure of Piers Birtwistle, Lillian Molloy, Maximilian and Gabriele Rauecker.

13.7.2005: Fr. Gérard, Clare Kalkwarf and Sr. Liz Coetzer attend a lecture of the HIV Clinicians Society at Nelson Mandela School of Medicine in Durban about Multi-drug-resistant tuberculosis.

14.7.2005: Executive Council Meeting.

16.7.2005: Funeral of our active member Bishop Mansuet Dela Biyase in Eshowe.

21.7.2005: Dedicated Members' Meeting.



22. - 30.7.2005: Dr. Andreas Heinze and his wife



Martine Sutter from Beinhem/France come back to volunteer at Blessed Gérard's Care Centre.

27.7.2005: Abused child Noxolo brought by police for admission to Blessed Gérard's Care Centre. (See title page !)

28.7.2005: Father Gérard, Dr. Andreas Heinze and Martine Sutter attend a lecture of the Medical Research Council on the socio-economic impact of HIV.

28.7.2005: Johan Viljoen from the SACBC AIDS office visits Blessed Gérard's Hospice HAART Programme.

28.7.2005: Our active member Heather Kalkwarf gives birth to Mackenzie.

30.7.2005: Father Gérard gives a talk on HAART at a meeting of the Sacred Heart Association and the St. Anne's Sodality at Mambane.

30.7.2005: Dr. Andreas Heinze and Martine Sutter depart.

August 2005

2.8.2005: The Hospice Association of kwaZulu/Natal (HAKZN) formally accepted Blessed Gérard's Care Centre's application for membership.



5.8.2005: Children from Blessed Gérard's Children's Home get free admission at Brian's Circus. Thank you!



10. - 12.8.2005: Andreas Huber and Johannes Prinz visit Blessed Gérard's Hospice and Blessed Gérard's Pre-Primary School & Crèche.

13.8.2005: Father Theophil Gaus O.S.B. from St. Ottilien Archabbey in Germany comes to visit Blessed Gérard's Care

Centre (after visiting our member Fr. Albert Herold O.S.B. in Mtunzini).



13.8. - 16.9.2005: Veronica Dietzel from Greifenberg/Germany comes to volunteer at Blessed Gérard's Care Centre.

15.8. - 29.8.2005: Susanne Stauffer's parents come to visit us.



16.8.2005: Reverend Deacon Thomas Müller and his wife Angelika arrive to stay as volunteers at Blessed Gérard's Care Centre for three years.

20. - 21.8.2005: First Aid duty at the Diocesan Pilgrimage to Fatima.



23. - 30.8.2005: Father Arnold Pirner and his housekeeper Miss Rita Gleißner from Elsendorf/Germany come to visit and to volunteer at Blessed Gérard's Care Centre.

25.8.2005: Dedicated Members' Meeting.

28.8.2005: Outing of Blessed Gérard's Children's Home to Zinkwazi and farewell of principal caregiver Susanne Stauffer.

29.8.2005: Susanne Stauffer and her parents depart.



30.8.2005: Father Pirner and Miss Gleißner depart.

31.8. - 3.9.2005: Our active member and former foreign volunteer Jennifer (Jenna) Neumann stays at Blessed Gérard's Care Centre with a friend of hers when she visits her friends.

September 2005

3.9.2005: The police and the two ladies, who found abandoned S'fundo, bring him to us and we gladly admit him to Blessed Gérard's Care Centre. (See page 5!)

5.9.2005: We collect an abandoned newborn baby girl at Jet stores in Sundumbili and reunite her with her mother and granny hours later. (Read her story: "Where is my mother?" on page 5!)

8.9.2005: Executive Council Meeting.



14.9. - 5.10.2005: Our member Helmut Pschorn from Ulmerfeld/Austria comes back to us to visit (especially his sick brother Father Severin).

16.9.2005: Departure of Veronica Dietzel.



22.9.2005: Dedicated Members' Meeting.

24.9.2005: Father Severin receives a new car which has been largely financed by MIVA Austria.



26.9. - 11.10.2005: Home based Care and Caregivers' Course.

