

Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard

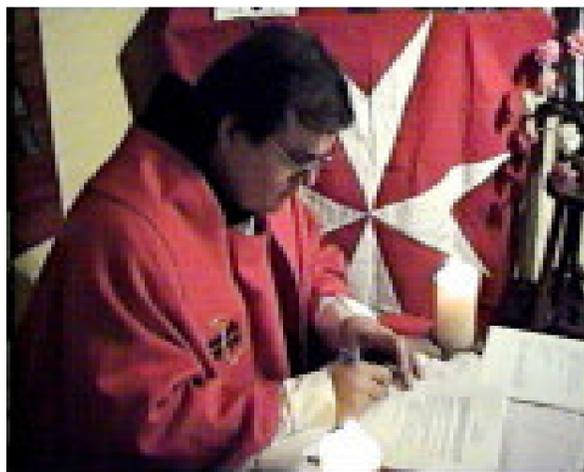


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Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard
P O Box 440 · Mandeni 4490 · South Africa
Phone: +27 (32) 4562743
Fax: +27 (32) 4567962
e-mail: info@bbg.org.za
Homepage: <http://bbg.org.za/>

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.



Foundation on 28 October 1992



Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard

The Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard was founded on 28 October 1992 by Father Gérard T Lagleder O.S.B., Dr Paul Z T Thabethe, Sister Nokuthula M Thabethe, Mr Geoffrey Kalkwarf and Mrs Clare A Kalkwarf.

By the grace of God we were able to develop many relief projects in the 15 years of our history and we could help countless needy people through these:

Today we run
Blessed Gérard's Care Centre:

Blessed Gérard's Hospice and HAART Programme:
We run a Hospice to provide home based care, day care and inpatient care for needy **sick** people, suffering from HIV/AIDS, and train the public in home based care. We provide Highly Active Anti-Retroviral Treatment (HAART) for poor AIDS patients free of charge.

Blessed Gérard's Children's Home:
We look after and give a home to **sick, neglected, abused, malnourished, abandoned and orphaned children.**

Blessed Gérard's Friendship Club:
We organise meetings to enable the **elderly** to get out of their isolation and socialise with others.

Blessed Gérard's HIV/AIDS-Education Programme:
We teach the **public** how to avoid HIV infection and how to live positively with AIDS.

Other Projects of the **Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard:**

Blessed Gérard's Pre-Primary School & Crèche:

We run a Pre-Primary-School & Crèche for **underprivileged children.**

Blessed Gérard's Malnutrition Clinic:

We run a clinic, where we examine, treat and feed **malnourished infants** and teach their parent/carer in proper baby care.

Blessed Gérard's First Aid and Emergency Service: We offer First Aid and assist **people in emergencies.**

Blessed Gérard's Bursary Fund:

We give bursaries to **poor pupils and students** of our local community.

Blessed Gérard's Poor-Sick-Fund:

We help **sick** people from our local community, if they cannot afford urgently needed medical treatment.

Blessed Gérard's Relief Fund (hunger relief / clothing / rebuilding): We help people in our local community in genuine cases of **immediate need.**

Blessed Gérard's Disaster Control & Civil Protection:

We are ready to give medical assistance and care as a relief organisation in case of a **disaster.**



It was a day before Christmas Eve that small little Hawukelani*, almost five months old, was brought in to our hospice by his mother. He had bad diarrhoea, was vomiting continuously and refused to drink properly, so we admitted him to the children's ward. We tried to feed him small amounts of food frequently to prevent him from vomiting again. This took us lots of time and patience. Because we did not have too many children in the ward at the moment, I could give Hawukelani the intensive care he needed.

I began to get involved with him and for him more and more. He was quite weak and we managed to make him recover a bit again. It was a continuous up and down. One day he was well and a few days later his diarrhoea was back and he was vomiting again. Later he improved again. But for the last two weeks he became weaker and weaker. He could hardly eat and drink for the last few days. I realised how this little one grew more and more close to my heart and I gave him more and more time and love. This is what we can give here in abundance.

It is Sunday morning 7 a.m. I enter the children's ward and I notice that Hawukelani is not well at all. His breathing is laboured. I show him to the nurse and she says that he is at a critical stage. I bathe the other babies, but always keep an eye on Hawukelani. I go for breakfast but I have little appetite. My thoughts are rather with Hawukelani. Meanwhile Sister Sheilagh is in the ward and looks after the babies. As I return Sister and Hawukelani are not in the ward any more. I go to the nurses' room, where I find her with Hawukelani on her arm. She is in tears and Father Gerard is there, too. I see that Hawukelani is still alive, but his death seems to be imminent, maybe still today. Sister Sheilagh lays him into my arms and tells me that she is trying to contact his

A day before Christmas Eve

mother. She succeeded and she wanted to come. Meanwhile it is 9:30 a.m. and I go with the dying Hawukelani to church to attend to the service. He is going down continuously and he has hardly left any strength to cry. I saw that he wanted to cry, but he was too weak to do so.

After church I went to the ward and waited for his mother, who arrived a little later. She told me that her entire family was absolutely unaware of Hawukelani's existence and that she used to live on her own with him. It happens quite frequently here that not a single family member wants to have any dealings with a patient as soon as they come to know, that one is HIV-positive or even in the AIDS phase. Both suffer from AIDS, Hawukelani and his mother. That is why she had been shunned by her family, even before her pregnancy was evident and the father also did not want to have anything to do with her any more. She phoned him nevertheless and told him that Hawukelani was about to die. Although he promised to come he failed to do so. Meanwhile it was 11:30 a.m. and Hawukelani became increasingly quiet. The breathing pauses became longer and longer. He became weaker and weaker and looked totally relaxed. His mother and I were in tears and we could do nothing but wait and wait and pray and hope. Hope

that he would be at a better place soon. He breathed his last at 12:10. This was a great pain, because I had loved him so much.

We laid him onto the bed and both of us cried. He looked so peaceful and sweet as he was lying there. Hawukelani's mother probably cried also because she was totally alone now. Both of us were very sad and will miss him a lot.

Our nurse on duty was also very nice to me. She said: "We are about to go out by ambulance to fetch a patient. Come! You drive! You have to get out of here now!" That was really nice of her. Gloria from the laundry also said she sympathised and she always would have noticed with how much love I look after the little ones and when I would one day knock at the pearly gates, the Lord God will say: "Come, Angelika, there are all your babies! Go to them!" It touched me deeply that she said such a thing. I did not feel well for the whole day and I know that it will not be the last time for a child to die here, as a hospice is usually the "last station" of earthly life. If we succeed to make this a dignified experience of love and comfort we have fulfilled our task indeed.

Angelika Müller

* The name Hawukelani (Zulu for "have mercy") is not his real name.



**May the glory and peace of
the incarnate saviour fill
your life in this Christmas
season and on every day
of the New Year 2008!**

Diary of the year 2007

It is an old tradition e.g. in monasteries or mission stations that chronicles are written to record important events, comment on them and conserve memories for all future. We have done this since 2005, but this is not a chronicle in the traditional sense. Therefore we renamed it into "diary" now. Apart from reporting on important events as they happen in chronological order we also insert reports and pictures of our day-by-day work to illustrate the whole spectrum of our activities.

January 2007

2 January 2007: A child is discharged from Blessed Gérard's Children's Home



4 January 2007: Sheryl Wüst from the Hospice Palliative Care Association of South Africa (HPCA) visits us in preparation of the baseline survey by the Council of Health Services Accreditation of Southern Africa (COHSASA).



6 January 2007: Father Gérard received his missionary assignment to South Africa 20 years ago.



7 January 2007: Children from Blessed Gérard's Children's Home on a "game ride" at their Sunday outing to Ballito.

11 January - 7 February 2007: Frà Georg von Lengerke, the German Conventual Chaplain of the Order of Malta, comes to visit us to gain experience of our work through volunteering



in our Hospice and Children's Home.

11 January 2007: Susanne Stauffer attends a HPCA Focus Group Meeting at Highway Hospice in Durban.



14 January 2007: "Mother" Susanne Stauffer and Father Gérard at a Sunday outing with Children of Blessed Gérard's Children's Home

to Umhlanga Rocks.

