

Blessed Gérard's Care Centre

Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard



Our **mission** is to further the glory of God and strive with a common effort to foster a more perfect life of our members by devoting ourselves to the apostolate of the Church in works of charity to serve "the poor of our Lord Jesus Christ" extending God's loving care to them under the motto "tuitio fidei et obsequium pauperum" (Protection of faith and service to the poor).

"Vision"
May the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard in adopting its patron's charisma continue the ancient spiritual tradition of its roots to humbly serve the hungry and thirsty, estranged and naked, sick and imprisoned Lord and thus become a sign of Christian faith, cheerful hope and apostolic love to the people.



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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



Caring without borders!



We care in any case!

Father Gérard returned from Germany with a special guest

The Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard is a charitable organization of the Order of Malta, founded in 1992 in Mandeni, Zululand, South Africa by Father Gérard Tonque Lagleder OSB. The area has the world's highest rate of AIDS infection. The Order's hospice and other projects serve the poorest of the poor directly.

"If people take anything away from my experiences, it should be that we all have to take God's love through its word and put those words, that love, into action for the service of humanity," says Father Gérard.

On 4 August 2009 Father Gérard ended his three-month long visit to his homeland, Germany. His sister, Mechthilde Lagleder, accompanied her brother on his return to Africa. Over the next three weeks, she wrote a series of "as it happens" reports for the local newspaper, the Donaukurier, about what life is like for those who are working to stem the tide of AIDS.



The following pages are translations of Mechthilde's newspaper reports. (A very special Thank you to Kate Bag-

gott for her great contribution by translating these reports for us!) They capture her impressions and experiences of the work of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard as they happened. The work of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard is completely financed by donor gifts and every cent goes directly to the Care Centre.

Mechthilde Lagleder



May the glory and peace of the incarnate saviour fill your life in this Christmas season

and on every day of the New Year 2010!

In 2009 we celebrated:



15 years of service of

Blessed Gérard's HIV/AIDS-Education-Programme:

We distribute information to the public relating to HIV and AIDS, namely how to avoid HIV infection and how to live positively with AIDS. This includes information about antiretroviral treatment.



10 years of service of

Blessed Gérard's First Aid and Emergency Service:

We provide rescue and care of persons in distress by offering First Aid and assisting people in emergencies.



5 years of service of

Blessed Gérard's Hospice HAART Programme:

counselling and Highly Active Anti-Retroviral Treatment (HAART) of persons afflicted with HIV/AIDS, including the care or counselling of their families and dependants in this regard

Mechthilde Lagleder
8926 Flight Kilometres to our Goal

There are 8926 kilometres by plane between my brother, Father Gérard Tonque Lagleder, and me. During the night flight, there is turbulence and we have to fasten our seatbelts as we fly over the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I have no fear. Through the plane window, I can see the moon shining and the stars twinkling. The adventure has already begun.

Later, we land in Johannesburg, reaching the airport at 11am. We are met by Axel Pape, the business manager from Blessed Gérard's Care Centre, who has come to bring us all safely to Mandini, 100km north of Durban.

While Everything is being readied for the World Cup.

The trip on the motorway leads us through the hilly landscape of South Africa. The first thing that we notice is how built-up everything has become. Everything that can be seen along the route between Durban and the airport in Johannesburg is being prepared for next year's World Cup. Slums in plain sight of the motorway are being torn down and new developments are being built as social housing projects.

Enormous corn fields extend over the hill ranges and into the valleys. We see several small fires where the remains of the sugar cane harvest are being burned away so that the fields can be ploughed under and grow afresh. Palms and flowering trees line the way as the vista opens up into the Tugela River Valley.

There are still 9km on the main road until we reach Mandini. The vegetation looms larger as we move closer and begin to see other human beings travelling on foot toward our destination. There is a large paper mill around Sappi and it makes for heavy traffic and that surprises me. When I was in South Africa in 1991, there was just another green meadow where the Care Centre stands today.

Our arrival is met with great ceremony. Banners are hanging all over that say: "Siyakwamukela ukubuya kwakho Baba ekahaya, ikakhulukazi no Mrs. Mechthilde". It translates roughly to: A warm welcome home to Father Gérard and a particularly warm welcome to Mrs. Mechthilde.