October 2005

5.10.2005: Benefactors Gerhard and Melanie Schilling from Weinheim/Germany visit Blessed Gérard's Care Centre.



5.10.2005: Departure of Helmut Pschorn - the last photo of Father Severin Pschorn alive.

14.10.2005: Father Severin Pschorn dies at 9:45 a.m. at Blessed Gérard's Hospice.

15. - 20.10.2005: His Excellency, the Ambassador of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta (SMOM) to Lithuania and Latvia, Dr. Peter Freiherr von Fürstenberg, visits us together with his daughter Alexandra.



16.10.2005: Celebration of Blessed Gérard's Feast with promotion of Father Gérard to the rank of Conventual Chaplain ad honorem of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta (SMOM). (See page 11!)

17.10.2005: Funeral of Father Severin Pschorn O.S.B. at Inkamana Abbey.

19.10.2005: A delegation from the Provincial Department of Welfare and the Department of health visitates Blessed Gérard's Children's Home and calls it "the best home I have ever seen in the Ulundi region".

24.10.2005: The health inspector visits Blessed Gérard's Children's Home and praises us for our high standards.

27.10.2005: Susanne Stauffer comes back to Blessed Gérard's Children's Home to continue her task as principal caregiver for another year.

29.10. - 12.11.2005: Monika Reimer from München/Germany comes to volunteer at Blessed Gérard's Care Centre.



November 2005

2.11.2005: Sheryl Wüst and Amra Charakvarti from the Hospice Palliative Care Association (HPCA) come to advise us on the preparation for the accreditation of Blessed Gérard's Hospice by COHSASA.

3.11.2005: Clare Kalkwarf attends the CATHCA Board of Management Meeting at Johannesburg.

3.11.2005: A standby generator is delivered to safeguard the power supply to Blessed Gérard's Care Centre.

8.11.2005: Father Gérard and Clare Kalkwarf attend the Management Meeting of the Hospice Association of kwaZulu/Natal (HAKZN) in Durban.

8.11. - 3.12.2005: Sr. Johanna Stadler comes back in South Africa to volunteer at Blessed Gérard's Care Centre.

9.11.2005: Susanne Stauffer symbolically hands over the donations she had collected for us, when she was at home in Ebnath/Germany.



10.11.2005: Executive Council Meeting.

10.11.2005: Our active member Rev. Father Vitus Siphon Ncube of Eshowe dies.



13.11.2005: Rev Deacon Thomas Müller baptises Zandile in Blessed Gérard's Church.

16.11.2005: The standby generator for Blessed Gérard's Care Centre is finally installed and commissioned.

16.11.2005: S'fundo's grandmother is found and takes him home after he came to us on 3.9.2005. (See page 5!)



16.11.2005: Meeting of the staff in Blessed Gérard's Care Centre.

17. - 19.11.2005: Sr. Elizabeth Coetzer and Sr. Sheilagh Schröder attend CRS nurses training.

17.11.2005: Blessed Gérard's Care Centre was donated the stations of the cross, which used to be at Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Mangete.



19.11.2005: Requiem Mass for our active member Rev. Father Vitus Siphon Ncube in Eshowe and funeral in Emoyeni.



20.11.2005: Children from Blessed Gérard's Children's Home visit the fun fare at Mandini.

23.11.2005: Dedicated Members' Meeting.

24. - 27.11.2005: Clare Kalkwarf and Sr. Elizabeth Coetzer attend "a Conference to celebrate our successes in the Church's ARV treatment programme" at Bronkhorstspuit.



25.11.2005: The Children of Blessed Gérard's Children's Home attending the Kindergarten in Mandini celebrate their "graduation" to primary school. Hope and Jade are amongst the "graduates".



26. - 29.11.2005:



The Executive President of Malteser Hilfsdienst, our member, Johannes Freiherr Heereman,



the Diocesan Manager of Malteser Hilfsdienst Munich and Freising, Mr. Christoph Friedrich



and the Diocesan Manager of Malteser Hilfsdienst Berlin, Mr Henric Maes, visit Blessed Gérard's Care Centre.



In his farewell speech Baron Heereman called us "a jewel in the crown of the Order of Malta" and stated that he had seen many relief works of the Order of Malta worldwide, but nowhere had he found the true spirituality of Blessed Gérard put into practice more intensely than here.