17 January 2007: "Back to school", also for children of Blessed Gérard's Children's Home.



20 January 2007: Susanne Stauffer celebrates her birthday with "her" children.



21 January 2007: On Sunday outing with children of Blessed Gérard's Children's Home to Ballito.

22 - 23 January 2007: Kath Defillippi, Amra Chakravarti and Carole Immelmann perform the baseline survey of Blessed Gérard's Hospice by the Council of Health Services Accreditation of Southern Africa (COHSASA). Blessed Gérard's Hospice gets high marks for the surveyed items.

24 January 2007: Our Dedicated member and Parish Priest Father Siphso Gamede overseeing the construction of a new church hall in Sundumbili, which will house Blessed Gérard's Malnutrition Clinic again.



24 January 2007: John Krupa, who had been a geriatric patient at Blessed Gérard's Care Centre, is discharged "back home" to Inkamana Abbey.



25 January 2007: Our Hospice Chaplain Father Herfried Holzgassner O.S.B. celebrates his 90th birthday together with our member Father Michael Mayer, who celebrates his 75th birthday.



28 January - 7 February 2007: Carsten Müller (son of Deacon Thomas and Mrs Angelika Müller) and his girlfriend Denise come to visit his parents and us.

28 January 2007: On a Sunday Outing of Children of Blessed Gérard's Children's Home.



February 2007

11 February 2007: Gregory Meyer of Mastercraft Builders comes for a preliminary talk about the planned extensions to Blessed Gérard's Care Centre.

4 - 7 February 2007: Our members Christian Müller (son of Deacon Thomas and Mrs. Angelika Müller) and his girlfriend Anne Giebler come to visit their parents and us.

8 February 2007: Meeting of the Councils of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard and Blessed Gérard's Care Centre.

13 February 2007: Father Gérard attends the quarterly meeting of the Hospice Association of kwaZulu/Natal (HAKZN) in Durban.



18 February 2007: On Sunday Outing with children of Blessed Gérard's Children's Home:



19 February 2007:



Sibusiso who had been with us from the day of his birth - his mother had failed to abort him and threatened to kill him after birth - is discharged from Blessed Gérard's Children's Home. His aunt collected him with the Social Worker.

21 February 2007: Marion Padayachee from TOGA laboratories visits us to discuss a computerised system of ordering blood tests.

26 February 2007: Gregory Mayer of Mastercraft Builders comes for another preliminary talk about the planned extensions to Blessed Gérard's Care Centre.

March 2007

4 March 2007: Real "Flower Power": Children of Blessed Gérard's Children's Home on a Sunday Outing to Durban.



5 March 2007: Sheryl Wüst and Carole Immelmann from HPCA visit us to discuss the further development towards COHSASA accreditation of Blessed Gérard's Hospice.

8 March 2007: Dedicated Members' Meeting of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard



11 March 2007: This is no toothpaste advert, just happy children and their "mother" at a Sunday Outing in Durban.

12 - 15 March 2007: Dr. Mdletshe and others attend a HIV Management Workshop (Adherence Counselling & AVCTT) by the Foundation for Professional Development

13 - 15 March 2007: Armin Küstenbrück, a former student of Fr. Gérard and now a top sports photographer, comes to visit.

15 March 2007: Dedicated Members' Meeting of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard



17 March 2007:
Father Gérard attends a Palliative Care Seminar at Highway Hospice

18 March 2007:
Clare Kalkwarf is posthumously awarded an "honourable mention" by the International Prayer for Peace Day in the U.S.A.: International Peace Award 2007

19 - 20 March 2007:
Father Gérard attends a Leadership Course of HAKZN



21 March 2007:
Father Gérard celebrates his Silver Jubilee of priestly ordination with his monastic community at Inkamana Abbey.

22 March 2007:
Gregory Mayer of Mastercraft Builders comes for another preliminary talk about the planned extensions to Blessed Gérard's Care Centre.

23 March 2007:
Marisa Wilke, the country co-ordinator for South Africa of CRS comes with a photographer to document our work, as they sponsor part of our HAART programme.

25 March 2007: Another two happy chappies: Blessed Gérard's Children's Home Sunday Outing to Ballito.



26 March 2007:
Father Gérard attends a Strategic Planning Meeting of HAKZN at Durban.

April 2007

1 April 2007:
"I scream, you scream: Everybody likes Ice cream!" Sunday Outing of Blessed Gerard's Children's Home are fun.



4 April 2007:
Father Gérard and Frank Franke of "Aviation without borders", a German charity, which donated a 4.7 ton shipment of relief goods, negotiate the import formalities with ITAC in Pretoria, who finally issue the needed permit.

6 April 2007:
First Anniversary of the murder of our co-founder and Vice-President Mrs Clare Ann Kalkwarf D.M.



8 April 2007:
Blessed Gérard's Children's Home makes their Easter Outing to Umgeni River Bird Park in Durban.



Remembering Clare Ann Kalkwarf D.M.



Memorial Service on the 1st anniversary of Clare Kalkwarf's murder



The Administrator of the Diocese of Eshowe, Father Jabulani Ndaba, celebrated a High Mass on 9 April 2007 in memory of Clare Kalkwarf.



We installed a memorial plaque at the church wall above Clare's grave.



and Father Ndaba blessed the grave.

Membership Statistics

(as on 20 December 2007)
889 active members
538 financial supporters
357 spiritual supporters
1784 members in total

Lindani



Lindani*, a small girl, was brought to us by her mother. She had the "usual" symptoms, like diarrhoea and vomiting. The little one does not look well and is quite weak. Apart from that her skin is damaged all over.



These are some of the typical symptoms which come with HIV-infection as opportunistic diseases.

It is true, her mother suffers from AIDS and Lindani is also HIV-positive. Because her mother is still working and has nobody to look after the little one she requests to admit Lindani temporarily to our children's home when she will have improved. For the time being she will stay at the hospice. Lindani's mother's blood tests were so bad that she has to start antiretroviral treatment a few months later. Lindani is steadily improving so that his mother came to take him home before Christmas.

It is only a few days later that she returns him with the same symptoms as last time. Lindani remembers us and cries initially when her mother leaves, but we can console her quickly. We try to sort out her skin problems and her diarrhoea again and we succeed after some time. Afterwards she is well and starts learning to walk, to eat on her own and we have lots of fun together. Sometimes she is overdoing things and falls asleep spontaneously no matter where she is and what may be going on around her.

Her condition though continuously goes up and down. When she was worse and did not want to eat and drink properly, we transferred her to Stanger Hospital. The doctors took her blood to check the CD4 count. If this is below 200/mm³ ARV treatment has to be started. Thank God her CD4 count was still so high, that she had no need for antiretroviral treatment yet. The hospital still wanted to admit her for the time being and we brought her to the paediatric ward. I removed her clothes and she was given a small white hospital shirt. She looked like a little angel as she was sitting there in her little bed with the little white shirt. It nearly broke my heart to leave this little angel there and not to take her along again.

Meanwhile she grows and I see her when her mother comes for her regular check ups, as she is taking Lindani along. Both of us rejoice every time when we meet again.



These regular check ups are very important for patients on antiretroviral treatment. The doctor can see whether or not the patient has any adverse drug reactions or if there may be any other problems. Lindani's blood count is still so high that she is not in need of ARVs yet.

We also check her blood regularly and if she gets to the stage when she will need the treatment she will also get it and thus have a chance to live a long and relatively normal life with AIDS.

Angelika Müller

* Lindani (Zulu for "Wait!") is not her real name, but Lindani's mother gave explicit permission to tell their story and to use her pictures.

"Christmas" in April

Not a phantasm through Aviation without borders
**10 - 12 April 2007: Official hand over of a playground
 and a large consignment of other relief goods for our work.**

Herbert Becker (Chairman of the Board of Auditors for the German premium league soccer club "Eintracht Frankfurt", who had donated the gifts for his 70th birthday on 4 January 2007 to "Aviation without borders" to buy a playground for Blessed Gérard's Children's Home), Frank Franke (Vice-President and CEO of "Aviation without borders"), Thorsten Jany (technician of "Menz Holz" the manufacturer of the playground equipment), Frank Weinert (TV journalist of "Hessischer Rundfunk") and Cornelia Merkel (Radio journalist of "Süd-West-Rundfunk") visit Mandeni to see our work and the area which we serve and install and officially hand over the playground and a large consignment of other relief goods for our work. We are most grateful for this enormous support and all the generosity and friendship which stands behind this wonderful charitable act.