My brother introduces me to his co-workers. Thank God I have not forgotten the greeting rituals of the Zulu people since my last visit. After a short break, my brother Gérard gives me a tour of the house. Everyone is pleased about his return and as we go into the playground, where the smaller children are playing with their caregivers, shouts of "Father, Father, you're back" echo all over. All the children run for their turn to be embraced and for their chance to welcome us. Everyone has so much to tell us all at once!



First contact: The new arrival Mechthilde Lagleder starts her three-week long adventure in the South African village of Mandini where her brother, Father Gérard, leads the Relief Organisation of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gerard.

Singing and Playing

In the evening the older children, who live in a group home, stand on the stairs and sing for us. My brother joins in spontaneously with Sister Edith, their teacher. Later we tell each other stories and riddles to entertain ourselves.

Mechthilde Lagleder
Blessed Gérard's
Children's Home



The atmosphere in both parts of the children's home is friendly and family-like.

First, I am going to tell you about life in the group home:



The twelve to sixteen year-old girls and boys live with their caregiver, Sister Edith, a Benedictine nun, in an apartment on the upper floor of the Care Centre. Two young people share each light-filled room and everyone has their own desk.

They work together to create a roster for keeping the house in order and plan their meals to cook together. This is an essential part of how they learn and teach each other life skills in pre-



paration for independent life. They do all the housekeeping, laundry, cooking and clearing up, as well as the hundreds of other small tasks that help keep a household in order. They come home from school between 2 and 4 pm, do their homework and finally have some free time to



play. Thanks to the generosity of a donor, the children's home has a piano and every child has piano lessons. Afterwards, the children who are on duty according to the roster prepare dinner for the group and share jokes and stories about their day at school. The children take their meals with perfect table manners. The family atmosphere continues to astonish me. A day

spent with these young people is truly a day spent with a happy family. I return to my room each evening filled with positive impressions of these young people.

The Blessed Gérard's Care Centre in Mandini is a place where brotherly love is practiced in daily life. That is true in the hospice and it is true in the children's home where, right now, 41 children are living.

Now I would like to tell you about the area of the children's home where the newborn to eleven year-old children live. At the door, I am welcomed by a friendly caregiver.

The main entrance is decorated with brightly-coloured furniture. A team meeting is being held while the children play together. Each of the children's rooms is shared by two to five children depending on the size. All of the rooms are light and friendly with views that look out on nature. The beds and comforters are colourful and cozy-looking. The children play movement and hand-clapping games together and seem very happy to be where they are.



This room is shared by four girls with plenty of room for them to play together.

The day begins at 6am. The youngest children are bathed while the older children shower. After everyone eats breakfast and brushes their teeth, the school-age children get into their groups so that the mini-buses can take them to their different schools. They have to be ready by 7:30 because school starts at 8:00. The

children who are still too young for pre-school stay home and play together. One of the boys and one of the girls need special therapy. All of the caregivers work hand in hand to help all of the children become physically and mentally stronger.



The room for small children at naptime

An educational assistant cares for the school-age children after school in the homework room while the smaller children stay in the playroom. And then, suddenly, all the work is finished and everyone runs for the playground. There is an adventure playground complete with a climbing apparatus. The children also enjoy playing ball, circle games and dancing. Everyone laughs and enjoys themselves. All of the children beha-





ve themselves and follow the rules of the playground. And the handicapped children are participating too. Traditional Zulu dancing requires a lot of jumping, as high as possible, and everyone sings and sings. It is infectious and I join and dance with them.



Once play time is over, the children go to wash their hands. Under close supervision the older children help to serve dinner for the younger children which comes from the central kitchen. The vitamin-rich, high-protein food is not only healthy but it tastes good! Some of the children in the care of Blessed Gérard's Care Centres have been abused, others have already experienced terrible losses. At the care centre they find acceptance, protection, love and education. All of the AIDS patients at the care centre, including the children, receive anti-retroviral medications that can increase life-expectancy by up to



25 years. Combined with the loving care they receive, they can go on to live full and full-filling lives. These children are the real hope in the fight against AIDS.

Mechthilde Lagleder The AIDS Crisis in Paradise

Today, my brother, Father Gerhard Lagleder, and I are going off on a photo-safari, but it's different than the kind everyone knows from South Africa. We aren't off to photograph lions, elephants and giraffes although we do head off into breath-taking scenery. The hills roll softly down into the banks of the Tugela River. Palms perfect the picture of a paradise where, right now, a terrible war is raging. We stand on a hill and look down into the valley. Gerhard says: "Here, this is the valley of death, the AIDS pit. 90% of the population is infected with HIV, many of them have AIDS."