He further stated in a press release: "Thanks to many volunteers and professional palliative medicine the patients here die in dignity, optimally nursed and cared for around the clock. This is an oasis of love and peace in the midst of need and despare."

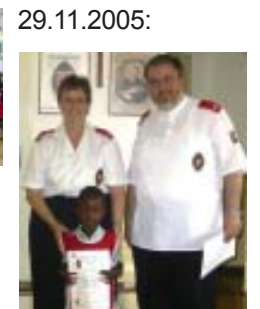


27.11.2005: Our Spiritual Supporter Member and newly ordained priest, Father Alois Siphon Zikhali O.F.M.,

comes back to his home parish in Mangete for a festive Holy Mass. Father Gérard preached the homily.



Blessed Gérard's Pre-Primary School & Crèche celebrate their year-end-party and "graduation".



December 2005

1.12.2005: World AIDS Day



2. - 18.12.2005: Our active member Diane Freiin von Wrede comes back to Blessed Gérard's Care Centre to volunteer again.

3.12.2005: Departure of Sr. Johanna Stadler.

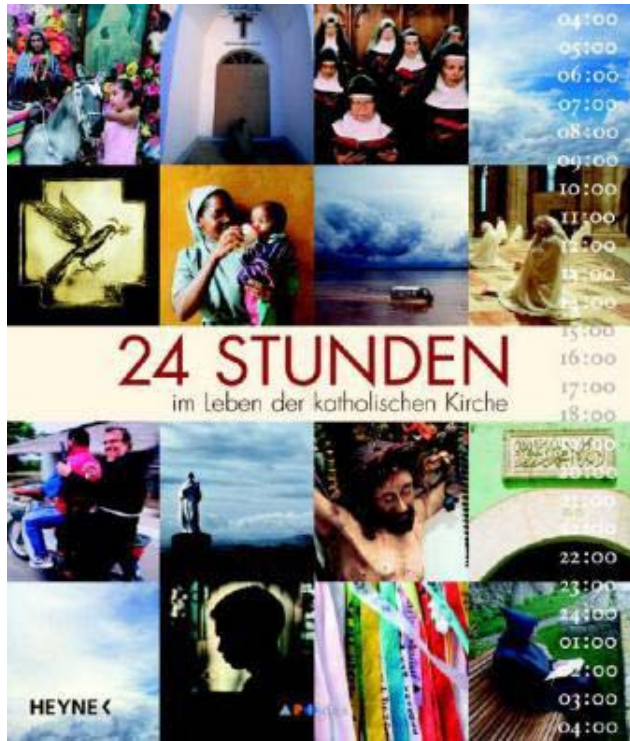
6. - 21.12.2005: Frà Ludwig Hoffmann von Rumerstein comes back to Blessed Gérard's Care Centre to volunteer.

7.12.2005: Father Gérard gives an AIDS talk for Stanger Correctional Services.

8.12.2005: Blessed Gérard's Community Development Centre closes for Christmas Holidays.

22.12.2005: Dedicated Members Meeting.

Reflection on the Service of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard in the book 24 HOURS in the Life of the Catholic Church



A major documentary event:

The worldwide activities of the Catholic Church, captured in pictures on a single day. 12 April 2005: 46 internationally renowned photographers are dispatched to the whole world, to document the work of the Catholic Church. Traditional services, faithful from all continents and especially brothers and sisters sacrificing themselves in serving their fellow humans are the centre of this fascinating pictorial book, which was produced with the support of the Vatican. The Catholic Church is active at every minute of the day, in pastoral and social work, as an institution of education, peace maker and proclaiming Christ's message. The photographer and author Hans-Günther Kaufmann took the initiative to depict this comprehensively - with the credentials of the Vatican, this was made possible, even at places and institutions, which had not been accessible to the public before. From Ireland to South Africa, from Los Angeles to Manila: Hundreds of moving colour and monochrome pictures show the Catholic Church as a Global Player of humanity.