Arrival of 4.7 tons of Relief goods from Aviation without borders Germany



Herbert Becker installed the playground equipment



Unloading



personally with the help of Thorsten Jany (a technician of "Menz Holz" the manufacturer of the playground equipment) and our children.



Our children sang a German song at the official hand over of the playground.



Cornelia Merkel (Radio journalist of "Süd-West-Rundfunk") interviewing our Deacon Thomas Müller and



Frank Franke (Vice-President and CEO of "Aviation without borders")



Becker (Eintracht Frankfurt)

Frank Weinert (TV journalist of "Hessischer Rundfunk") filming Herbert Becker

From left to right: Thorsten Jany (Menz Holz), Father Gérard (Blessed Gerard's Children's Home), Cornelia Merkel (SWR), Frank Weinert (HR), Frank Franke (Aviation without borders) and Herbert



Joy and fun and happiness at the handover of bicycles, clothing and toys.

Herbert Becker with a paediatric patient of Blessed Gérard's Hospice



We celebrated Herbert Becker's 70th birthday again at the farewell party for our dear guests.

Thank you, Herbert, you are a world champion of charity!

Thank you, Frank, you have a heart without borders!

April 2007 (continued)



(Magdalena, Dumisile, Lethiwe, Sipho, Evander, Tamia, Jamie and Jonade) were baptised.



15 April 2007: Eight children of Blessed Gérard's Children's Home

15 April - 1 June 2007: Peter McCann from the U.K. comes to help as a volunteer at Blessed Gérard's Care Centre.



23 - 25 April 2007:



The director of the Mission Department of the Diocese of Regensburg, Hagen Horoba, pays us a visit.

May 2007

3 May - 4 June 2007: Father Gérard goes overseas to join the British Association of the Order of Malta at the SMOM Lourdes Pilgrimage (4 - 10 May)



8 May 2007: During the Lourdes pilgrimage our honorary dedicated member Miss Lillian Molloy is decorated with the Cross of Merit



with Crown of the Order of Malta, awarded by the grandmaster of the Order of Malta for her special merits in supporting the Brotherhood of Blessed Gerard - and conferred by the president of the British Association of the Order of Malta Prince zu Loewenstein.

Visiting our benefactors in the U.K.:

The Pauline bookshop at Newcastle Cathedral which had donated valuable media for religious education.



12 May 2007: Holy Mass and get together with our benefactors John Crook and the Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish at Whitley Bay who made supporting us their Justice & Peace parish project.



13 May 2007: Services at Newcastle Cathedral

14 May 2007: A big and a little Benedictine at Newcastle: Basil Cardinal Hume (monument) and Fr. Gerard



Fr Gérard visits our members Fra Mathew Festing, the Grand Prior of the Grand Priory of England of the Order of Malta and Peter Loyd, the Hospitaller of the British Association of the Order of Malta and his wife.



15 May 2007: It was a great privilege that Fr. Gerard could hold the original book of hours of Blessed Adrian Fortescue in his own hands as a guest of the Grand Prior Fra Mathew.

Fra Mathew and Lillian Molloy show Fr. Gérard a state of the art rehabilitation facility of the St. John Care Trust.



Visiting family and friends in Germany (17 - 27 May):

19 May 2007: Confirmation of Fr. Gérard's niece Elisabeth.

20 May 2007: First Holy Communion of Fr. Gérard's nephew Andreas.

20 May 2007: May devotion with sermon at Manching



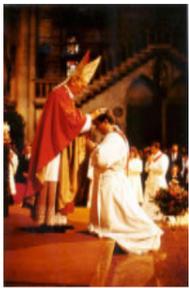
Awarding meritorious supporters of our work with decorations, which the Grand Master of the Order of Malta has conferred onto them:
Award Ceremony at Neuburg on 22 May 2007:
The "Cross pro piis meritis" of the "Order pro merito

Melitensi" to Dean Vitus Wengert of Neuburg the Silver Medal of the "Order pro merito Melitensi" to Mr Johannes Lagleder, Mrs Albertine and Mr Hans Sporer of Neuburg.



Award Ceremony at Steinbach on 26 May 2007:

the "Cross pro piis meritis" of the "Order pro merito Melitensi" to Father Georg Weinzierl of Steinbach.



27 May 2007:
Celebration of his Silver Jubilee of Priestly Ordination with his home parish on Pentecost Sunday,

Holy Mass at Niedermünsterkirche in Regensburg

afterwards reception at Ulrichshaus in Prinzenweg in Regensburg



From 28 May - 2 June he joined his ordination class for a jubilee tour to East Germany marking their 25th anniversary of priestly ordination.

June 2007

7 June 2007:
Meeting of the Councils of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard and Blessed Gérard's Care Centre: Father Gerard resigned from his office as Administrator of Goods of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gerard. Susanne Stauffer is elected to take over the financial management of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard.



10 June 2007:
Father Gerard with Bongani, Siphon and Nthuthuko from Blessed Gerard's Children's Home at an outing in Ballito.

18 - 26 June 2007:
Visit (retreat/ volunteering/ sightseeing) of fifteen delegates of Malteser Hilfsdienst Germany.



24 June 2007:
Solemnity of St. John the Baptist.
(See article further down!)

28 June 2007:
Farewell from our old "Secondary Emergency Vehicle" (SEV),



which we had traded in when we bought our new "Home Care Vehicle" (HCV).

July 2007



1 July 2007:
Children of Blessed Gerard's Children's Home visit our member Fr. Albert Herold in Mtunzini as their Sunday outing.

4 July 2007:
Sr. Marisa Wilke from CRS comes to help us with PEPFAR statistics

6 July 2007:
Official handover of the building site to construct a new HAART Clinic and extensions to Blessed Gérard's Children's Home to Mastercraft.

9 July 2007:
Roselyn from Toga Laboratories comes to discuss their laboratory services for our HAART Programme with us.

10 July 2007:
Visit by Social Worker Mrs. Helma Lintvelt



11 July 2007:
Our Dedicated Member Yvonne Renaud and her husband Louis visit us.

16 July 2007:
Information about our work for students of the Medical School



17 July - 16 August 2007:
Visit of Angelika Müller's sister Dagmar Schmidt.

18 July 2007: Marcelle Joubert from HPCA comes to help us with Hospice statistics.

19 July 2007:
Dedicated Members' Meeting of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard

25 July 2007:
Sr. Liz and Fr. Gérard attend a training session of the S.A. HIV Clinicians' Society about Cancers in HIV/AIDS at Nelson Mandela Medical School in Durban.

Current statistics for 2007

(as at 19 December 2007):

HIV-infected patients currently in care	421
HIV-infected patients seen in our HAART Clinic per month	202
AIDS-patients specially counselled per month	60
AIDS-patients currently on antiretroviral treatment (HAART)	128
new patients in home care	89
home care visits made	1213
new inpatients in the hospice	386
outpatient visits	1995
children in the children's home	39
children in our pre-primary school & creche	42
children and youth were granted bursaries	60

Nyeken

It is Wednesday, the 9th of May. We get a phone call requesting a home visit. This is nothing unusual, as we get frequent calls from relatives or neighbours telling us there is somebody sick in their family or neighbourhood. We go there and assess what the best way of caring for the patient may be. We decide on the spot whether or not we take him along for admission at the Care Centre or if he should be brought to the primary health care clinic or to hospital. This call came from a lady whose niece seems to be in a bad state of health. Therefore we go there to examine the child. As we arrived we found Nyeken*, an approximately four year old girl totally withdrawn lying on a lounge suite with an opened nappy. The aunt told us the child had been suffering from diarrhoea for a long time and that she had stopped walking about a week ago. Nyeken lived with her aunt and uncle, as both parents had passed away. The Nurse wrote down all particulars and then we took Nyeken with us to the Care Centre.