About the author: Hans-Günther Kaufmann, born in 1943 in Tours / France, worked as a fashion and promotional photographer since the age of 18. A life crisis and the friendship to Abbot Odilo Lechner caused a radical change in his interests. He tries to communicate the existential basis of Christian values through the media of photography and film. He lives with his family in Upper Bavaria.

From the preface:

"In actual fact the idea (of this book) goes back to the question, what church and faith mean to us today, in a commercially orientated time; the book aims at bringing those into the foreground, who follow the word of Jesus Christ by actions through devoting their life to the service of their fellow humans; wishing to open this impressive universe to people who are distant from the church."

Hans-Günther Kaufmann
in June 2005



SOUTH AFRICA | MANDENI [08:03]

Each patient at the Care Centre of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard is invited to attend a religious service every morning

page 50



SOUTH AFRICA | MANDENI [08:24]

A Christian is never alone. Benedict XVI.

page 51



SOUTH AFRICA | MANDENI [09:50]

Tenth anniversary of the Kindergarten. It was founded by the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard.

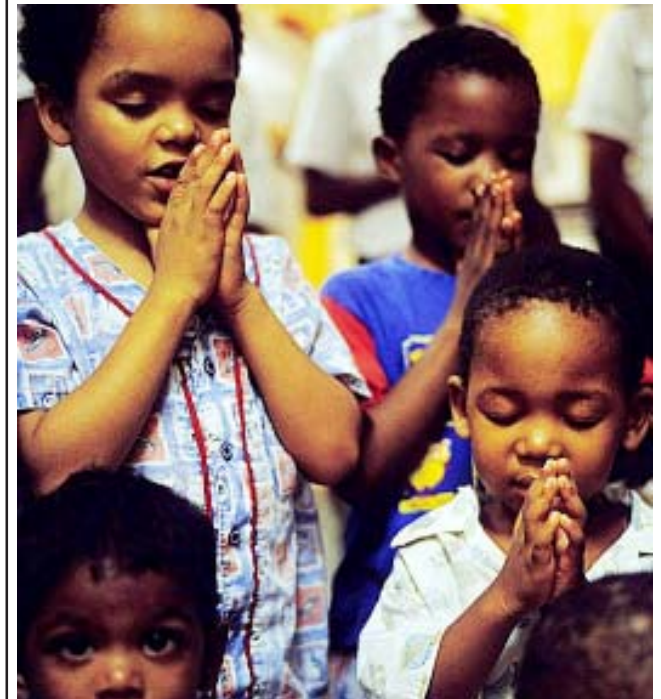
pages 71-73



SOUTH AFRICA | MANDENI [17:59]

The little ones at the (Children's) Home are already expecting the meal. But before that grace is said, of course.

pages 206 - 208



SOUTH AFRICA | MANDENI [19:23]

Bed time in the Children's Home: Just a night prayer and then jump into bed.

page 237



SOUTH AFRICA | MANDENI [23:15]

Whatever might have disturbed the sleep of this baby, the carer in the children's ward is there immediately.

page 268

The photographer:

PER-ANDERS PETTERSSON was born at Borås in Sweden in 1967. He lives in South Africa, where he photographed projects of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard. (Agentur Focus)

This book is available in German under the title "24 STUNDEN im Leben der katholischen Kirche". You may order this book at any bookshop or online at http://www.amazon.de/exec/obidos/ASIN/3453120329/brotherhoofbl-21?creative=6378&camp=1410&link_code=as1

Lillian's Scoop Stretcher

by Sr Sheilagh Schröder



On the occasion of Father Gérard's 50th birthday, this year, one of the gifts he received was a light weight aluminium scoop stretcher from Lillian Molloy, an Honorary Dedicated Member, residing in the United Kingdom. She was volunteering in Blessed Gérard's Care Centre having given up her annual holiday to teach First Aid to our local volunteers.

Many of the homes we go into to fetch patients are very small and situated in rural areas. This often entails a walk over difficult terrain. The scoop stretcher has enabled us to negotiate sharp corners and steep slopes with relative ease. Once back at the ambulance, the patient is transferred to the ambulance stretcher and loaded into the ambulance.

Before Lillian left, she made sure that each and every member of staff, who might have occasion to use the scoop stretcher, was well rehearsed in the assembly, disassembly and length adjustment of it.

In many instances it has made our collection of patients so much easier, both for the patient and ambulance crew.

Thank you so much Lillian!

Thanks to our Donors!

Every day in Holy Mass we pray for the people who enable us to do our work through their prayers, donations and active help. A very special "Thank you" for your help in 2005 goes to Frà Matthew Festing, Mr. Peter Loyd & the British Association of the Order of Malta (BASMOM), Fr. Volker & the Benedictine Mission House in Schuyler/U.S.A., Sr. Alison Munro & the AIDS Desk of the SACBC, CRSC and PEPFAR, SAPPI, Wedigo Graf von Schweinitz & the Canadian Association of the Order of Malta, Mr. Victor Claudius, the South African Sugar Association, Tongaat-Hulett's, Sr. Eobarda & the Nardini Sisters, Whirlpool, the family, relatives and friends of the deceased Mr. Nene Ofuately-Kodjoe and Diversity Films, Loungefurn, the Little Flower Convent, Sr. Edith & the Holy Childhood Convent, Rev. Deacon Carter, SEC Electrical, D H O'Flaherty, Metalix, Mr. Robin Götsch and all other donors.



A very special mention is due to Peter Loyd, the Hospitaller of BASMOM. Due to his unflinching fervour and enthusiasm

Mrs Clare Kalkwarf re-elected to the Board of Management of CATHCA



The Vice-President of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard, Mrs. Clare A. Kalkwarf D.M., was re-elected a member of CATHCA's Board of Management on 21 March 2005 at the National Conference and AGM of CATHCA from 19 to 21 March 2005 at the University of the Free State in Bloemfontein. Mrs. Kalkwarf had served a previous term of office from 2000 - 2005. Congratulations!



The Catholic Health Care Association of Southern Africa

CATHCA is an associate body of the Southern African Catholic Bishops Conference.

CATHCA is a service, research and policy-shaping body committed to Health Care in the Catholic tradition. CATHCA's vision is to provide a high-quality affordable health care service to all, including the poorest and most marginalized people in the land, in the spirit of the humble service of Christ and in co-operation with others. CATHCA's Mission is to affirm, develop, support and strengthen both individual Catholic health care workers and an evolving Catholic health care network, in conjunction with all other health care role-players.

and the help of many wonderful people like Lillian Molloy, BASMOM has become our main donor and we are deeply indebted for their great support.



Another unparalleled champion of charity is our active member, Mr. Victor Claudius. He is the most dedicated, diligent, hard working and persevering private fundraiser we have ever come across. Nothing is too much for him and he has permanently new ideas on how to get all these most needed donations.

A wholehearted "Thank you" to all of you, our donors. May God reward you in his abundant measure for your generosity and care!

The Celebration of the Solemnity of St. John the Baptist at Blessed Gérard's Care Centre on 26 June 2005

St. John the Baptist is the patron Saint of the Order of Malta. Being the Order's Relief Organisation for South Africa we celebrate the Solemnity of St. John every year as one of our two major feasts, where we welcome the new members and socialise with all our members, benefactors and supporters.

At this year's celebration our active members Mr. Maximilian Rauecker and Mrs. Gabriele Rauecker were invested as Honorary Dedicated Members. This is the highest honour the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard can confer and it is done in gratitude and acknowledgement of their extraordinary participation, support, loyalty and fidelity to our work, our principles and our vocation.

All new members were officially received into the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard during this celebration and received the members' medal of our Brotherhood.

The 10th anniversary of Blessed Gérard's Pre-Primary School & Crèche and the 5th anniversary of Blessed Gérard's Children's Home and Blessed Gérard's Disaster Relief Project were celebrated as well.

Festive Holy Mass at Blessed Gérard's Church

Father Gérard delivered the sermon explaining why Gabriele and Max Rauecker were chosen to become Honorary Dedicated Members of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard.

Father Gérard blessed the capes for the new Honorary Dedicated members of the Brotherhood, Gabriele and Max Rauecker



Mrs Clare Kalkwarf invested Gabriele ...



... and Maximilian Rauecker ...



the new Honorary Dedicated Members of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard.