She appeared very disturbed, did not walk and could not eat properly. When I bathed her and wanted to wash her there were big problems, as she refused to sit in the water and to be washed, especially not between her legs. When I dried her and applied body lotion I realised that there was

something wrong and notified our nurse. She examined the little one and agreed with me. Then she called our doctor who also examined the child and diagnosed that somebody had interfered with her. The district surgeon was consulted and stated that she had not been raped, but the fact that she was so perturbed and had stopped to walk and to talk is still a clear indication that Nyeken had been abused. The police was content with the district surgeon's certificate and did not initiate criminal investigations probably for lack of evidence.

Our Care Centre has always been open not only for terminal patients, but also for people who otherwise would not get help and therefore it was a matter of course for us that she could stay with us for the time being. We tried to make the little one feel comfortable with us so that she may realise that she has no reason to be afraid. She always forced such large amounts of food into her mouth that she could hardly chew it and meanwhile she had both hands full of food again to keep stuffing into her mouth as much as she could. That was very strange. At the daily hygiene I tried teaching her that she could do this herself, especially between her legs where she would not allow anybody to come close to her.

After a few days we made the first attempts to walk again. That was very strenuous for her and would not be successful at all without assistance. Nevertheless we diligently made our exercises, as she wanted to run around in the room and on the patio like the other children as well.

After a few weeks there was evidence of success, at least as far as walking is concerned. Feeding was still problematic and she still totally refused to talk. She played with the other children, came for a cuddle like the others but somehow she still appeared very perturbed. She continued making good progress in walking, eating and playing with the other children.



It was weeks later that we could discharge Nyeken, after she had improved significantly and he have to trust that the consulted social worker will have remedied the environment to such an extent, that she will be fine in all future.

Angelika Müller

Solemnity of Saint John the Baptist

The highlight of the year 2007

Investiture of the new Dedicated members

Father Siphon Titus Gamede, Miss Susanne Stauffer and Deacon Thomas Müller

Our statutes read in No. 5.1.1.:

"The Dedicated Members of the Brotherhood devote themselves with all their heart, with all their soul and with all their strength (cf. Dtn 6.5) to Jesus Christ and his body, the church (cf. 1 Cor 12.27), by striving to be the yeast (cf. Gal 5.9) of God's love in their entire life as members of their family, community, at their work and in their leisure time. Over and above this, their special task is to initiate, facilitate, guide, support and bear responsibility for the activities of the Brotherhood. For the Dedicated Membership only baptised and confirmed members of the Roman Catholic Church qualify, who are known for their outstanding character, loyalty to the Church and good Christian life. Cessation of the membership in the Church automatically terminates the Dedicated Membership in the Brotherhood."

Father Gamede, Miss Stauffer and Deacon Müller made their private promise:



Then they signed their promise at the altar.

"Receive this cape as the sign of your acceptance as a Dedicated Member into the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard. Live in such a way that, with the help of the mother of God, St. John the Baptist and Blessed Gérard, you may more and more put on Christ, who redeemed us by his blood, for the glory of the Trinity and for the service of the Church and of your neighbour. Amen."



Abbot Godfrey gave them a special blessing:
"May almighty God bless you with his gentle kindness and give you the vision of his saving wisdom. Amen. May he continue to nourish you with the teaching of faith and enable you to remain steadfast in doing what is right. Amen. May he turn your steps always toward him and lead you along the pathway of peace and charity. Amen. And may almighty God bless you all, the + Father, and the + Son, and the + Holy Spirit. Amen."



*"Lord Jesus Christ! In your Grace you have called me to serve you in the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard. I ask you at the intercession of our patron saints Mary, the Blessed Virgin and Mother of God, St. John the Baptist and the founder of the Order of St. John, Blessed Gérard Tonque: Give me the courage, to live the faith in you as a convincing example and to meet our neighbour in charity, especially the needy, aged, disabled, sick and injured. Give me the needed strength, to live as an upright Christian selflessly in the spirit of your Gospel according to this resolution, to the honour of God, for the peace in the world and the welfare of our society. **I hereby promise to protect the faith and to serve the poor of our Lord Jesus Christ by devoting myself to the apostolate of the Catholic Church in Works of Charity as a Dedicated member of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard. I devote myself with all my heart, with all my soul and with all my strength to Jesus Christ and his body, the Church. I will strive to be the yeast of God's love in my entire life as a member of my family, at my work and in my leisure time. May God help me, guide me and strengthen me to fulfil what he has called me to. Amen."***

Abbot Godfrey blessed the capes for the new dedicated members:

"God uses signs to express his extraordinary mercy toward us. We also use signs to express our gratitude, declare our willingness to serve God, and profess to be resolved to live up to our baptismal consecration. This cape is a sign of entering the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard as a Dedicated Member. The cape thus expresses the intention of living in the spirit of that association. That intention renews our baptismal resolve to put on Christ with the help of Mary, whose own greatest desire is that we become more like Christ in praise of the Trinity, until, dressed for the wedding feast, we reach our home in heaven. Almighty God, bless + these capes and give those who wear them the grace to live up to the promise they have made to implement the beatitudes of the Sermon on the Mount by protecting the faith and serving the poor. This we ask through Christ our Lord. Amen."

Prayer for the Dedicated Members:

"O God, the author and perfecter of all holiness, you call all who are reborn of water and the Holy Spirit to the fullness of the Christian life and the perfection of charity. Look with kindness on those who devoutly received this cape of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard. As long as they live, let them become sharers in the image of Christ your Son and, after they have fulfilled their mission on earth with the help of Mary, the Virgin Mother, Blessed Gérard and all the Saints receive them into the joy of your heavenly home. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen."

"Our brotherhood will be everlasting, because the ground which this plant is rooted in, is the misery of the world - and because, God willing, there will always be people, who want to work towards the alleviation of these sufferings and make this misery more bearable."

Blessed Gérard



The dedicated members Dr. and Sister Thabette invested the new dedicated members with the cape while Father Gerard said:



Finally the other dedicated members welcomed the new ones into their ranks.

Solemnity of Saint John the Baptist

Conferral of the "Cross pro piis meritis"

His Most Eminent Highness Fra Andrew Bertie, the Prince and Grand Master of the Sovereign Military and Hospitaller Order of St. John of Jerusalem, of Rhodes and of Malta (= Order of Malta) had decorated the Most Reverend Abbot Godfrey Sieber O.S.B. with the Cross for pious merits of the Order of Merit of the Order of Malta in acknowledgement of his great support of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard.



At the occasion of St. John's Feast Wilderich Graf von Spies from the German Association of the Order of Malta conferred the Cross onto Abbot Godfrey.

Abbot Godfrey was really moved by this honour and expressed his thanks with moving words.

Fr. Gérard's Silver Jubilee of priestly ordination

Father Gérard has been ordained a priest on 26th June 1982 at Regensburg Cathedral in Germany by Bishop Dr. Rudolf Graber.



At the occasion of the Solemnity of St. John the Baptist Father Gérard thanked God with his Abbot Godfrey Sieber, the community of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard and the faithful of St. Anthony's Parish in Mandeni for the grace of his priestly vocation.

"We thank you for counting us worthy to stand in your presence and serve you."



Blessed Gérard's Hospice

We help, no matter what ...

Entertainment



Hundreds of members, parishioners and friends had come to celebrate with us.



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



Zulu dancers and singers in their traditional tribal outfit
Children of Blessed Gerard's Pre-



Primary School & Crèche
A joint choir from St. Benedict's Catholic Church in



Sundumbili and Malteser Hilfsdienst from Germany

Hope and our beaming Father



We congratulate our Registered Nurse Sister Liz Coetzer for having passed a Palliative Care Course

She writes:

This year, 2007, I was given an opportunity to study. The course was a six months Palliative Care course for nurses, with an exam in October 2007. I went for weekly lectures at Highway Hospice in Durban. In between the lectures, I had a series of practicals which had to be completed before the exam, and a case study which had to be completed within four months.