Then Fr. Gérard blessed the medals for the new members of the BBG and the Dedicated Members presented the medals to the new members.



Afterwards all the new members received a special blessing by Father Gérard.

Continuation of the celebration outside Blessed Gérard's Care Centre



Miss Fikile Mthethwa was presented with the President's Award of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard for 2005 for her good care of the children in Blessed Gérard's Children's Home as a house-keeping assistant and caregiver, her sense of responsibility and outstanding readiness offering to take on extraordinary duties voluntarily.

Happy First Birthday to John Zulu! The birthday cake has next to John's single candle another candle with the number "50" on it and that is for Father Gérard, who celebrated his 50th birthday just a few days after the feast.



Blessed Gérard's Children's Home celebrated its 5th anniversary of foundation. Caregivers and children rejoice.



Blessed Gérard's Pre-Primary School and Crèche celebrated its 10th anniversary of foundation singing and dancing to everybody's delight.

The Celebration of the Feast of Blessed Gérard at Blessed Gérard's Care Centre in Mandeni, South Africa, on 16 October 2005

After the death of our meritorious member Bishop Mansuet Dela Biyase on 1 July 2005, Rev. Father Jabulani V. A. Ndaba has been elected the Administrator of the Diocese of Eshowe. It is a great honour that he accepted our invitation to be the main celebrant in our service.

The Prince and Grandmaster of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta, His Most Eminent Highness Frà Andrew Bertie, has promoted our founder and president, Father Gérard T. Lagleder O.S.B., to the rank of "Conventual Chaplain ad honorem" of the Order of Malta. Father Gérard was presented with the vestments and insignia from the Grand Magistry of the Order in Rome.

All our new members were received into the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard and were given our medal.

Our long serving member, the ambassador of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta to Lithuania and Latvia, His Excellency, Dr. Peter Freiherr von Fürstenberg, was our special guest of honour and keynote speaker.

The solemn Holy Mass at Blessed Gérard's Church



Mrs Clare Kalkwarf, Dame of Magistral Grace of the Order of Malta, during her laudatio:

"In 1955 a little boy was born to Hans and Thilde Lagleder in Germany. This

little boy grew up as most little boys do going to church and to school, making his First Holy Communion and being confirmed. At a very early age this little boy showed a keen interest in learning First Aid and in October 1969 – exactly 36 years ago – the man we now know as Father Gérard joined our German sister organisation, Malteser-Hilfsdienst, as an active member. He was then on the road to what we call a divine calling.

Father Gérard began with First Aid training, going on to become an ambulance assistant, a teacher in First Aid, completed his nursing training and became a paramedic in 1975. In June of 1975 he was appointed a group leader of Malteser-Hilfsdienst in Regensburg at the young age of 20. Just one year later at 21 he was authorised to train nursing assistants and paramedics and he received his appointment as a nursing tutor.

Father Gérard felt a calling to the priesthood and entered into the Major Seminary in Regensburg as a candidate for the priesthood in 1976. While studying theology, Father Gérard continued his work for Malteser-Hilfsdienst. He became the head of the Diocesan nursing department of Malteser-Hilfsdienst Regensburg in 1976, a member of the Conference of Delegates of Malteser-Hilfsdienst in 1977 and in 1979 deputy provincial managing director in Hesse.

Father Gérard then obtained his masters degree in theology in 1981, having written his dissertation on "The Novelty in the spiritual tradition of the Order of St. John"

In 1982 he was ordained a priest at Regensburg Cathedral. This was not enough – unbeknown to Father Gérard, God was still pushing in the direction of his continuing to use all his managerial and nursing skills. So as a priest Father Gérard joined the community of the Missionary Benedictines at St. Ottilien Archabbey in 1982.

Still continuing his work for Malteser-Hilfsdienst while in the monastery, he became the district and municipal director of Malteser-Hilfsdienst in that area. On 14 September 1986 Father Gérard made his solemn profession as a Benedictine Monk and was assigned as a missionary to Zululand in 1987. Father Gérard was first the assistant priest in Mahlabatini. Subsequently he was appointed the parish priest of Mangete and Mandeni 15 years ago.