The practicals were broken up thus:

- 36 hours day shift inpatient care.
- 12 hours night shift inpatient care
- 18 hours paediatric inpatient care
- 36 hours home based care
- 4 hours oncology
- 4 hours at a funeral home
- 4 hours stoma care and wound care

Of course, life goes on, and I still had to do my normal day to day job, taking care of my patients, and any problems they presented.

It was a busy schedule, but with lots of patience and help from Father Gérard and the help of my work-mates, I was able to cope very well.

I need to say thank you to all my work mates and Father Gérard, because without their encouragement and support, I would not be able to say with joy (and some relief) Hooray! I passed!!

Liz Coetzer

Accumulative statistics (1992 – 2007) (as at 19 December 2007)

Patients

- 2183 inpatients
- 1670 home patients
- 1492 patients transported
- 1064 patients counselled
- 608 patients transferred
- 600 day- and outpatients
- 515 HAART patients
- 411 paediatric patients
- 297 patients were administered First Aid
- 243 emergency patients
- 255 social cases

Training

- 497 home carers and caregivers
- 204 First Aiders
- 16 therapeutic counsellors for Highly Active Anti-Retroviral Therapy (HAART)
- 275 seamstresses (basic training)
- 188 seamstresses (intermediate training)
- 3 seamstresses (advanced training)

Transport: We have driven more than 500.000 km with our vehicles to render our services.

Cost: We have raised and spent close to 35 Million Rand to look after those entrusted into our care.

We thank all our supporters and members wholeheartedly for making all this possible.

Nothando's birth

Another "first" in our Care Centre:
**Nothando was born
in our treatment room.**

**On the 26th of June 2007 at 9:30 a.m.
we had an emergency delivery.**

We admitted a lady, 20 years of age, who was brought in to us by car through her family members. They had tried to bring her to Sundumbili Clinic and later to Mandeni Clinic, but they were sent away from there because there was a national strike of nurses on the go and they refused to help her no matter how urgently she needed help. As she arrived here the birth was really imminent. It has always been our policy that we would send nobody away who needs our help and who we are able to help. The doctor of Blessed Gerard's Hospice, the Sister on duty, who is a midwife as well and a therapeutic counsellor and caregiver immediately came to her aid.



The mother gave birth to a beautiful baby girl at 9:45 a.m. and she named her Nothando (Zulu for "the loving one"). Nothando weighed 3.4 kg.

Unfortunately many people lost their lives during the nurses strike because the nurses were forced into refusing their service delivery and most government hospitals had to close down. In our district Hospital in Stanger the nurses walked out of the hospital - leaving babies unattended in incubators - and the doctors were left alone with the patients and they had to nurse and feed and bathe them - maybe quite an eye-opening exercise of holistic care. When Stanger Hospital was forced to close down the doctors phoned us from their private cell phones and urged us to accept those patients who they could not discharge home and although we had primarily been asked to accept just a few of them, but then a few more and another few and so on and our wards were soon filled to capacity (thank God our inpatient unit being the largest inpatient unit of any hospice in South Africa has 40 beds!) with very sick patients who nobody else was prepared to look after but us. We are proud that we could help out and many of the patients could later be discharged home, having improved under our care and only a few were transferred back to Stanger Hospital weeks later when the strike had been over.

**That explains in another way
what we mean with our slogan
"Blessed Gerard's Hospice -
We care, no matter what..."**

Sthembile Masuku and Father Gérard

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.

Address: P O Box 440
Mandeni 4490
Republic of South Africa

Phone +27 32 4562743
Fax +27 32 4567962
E-mail info@bbg.org.za
URL http://bbg.org.za/

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

Blessed Gérard's Children's Home Blessed Gérard's Hospice HAART Programme

We need your support!

Blessed Gérard's Children's Home

looks after and gives a home to orphaned, sick, abandoned, formerly neglected, abused, malnourished and physically and mentally challenged children since 2000.

Blessed Gérard's Children's Home

is currently full to its capacity of 40 places. Up to eight children have to share a bed room (i.e. in the babies' room). We are constructing an extension to enable us to provide double-bed-rooms for our older (secondary school age) children in a family-type setup, where they can grow up as they would in a real family getting introduced to "real life" by participating in cleaning, shopping, cooking, washing dishes, washing and ironing their laundry etc. This will increase our capacity by 10 places. A second extension will provide a larger dining room, play room and study room for the younger children.

We would love to build a third extension providing 24 more places (for primary school age children), but whether or not we can do this will depend on the success of our fundraising.

Blessed Gérard's Hospice HAART Programme

provides Highly Active Anti Retroviral Therapy (HAART) for poor AIDS patients free of charge since 2003.

Blessed Gérard's Hospice HAART Programme

used the facilities of the Inpatient unit of Blessed Gérard's Hospice until now. We are constructing a new HAART Clinic to create more privacy for our AIDS patients and better consulting rooms for our doctor and nurse and safe storage for the antiretroviral medication.



Planned construction work:

(commenced on 6 July 2007)

1. New HAART Clinic
 2. Administration & staff accommodation
 3. Children's Home Extension No. 1
 4. Kitchen/Pantry Extension
 5. Store Room
 6. Children's Home Extension No. 2
(Dining room, play room, study room)
- Above 5 and 6: Children's Home Extension No. 3



Construction progress:

Photo from 6 December 2007

1. New HAART Clinic: complete, no furniture yet
 2. Administration & staff accommodation: under construction
 3. Children's Home Extension No. 1: complete
 4. Kitchen/Pantry Extension: complete
 5. Store Room: under construction
 6. Children's Home Extension No. 2 (Dining room, play room, study room): under construction
- Above 5 and 6: Children's Home Extension No. 3: under construction

**We depend entirely on fundraising
to finance our work and ask you
to support us generously!**

August 2007

1 August 2007:

Johan Viljoen from the SACBC AIDS desk comes to visit our HAART Programme.

2 August 2007:

Our member Sr. Agnes Grasböck from Mariannhill Convent visits us with four sisters from Austria.

2 August 2007:

Meeting of the Councils of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard and Blessed Gérard's Care Centre.

4 August 2007:

Desiree from Mandeni, who will be a Rotary Exchange Student going overseas, wanting to promote our cause in her host country, comes to get first hand information about our work.

8 August 2007:

Helma Lintvelt, Susanne Stauffer and Fr. Gérard go to the Magistrate's Court in Mtunzini, which places four of the children staying in our Children's Home officially into our care.

14 - 19 August 2007:

Sister Liz Coetzer and Fr. Gérard attend the annual AIDS Relief ART Conference in Vanderbijlpark.

16 August 2007:

Dedicated Members' Meeting of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard



annual Diocesan pilgrimage to Fatima (in South Africa)

18 - 19 August 2007:
Blessed Gérard's First Aid & Emergency Service provides First Aid at the

24 August 2007:
Our new ambulance is delivered



from the U.K. come and volunteer at Blessed Gérard's Care Centre.

26 August
- 25 September 2007:
Mrs & Mrs Woodhouse



28 August 2007:

Fr. Gérard attended the quarterly meeting of the HAKZN in Durban.



28 August 2007:
Sibusiso (=Benedict) Clemens was the name that we have chosen for a newborn baby boy, who had been abandoned and referred to us by the government social workers.

28 August 2007:
Our new Children's Home Bus "Winnie two" is delivered



30 August 2007:

Johan Viljoen from the SACBC AIDS desk comes to visit our HAART Programme.



**Blessed Gérard's
Children's Home**

**Caring
without borders**

September 2007

2 September

- 29 November 2007:

Harry Hine, a registered nurse and paramedic from Germany, comes to us to do practical training for his study as a social worker.



3 September 2007:

Our Sipho Qeda from Blessed Gerard's Children's Home passes away at Stanger Hospital after long sickness. (See article in right column!)

6 September 2007:

Our Hospice chaplain Father Herfried Holzgassner O.S.B. dies in hospital in Ballito after he had suffered a massive stroke the day before. (See article further down!)

7 September 2007:

We celebrate the Funeral Mass for Sipho Qeda from our Children's Home at Blessed Gerard's Church, then we bury him at the cemetery of Inkamana Abbey.

10 September 2007:

Our Hospice Chaplain Father Herfried Holzgassner O.S.B. is buried at Inkamana Abbey.

15 - 29 September 2007:

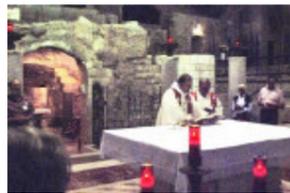
Fr. Gérard teaches a HAART Information course to prepare patients and their helpers for antiretroviral treatment.



18 September 2007: Marcelle Joubert from HPCA visits us to help us with Hospice statistics.

20 September 2007:

Dedicated Members' Meeting of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard



29 September - 10 October 2007: Fr. Gérard joins the SMOM Holy Land Pilgrimage. He published his photos at <http://gtl.meon.net/>

October 2007

11 October 2007:

Meeting of the Councils of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard and Blessed Gérard's Care Centre.

14 October 2007:

Blessed Gérard's Feast (See report further down!)

18 October 2007: Social Worker Mrs. Helma Lintvelt

visits Blessed Gérard's Children's Home to discuss the official placement of children resident at the home through the Children's Court.

20 October - 3 November 2007: Fr. Gérard teaches a

HAART Information course to prepare patients and their helpers for antiretroviral treatment.

23 October - 6 November 2007: Sister Hanna Stadler

from Wiesbaden/Germany, who found her vocation to work in palliative nursing when she was helping in Blessed Gerard's Hospice as an overseas volunteer in 2004/2005, comes back to us for a visit.



28 October 2007: 15th anniversary of the foundation of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard (celebration on 14 October!)

30 October 2007: Wiseman Zulu attends a meeting at kwaDukuza to prepare the foundation of a District AIDS Council for the Ilembe district.

A gift from heaven

Siphosenkosi

was his name.

That is Zulu and means "Gift of the Lord" and we called him shortly "Sipho".



Sipho came to us on 2nd October 2003 one-and-a-half years old. The social worker of Stanger Hospital looked for a place for an

HIV positive orphan suffering from tuberculosis. We accepted him of course. The mother was unknown and the father did not care about his son. Later we heard that he had passed away from AIDS.



It took a long time to treat his tuberculosis and he had terrible skin problems at the beginning. Later he recovered through the treatment of his opportunistic infections, through good nutrition and lots of tender loving care which we could give to him.

He continuously gained new strength and was soon discharged from our hospice and then he lived in our children's home under the same roof.



2004

He developed quite well and grew up like any other child. He only was always quite unobtrusive and a bit shy.

Christmas 2004 with Susanne Stauffer

2005



8 July 2005 with Gabi Rauecker



31 Oct 2005



29 Nov 2005

2006



27 August 2006



6 September 2006 with Angelika Müller



15 October 2006

2007

It was in January 2007 that Sipho was ready to go to pre-primary school. He thoroughly enjoyed this.



15th March 2007



21st June 2007 with Max Rauecker

Angelika Müller reports:

11th July 2007: It is a totally normal work day for me. I start my day at 6:45 a.m. with the nursing conference. Then I go to the children's ward and check how "my" children are feeling as I had been off duty for two days. Sipho is there.



Sipho is now five years old. He is not feeling so well. Therefore he is supposed to recover here in the hospice for a few days and regain his strength.

Well, I go to his bed and greet him. He seems to be happy, as he knows me and this is not the first time that he is admitted to the hospice and I had been helping in the children's home before. Therefore we are used to one another.

Then I start the daily morning routine of hygiene. I am lucky that my paediatric ward has a bathroom with a bath tub, not just a shower. Thus all children can have a bath to begin with. That usually takes quite some time as the little ones absolutely love bathing and especially to play in the tub. That is what they may and should do. Afterwards there is breakfast time and Sipho also eats a little bit.

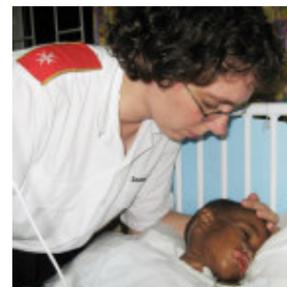
Meanwhile Father Gerard tries all in his power to enable Sipho to receive antiretroviral treatment to improve his quality of life in this way. This is not really easy for legal reasons.

The following weeks are a permanent up and down. One day he is a bit better. That is when he eats and drinks and we can play or he draws something. There are other days when he feels bad again, has difficulties swallowing his medication and refuses to eat and drink. As his health does not improve any more our doctor decides to transfer him to hospital.



Sister Sheilagh and I go with him to Stanger Hospital. It is very crowded there as usual and because the doctors are at breakfast at the moment we have to wait. Finally a very nice doctor is coming and we tell her everything. She examines Sipho and takes blood and we have to wait again (for the results). When the

results lastly arrive another doctor examines Sipho again. Then they tell us that they will admit Sipho for the time being and that his prognosis would not be very well. First he gets an intravenous infusion and is transferred to the paediatric ward. We go back to the Care Centre.



Susanne Stauffer and Father Gerard visit Sipho every evening at the Hospital and look how he is doing. Unfortunately his state of health deteriorates progressively and it does not look good. He keeps uttering three wishes: He asks for

sweets, water and to sit on our laps. We gladly fulfilled these last wishes.

Father Gerard finally jumped all hurdles through the assistance of Mandeni's Social Worker, our member Helma Lintvelt, and was granted legal guardianship by the children's court in Mtunzini, which enables him to agree to putting Sipho onto antiretroviral treatment, as this is not possible without consent of the legal guardian, of course. Unfortunately this came too late for him. He died on 3rd September 2007 only two days after he had started receiving antiretroviral treatment.



Our last pictures of Sipho on 1st

September 2007, two days before he died.



Blessed Gérard's Feast - 14 October 2007

Festive High Mass

The occasion of the 15th anniversary of the foundation of Blessed Gérard was the reason to thank God deeply for all his grace of sustaining our work over the years.



Father Gérard said in his sermon:

"Blessed Gérard most probably came from Scala next to Amalfi in Southern Italy. He might have joined the Benedictine Abbey of Cava dei Tirreni which commissioned him to go to the Holy Land, where merchants from Amalfi had established the Abbey of Santa Maria Latina in Jerusalem (which is today the Church of the Redeemer). Next to the church and abbey there was a guest house in the area which today is called "Muristan" (Persian for "hospital"). The guesthouse was in fact a hospital, which in the oldest known manuscripts is referred to as "hospitale iherusalem", the Hospital of Jerusalem. It was in 1099 that Blessed Gérard established a group of helpers, a nursing brotherhood, to look after the sick, when many knights came to Jerusalem with the first crusade. Many of these laid down their armour and took on the brotherhood uniform. Pope Paschalis II. acknowledged this Brotherhood of St. John on 15th February 1113 as an independent religious order, creating the first hospital order of the church, which to this day is still the largest one. Blessed Gérard died on the 3rd September 1120.

Blessed Raymond du Puy succeeded Blessed Gérard and wrote the Rule of the Order of St. John. This rule and the way how it was put into action showed that holistic care is not an invention of modern times, but was already practised in these early days:

Pastoral Care:

The patient was to be treated like the Lord "quasi dominus" and a priest would attend to him at admission even before he was transferred to the ward.

Nursing Care:

The hospital provided one bed for one patient unlike other hospitals in these times where more than one patient had to share one bed. The patients were fed from silver plates (not wooden plates for hygienic reasons) before the personnel would eat.

Medical Care:

The Medical Care was the state of the art care in this time influenced by the Arabic medicine which was far superior to the European medicine in those days. Long before disinfection was invented they successfully used incense as an airborne disinfectant.

In 1187 all Christians were expelled from Jerusalem. The hospital carried on for some time, but was later destroyed.

When I first came to Jerusalem in 1994 I felt like walking over the graveyard of history. All glory (of Blessed Gérard's Hospital) had disappeared, the only remainder is the Church of St. John, but it is known to be always locked. This time during my second pilgrimage to the Holy Land, on 5th October 2007, I got inside. I stayed at that holy place, where the first members of the Brotherhood of St. John pronounced their religious vows to make them professed members of the Order.