During this time as a missionary in Zululand Father Gérard thought that his work for the Order of Malta would have come to an end. He believed that his work was now of a purely pastoral nature ministering in the rural areas of Zululand.

However, unbeknown to Father Gérard, God was still calling and pushing him gently and on 28 October 1992 (13 years ago) he founded the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard together with four other people.

What you see here today – the 12 projects of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard, is a culmination of all those years of gathering knowledge and experience to do the work which God has called him to do. Blessed Gérard himself was a Benedictine monk and worked in this special field of hospitality. Father Gérard has followed very closely in the footsteps of this wonderful man and all this work for the Sovereign Military Order of Malta has been acknowledged and rewarded with his promotion today.

On behalf of the members of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard, I want to thank Father Abbot Godfrey, the Abbot of Inkamana Abbey, the Archabbot of St. Ottilien and the Abbot Primate Notker Wolf in Rome for the support which they have given to Father Gérard in his God-given task.

In 1994 Father Gérard was received into the Order of Malta as a Magistral Chaplain. On 21 June 2005, His Most Eminent Highness, the Prince and Grand Master of the Order of Malta, Frà Andrew Bertie and the Sovereign Council of the Order promoted Father Gérard to the rank of Conventual Chaplain ad honorem.

This is indeed a great honour and a wonderful occasion, not only for Father Gérard but for the whole of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard. Father, we, the members, are extremely proud and grateful that you have been given this promotion. We pray that God's grace will surround you, keep you safe, that you may complete the work given you by God. We, the members, hereby

pledge our undying support and help for you as we live out our motto *tuitio fidei et obsequium pauperum*, as we care for "Our Lords the Sick".

We thank God that you are who you are, we thank God that he has sent you to Mandeni and we thank God that you have brought the Order of Malta and its special spirituality to South Africa."



chaplain ad honorem.

The Administrator of the Diocese of Eshowe, Fr. Ndaba, blessed the new vestments (cassock & mozetta) and insignia (cross) of the Conventual chaplain ad honorem and invested Fr. Gérard with the new cassock of a Conventual



The ambassador of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta to Lithuania and Latvia, Dr. Peter Freiherr von Fürstenberg, invested Fr. Gérard with the new mozetta of a Conventual chaplain ad honorem.



The Vice-President of the South African Relief Organisation of the Order of Malta, Mrs Clare Kalkwarf D.M. presented Fr. Gérard with the cross of a Conventual chaplain ad honorem.

The Vice-President of the South African Relief Organisation of the Order of Malta, Mrs Clare Kalkwarf D.M. presented Fr. Gérard with the cross of



Abbot Godfrey blessed the medals for the new members of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard.

The Dedicated Members of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard conferred the medals to the new members.



Father Gérard blessed the new members.

The celebration continued on the patio of Blessed Gérard's Care Centre

A large crowd of members and friends was congregated



His Excellency Ambassador Dr. Peter Freiherr von Fürstenberg delivered the keynote address reporting on the work of the Order of Malta in Lithuania and Latvia.



The children of Blessed Gérard's Children's Home and of Blessed Gérard's



Pre-Primary School and Crèche sang and danced to everybody's great delight.



Joyous applause from the guests of honour.



The Sovereign Military and Hospitaller Order of St. John of Jerusalem, of Rhodes and of Malta

tuitio fidei et obsequium pauperum
Protection of faith and service to the poor

DONATION REQUEST

The entire work of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard has to be financed through donations, because our patients are so poor they cannot contribute anything themselves. We depend on your gifts and we are most grateful for all donations no matter how big or small they may be.

The all inclusive monthly cost for the anti-retroviral treatment of an AIDS patient in our HAART Programme amounts to approximately 100 GBP (British Pounds) / 150 EUR (Euro) / 200 USD (US-Dollars) or CAD (Canadian Dollars) or CHF (Swiss Franks) / 1200 ZAR (South African Rand).

Therefore, we urgently look for groups, parishes, societies, clubs, associations, classes, companies or individuals who may be able and prepared to

**take on a
sponsorship for an AIDS patient
by donating 100 GBP / 150 EUR /
200 USD or CAD or CHF / 1200 ZAR
regularly every month.**

Smaller amounts
or donations for other projects of the
Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard
are also most welcome!

Please cut out!  and/or copy freely!

Pledge of Sponsorship / Donation

Kindly indicate how you would like to support the patients of the **Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard**:

- I want to **sponsor an AIDS patient** of **Blessed Gérard's Hospice HAART Programme** through a regular monthly donation of
 £100 150 € \$200 200 CAD 200 CHF R1,200.
- I want to support the **Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard** as a **Donor member** through an annual quarterly monthly donation of
- (amount): _____ (currency) _____.

Title (Mr/Mrs/Miss/Dr): _____

First Names: _____

Surname or _____

Company/Society: _____

Date of birth: _____

(use letters, not figures for the month) _____

Postal address: _____

Postal/ZIP Code: _____ Town/City: _____

State/Province: _____ Country: _____

☎ (home) Code _____ No. _____

☎ (work) Code _____ No. _____

Fax Code _____ No. _____

E-mail Address: _____

Homepage URL: http:// _____

Signed at: _____ Date: _____

Signature: _____

Please send this form to the:
Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard
P O Box 440
Mandeni 4490
Republic of South Africa

Fax +27 32 4567962

How You can help us to help:

By joining us

- as an **Active Member**
if you are able and prepared to help in our projects to serve the poor as a volunteer and agree with our principles. In this case, please call us for an interview.
- as a **Donor member**
if you want to support our service financially on a regular basis.
- as a **Spiritual Supporter**
if you want to help us through your prayers regularly.

By a donation towards our charity work.

Financial contributions are most needed.
If you want to donate goods, kindly contact us beforehand to make sure that the donation will be really useful.

By making us a beneficiary in your Last Will and Testament.

By your prayers that God may bless our service and those we serve.

Making a donation



If you live in South Africa:

Blessed Gérard's Care Centre, being a public benefit organisation in terms of section 30 of the Income Tax Act, has also been approved on 2 July 2003 by the South African Revenue Services (SARS) for purposes of section 18A(1)(a) of the Income Tax Act, i.e. donations to Blessed Gérard's Care Centre are tax deductible. [Reference 18/11/13/2777]

This means that now we can issue South African donors with tax receipts for their donations, which they can use for tax deduction from the SARS. **If you are a taxpayer in South Africa and want to utilise this facility, make sure, that you make your donation to "Blessed Gérard's Care Centre" (not to the "Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard"!).** For donations of R500.00 and above we will issue such a receipt automatically.

You may make a donation directly into our banking account:

Name of Account:	Blessed Gérard's Care Centre
Type of account:	Current Account
Bank:	First National Bank
Account number:	529 4004 0349
Branch:	Mandini
Branch code:	220 429

Please ensure that you put your personal details on the deposit or send the information directly to us, so that we can acknowledge and assign your donation properly. The most convenient solution for both parties would be if you organised a stop order on your account, if you want to donate regularly.



If you live in the USA:

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 "Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard"** (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.



If you live in Canada:

Make out a check to the "Order of Malta", **mark it "for the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard"** and send it to:

**Order of Malta
1247 Kilborn Place
Ottawa ON K1H 6K9**

You will receive a Canadian tax receipt for the full amount.



If you live in Great Britain / United Kingdom:

- You may send a cheque:
Any cheques sent must have the payee name: "BASMOM (BBG) Fund" (a fund of BASMOM, Charity No. 227994) and to be sent to this address:
The Hospitaller BASMOM · Mantle Hill · Bellingham · Hexham · Northumberland NE48 2LB
- You may deposit your donation directly into the banking account of the BASMOM and mark it for the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard:

Name of Account:	BASMOM Emergency Fund
Bank:	LloydsTSB
Account number:	00872754
Branch:	Bellingham Branch
Branch code:	(30-94-19)
- In any case, please make a Gift Aid Declaration.
You will find a form on-line at <http://bbg.org.za/giftaid.pdf>

**We wholeheartedly thank
the Benedictine Mission House in the U.S.A.
and the Order of Malta in Canada and the United Kingdom
for their great help of receiving donations on our behalf,
and passing them on to us without taking commission.**