Meanwhile the Order had spread all over Europe and established many hospitals. Today the Order has branches, organisations and institutions in most countries all over the globe and **we are proud to be part of it as we celebrate the 15th anniversary of our foundation. May our patron saint Blessed Gérard always inspire us to walk in his footsteps courageously.**



After the sermon Father Gérard blessed the medals for our new members

and the Dedicated Members presented the new members (including Harry Hine in the photo) with the medal.



Our new members received a special blessing from Father Gérard

and Holy Mass continued.



After Holy Mass Deacon Thomas Müller blessed our new ambulance, home care vehicle and Children's bus.

Anniversary Function commemorating 15 years of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard

Father Gérard said in his speech:



"15 years ago, on the 28th of October 1992, our Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard was founded by Dr. and Mrs. Thabethe, Mr. and Mrs. Kalkwarf and myself. The foundation intended to revitalise the original spirit of the Brotherhood of St. John founded by Blessed Gérard.

The Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard was established to create an instrument to look after neglected sick people in the Mandeni area, i.e. in the areas of Mandeni and Mangete Parish. All projects were established as a specific answer to the specific problems in the Mandeni area.

We could brag with impressive statistics, but more important than figures are the people:

We thank the **active and dedicated members**, who have done all the work.

We thank the **financial supporters and donors**, who have financed all our activities. Many of these donations were the cents of the poor widow, to talk in biblical terms.

We thank the **spiritual supporters**, who have accompanied us with their most valuable prayers.

We thank the **patients**, who have entrusted themselves into our care and represented Christ to us.

We thank **other organisations**, which we are networking with, especially the Most Venerable Order of St. John, the Hospice and Palliative Care Association of South

There are many people who die in our hospice, including children, but Siphon was the first child from our children's home, who died. It was a matter of course that we held the funeral service on 7th September 2007 with the whole community of the Children's Home. All children and the caregivers were there, when Father Gérard celebrated the requiem mass at Blessed Gerard's Church.

All children were invited after the sermon to write down a farewell note for Siphon and to lay the papers down at his picture next to the coffin.



Susanne Stauffer lit a candle at the Easter Candle for every note that was laid down and placed it round a red heart next to

the coffin as a symbol for the love which unites us with Siphon and God.

May perpetual light shine upon him!



All of us went together with several vehicles to the grave yard of Inkamana Abbey where Father Gérard buried him.

Father Herfried Holzgassner R.I.P. Our Hospice Chaplain Father Herfried (Anton) Holzgassner O.S.B. died on 6th September 2007 at 0:30 a.m. in Ballito's Hospital.

Father Herfried had prepared everything for Holy Mass at Blessed Gérard's Church on 5th September 2007 before 7° a.m. when he went to our dining room and got himself something for breakfast and went to his flat. When he did not arrive for Holy Mass at 7:30 a.m. we checked his flat and found him lying on the floor of his bedroom deeply unconscious. He had all the symptoms of a stroke. I administered the sacrament of the anointing of the sick to him and the ambulance services arrived soon, which brought him to Alberlito Hospital, a good hospital in Ballito. The doctors there confirmed that he had suffered a massive brain haemorrhage and made us no hope for recovery. A neurosurgeon was to examine him whether or not brain surgery could still help him, but the good Lord called him to his heavenly home shortly after midnight.



Father Herfried was an absolutely diligent confrere and since he came to us on 1st December 2006 he engaged himself with all his strength in his task as our house chaplain. He had an extraordinary and exemplary pastoral zeal and although he had turned 90 on 26th January 2007, he was ready and prepared to fulfil his priestly duties day and night at any time. Over and above this he helped in the parish and celebrated Sunday Services in different outstations.

I held him in highest esteem and I thank God, that I had the privilege to know him for more than 20 years and I thank him especially, that he did absolutely magnificent pastoral work in our house for the last ten months.

I would like to ask you for your prayers for Father Herfried.

Father Gérard

Africa and the Hospice Association of kwaZulu/Natal.



We thank the **governments**, especially the government of the United States of America for their most valuable support of our HAART Programme through their "President's Emergency Plan for AIDS-Relief in Africa" (PEPFAR).

We thank the **Church hierarchy**, especially the Diocese of Eshowe, the late Bishop Mansuet Dela Biyase, the Administrator of the Diocese of Eshowe, Father Ndaba, and the South African Catholic Bishops' Conference and its AIDS Desk.

We thank the **Order of Saint Benedict**, especially St. Ottilien Archabbey, Inkamana Abbey and the Benedictine Mission House in Schuyler/ U.S.A.

We thank the **Order of Malta**, especially HMEH the Grandmaster, the Grand Hospitaller, and its British, German and Canadian Associations.

The fact that we exist and the work that we could achieve in spite of most difficult circumstances is like a miracle.

The fact that we can expand not only our buildings, but the quality and scope of our care is a special blessing.

I request your continued support! Do not sit back in complacency! Nothing has been achieved without lots of effort and hard work. Let us carry on doing all we can and God will complete the good he has started through us.

Thank you and may God bless you abundantly!"



The President's Award 2007

The President's Award of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard for the Year 2007 was presented to

Reverend Father Siphosenkosi Titus Gamede

for his long-lasting voluntary service as an Active Member of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard, his loyalty and excellent pastoral care, his outstanding example of brotherliness and integration and his readiness to take on responsibility for our organisation as a Dedicated Member.



Father Siphosenkosi Titus Gamede thanked for the special honour which he had so well deserved.

A special thanks to our top 14 donors in 2007:

1. Missionsprokura (St. Ottilien/Germany)
2. Sternstunden e.V. (München/Germany)
3. Benedictine Mission House (Schuyler/U.S.A.)
4. U.S. Governmt. (PEPFAR) & CRSC & SACBC
5. Order of Malta (British Association)
6. Victor Claudius (Durban/South Africa)
7. Catholic Church (Manching/Germany)
8. Nampak (Johannesburg/South Africa)
9. Catholic Church (Elsendorf/Germany)
10. Vilseck gibt Hoffnung e.V. (Vilseck/Germany)
11. Missionsprok. (Münsterschwarzach/Germany)
12. Father Franz Ferstl (Obertraubling/Germany)
13. Irene Scheidweiler (Bad Marienberg/Germany)
13. Father Georg Weinzierl (Steinbach/Germany)
14. Stauffer Family (Ebnath/Germany)

November 2007

13 November 2007: Fr. Gérard attended the quarterly meeting of the HAKZN in Durban.

15 November 2007: Dedicated Members' Meeting of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard

16 November 2007: Evander Lucas from Blessed Gerard's Children's Home is awarded three certificates of Merit by Little Flower Primary School in Eshowe: One for first position in class and two for outstanding academic achievements



16 - 24 November 2007: Our member Gregor Tautz from Germany visits us again. It was because of his article "Eine neue Heimat für die Aids-Waisenkinder von Mandini" from 30 June 2002 in the Regensburg Diocesan Newspaper, that Miss Susanne Stauffer decided to come to us. Mr. Tautz records several interviews about our work and made many pictures, which he will use for public relations in radio and press in Germany.

17 November 2007:

Children from Blessed Gerard's Children's Home enjoy religious information in Father Gerard's lounge



17 November - 1 December 2007: Fr. Gérard teaches a HAART Information course to prepare patients and their helpers for antiretroviral treatment.

21 November 2007: Our therapeutic counsellor Wiseman Zulu making home visits.



24 November 2007: Our children from Blessed Gerard's Children's Home who attend pre-primary school at their year-end celebration.

Brian and Mpilwenhle "graduated" to enter primary school next year.



30 November 2007: Blessed Gerard's Pre-Primary School & Crèche celebrates its year-end function with "graduation" of 15 children, who will attend primary school in 2008.

December 2007

1 December 2007: We celebrate World AIDS Day with a "Feast of life" (See article in the right column!)

6 December 2007: Meeting of the Councils of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard and Blessed Gérard's Care Centre.

10 - 18 December 2007: Another Course in Home Care is held at our Hospice.

19 - 20 December 2007: Another Caregivers' Course is held at our Hospice.

20 December 2007: Dedicated Members' Meeting of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard.

23 - 26 December 2007: David Graham from the U.K. who had fundraised for us by running the London Marathon comes to visit us.

Feast of Life

1 December 2007:

We celebrated World AIDS Day with a "Feast of life" for all our patients on HAART.

A large crowd of about 70 patients attended, which represents more than half of all our patients on treatment.



Father Gérard welcomed the amazingly large crowd who had accepted our open invitation to come to the hospice to celebrate that through their successful antiretroviral treatment they are living proof that AIDS is not a death sentence, but a challenge and an invitation to live their life to the fullest and rejoice in it.

Father Gérard expressed his profound gratitude to all in our HAART Programme and especially those, who have made it possible: Father thanked the patients for their trust, the treatment supporters for their assistance, our past doctors in the HAART Programme (Dr. Shembe, Dr. Gabela, Dr. Nkabinde and Dr. Mdletshe) and announced that Dr. Siluma started as the new doctor in our Care Centre, our Medical Superintendent Dr. Thabethe, who always helped out, when there was a need, our Registered Professional Nurse Sr. Liz Coetzer, our Therapeutic Counsellor Qinisani Wiseman Zulu and announced that Patrick Dube has joined him now in his task as a therapeutic counsellor to do the adherence monitoring home visits, our Therapeutic Counsellor Sthembile Masuku, who assisted Sr. Liz in her tasks and announced that Therapeutic Counsellor Xolile Nxumalo has joined her now in her tasks to be able to take over from her, when she goes to nursing school in February 2008, the government of the United States of America and their President's Plan for AIDS Relief in Africa (PEPFAR), which is our main sponsor in the HAART programme, the Catholic Relief Services Consortium (CRS), which administers the PEPFAR funds and is responsible for monitoring and evaluation, the AIDS desk of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of South Africa, which liaises between us and CRS, all other donors and all other staff and volunteers involved in the programme.

Father invited the patients to spread the word that we would love to provide our services to many more people, who are in the need of it and announced that we would soon start our own Voluntary Counselling and Testing (VCT) service. He also introduced our HAART patients to the idea to invite those of them who are interested to be trained as peer counsellors. Then they could become involved in supportive home visits to encourage each other to adhere to the treatment, which is absolutely vital for the long term success.

Father also informed the patients that we would love to establish support groups where patients can meet on a voluntary basis to get together, talk about common concerns, give each other advice how to cope the best and support one another in many different ways.

We got very positive and encouraging spontaneous reactions to these suggestions.

Then he asked the patient amongst the crowd, who had been on antiretroviral treatment for the longest time to light a candle with the AIDS-ribbon round it in commemoration of all the people who lost their lives through AIDS and we sang a Zulu hymn of remembrance.

Following this we all enjoyed a healthy and wholesome meal from our Care Centre kitchen.

Our therapeutic counsellor Mr Qinisani Wiseman Zulu, who makes our adherence monitoring home visits, spoke to our patients and encouraged them to engage in our new ideas of peer counsellors and support groups.

One of the patients nominated herself the speaker of all of them and thanked us in moving words for all the work that we put into the HAART programme to make it such a tremendous success. When the whole crowd started chanting and signing and swinging and dancing in jubilation Father Gérard could not stop his tears of joy looking into a crowd of happy and strong people, full of energy and vitality, celebrating their saved lives and knowing that they would all be dead if it was not for the treatment we are proud to provide.

Give us this day our daily bread

"Mrs Sibheko gave me the 75 Cents. These were my daily wages. My hands and back were sore from cutting sugar cane and I had no choice but cope with it. I had to hurry up as the sun was about to go down. I had 40 minutes to walk home but I still had to get a school uniform for Luke. The Mthethwa family lives next to the Nyoni river and I still want to see them. The youngest daughter had grown a lot. Maybe I get her school uniform for a few Rand. I could do things for them instead of paying money for it. Things have become quite difficult since my husband died. We never had lots of money, but now I often don't know how to feed my six children at all. I have no choice. I must get a uniform. If the children do not go to school they will have no chance at all. It is already dark when I come home with a uniform in my hand. There are seven of us living in a small Zulu hut. The children had already prepared everything to go to bed. Luke is happy and dances excitedly: I'll go to school, I'll go to school ...

I blow the candle out and we try to sleep. Tomorrow I will have to get some maize. We have no food at home.

Well, that's how it was in the early eighties", the old lady beams at me, "that was our life - and I made it - for all six of us! All went to school. With my Patricia I once thought, that's it! The academic year began and we had nothing. Not a cent in the purse and no uniform! She is our first-born and there were no second hand clothes handed down from older siblings. I earned six Rand per week and had six children to clothe and feed. But the good Lord helped us and Patricia could continue schooling. It was only in the nineties that our circumstances changed. The children had grown up and we still slept, lived and cooked in our old hut. Patricia got work at iSithebe, but she earned little money to bring home. After the political changes I received a small pension and we could build a kitchen with it.

Patricia did not work for long at iSithebe. Thereafter she helped at home for a whole year. The new kitchen made cooking more affordable for us. Then

there was that Sunday when everything started. We helped to distribute the parish newsletter and of course I read what was written there. Father Gerard looked for new staff for his care centre in Mandeni and for his pre-primary school and creche in Whebede. I quickly showed the newsletter to Patricia and told her to call there. We knew the Father. He was our parish priest and we knew that he would help if possible. On the same day my big girl ran to the store and phoned. Mrs. Kalkwarf was there and told her to come to the Care Centre at Mandeni on Monday. So she went there. She wanted to work at the Care Centre but Father Gerard had told her that she was very familiar with the Whebede area and that this area is not far from our home. So she agreed to work at the pre-primary school & creche. First she had to undergo training for two months, but then, deacon, then we had bread! We had bread at home, bread and margarine. There - she points to the kitchen - I had a pot of margarine. We even could buy porridge for the little ones now and again. More than 12 years had passed since my husband had passed away, 12 years, they were so difficult. But now all of a sudden everything was there!

Everything became much easier now. We are so grateful to the Brotherhood, so grateful. All the children could go to school without problems. The brother of my deceased husband had died meanwhile. Because his wife had also died, his five children came to me. We could manage because we had money. When Zanele had matriculated she could do a two year computer course paid by Patricia's wages. In spite of the course she could not find work. That is why she helped her sister in the pre-primary school & crèche as a volunteer. Later she was employed by the Brotherhood of Blessed Gerard as a staff member. Patricia could finance her brother's driver's licence. Deacon, just look around, see all what we have got, we would not have it if it was not because of our Father Gerard.

A real Zulu homestead has developed. Mother - meanwhile for a long time already granny - Zikhali lives here together with her six children and her

brother's five children and ten grandchildren. But now the children and grandchildren can build a new house for their mother and granny.

The rooms are still empty, but granny shows us proudly her new realm and with glowing eyes she explains what the different rooms are going to be used for.

The brotherhood as a stone which falls into the water, as a German religious hymn says: A stone falls into the water, unseen and quietly. No matter how small it is, it makes far reaching waves. Where God's great love enters a person, there it continues being effective in word and deed into our world.

Patricia's employment and later Zanele's too opened new chances for life for a whole family. They consider this chance a gift and blessing from God and they passed on what they had received.

21 children and grandchildren, the older ones long grown up, live together as a family, in a safe environment with school education, regular nutrition and proper housing. The grown up sisters prepare every year more than 40 children for their entry into primary school and doing so lay the foundations for countless families to get a chance as well. Give what you have received yourself and it will bear fruit 30fold, 60fold and 100fold.

Help which spreads like a wave. The Brotherhood of Blessed Gerard could help the Zikhali family because there were people who supported the brotherhood though donations and membership fees. Therefore the Zikhali family could provide new chances for life to their whole family clan and their work is a blessing for the Whebede area. Only God knows how many people's lives were saved by this and how many people's way of life was positively influenced by this.

May our heavenly father richly reward everybody for the good they have initiated and done.

*Deacon Thomas Müller
after visiting the Zikhali family in November 2007*

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>