Father Gerhard's goal is show us the human side life inside a global emergency, an absolute catastrophe. Our route takes us through the slums that have sprung up around the paper factory in the Industrial area of Isithebe, where about 50.000 people live, and into the Township of Sundumbili where the population is about 100.000. Here, I have to confront absolute poverty. The unpaved roads can be passed only by jeep. Thanks to Peter Wiedemann, who asked for donations to the Brotherhood of Blessed Gerard in lieu of gifts for his 50th birthday, a new vehicle was bought when donations from his friends and family were matched by



Rotary Club International. Since the work of the Brotherhood is carried out exclusively through donations, they're always grateful to those who remember their fellow human beings.

"For 18 years, we always had to take the shortest, quickest route possible through an area riddled with criminals and danger. The car was always locked, the windows were always closed;" Father Gerhard says. Today, we leave both doors unlocked, the windows are always wide open. "Please, photograph everything. Photograph as much as you can," my brother tells me. "We have to show other people just how extreme the poverty here really is."



I photograph the little houses and cottages built by greedy business concerns for the factory workers. The workers have just six square meters of living space and have to pay huge rents for this miserable space. They are built like row houses, one right into the other. There is no running water. It all has to be carried a long way home in large canisters. There are mountains of garbage everywhere. Between the piles of waste; chickens, goats and children compete for room to move.



The "butchery"

I cannot describe the place where animals are slaughtered. Hygiene is non-existent. It's a place where diseases find their ideal breeding-ground. Corrugated iron, tin, barbed wire, old tires, plastic sheets and pieces of firewood are among the most common building materials. About 30% of the children don't go to school

because their families simply can't afford to pay the school fees.



Laundry and plastic water barrels

As we drive by, people run out of the cottages to see us. They always wave and call out: "Baba, Baba Gerard!"



The children jump for joy and the adults laugh at them. Many of them know my brother from visits to the hospice where they, or their relatives, have stayed for treatment.

Yes, a lot has changed over the past 18 years! Everyone knows the Brotherhood's vehicle. It brings help,

through food deliveries, directly into the township to those who cannot work because they are sick. They also know the Brotherhood through the sewing school through which many women have been trained to work as seamstresses and some even have sewing schools



of their own. They also know that it brings medicine to the sick and scholarships to children who otherwise could not attend school. These people are learning that education is the way to break the cycle of poverty. Those who go to school find good jobs, those who find good jobs earn good money, those who earn good money can afford to move away from the slums. Those



of us who live in Western Democracies don't have to pay school fees. We should be more grateful for the

rich educational opportunities that we have. My brother points out one of the cottages and explains how one of the children, who now lives in Blessed Gerard's Children's Home, had to be taken from there. Put shortly, he was sick and being severely abused. Compassionate witnesses called social services who contacted the Care Centre. Another child was abandoned so soon after birth that the placenta was still attached, was found in a garbage heap. An aide who works with the Brotherhood bundled him up and brought him to the children's home. I have met this particular child in the children's home. He hugged me and looked at me with smiling eyes. I would never have guessed that his life's story had such a sad beginning.

I am having flash backs: Pictures that I have seen keep coming back to my mind, situations I have been part of, a reality that I touched with my hands and that touched my heart in turn.

Mechthilde Lagleder
**Time Passes Differently
 at Blessed Gérard's
 Hospice**

My brother, Father Gerhard, gets a call on the telephone.

"Do you want to come with me?" he asks. "I've been called to a deathbed."

I don't hesitate and follow my brother. I don't know exactly what is to come and emotion gathers around my heart. We enter one of the four rooms for the dying at Blessed Gérard's Hospice. A volunteer caregiver sits beside the bed of a young man and holds his hand. My brother strokes the young man on his head, gives him the anointing of the sick and prays a little more. I feel complete peace in the room, unbelievable peace.

Inside myself, I have become completely calm. They prayers finish. The dying man barely moves. Occasionally an eye reflex twitches, a partial breath is drawn in. I can hear the ticking of the clock on the wall and it becomes even louder in that spot inside myself. So many things

start to run through my head. Who is this man? What has he been through? How has he lived? Important events from my own life come to mind too: the deaths of my parents, the births of my children. Life and death run together in the blink of an eye. Above the bed is a sign with the patient's name. His name is Christopher. His therapy regime: Palliative Loving Care. I don't know how long we have been in the room. My brother motions for me to come. The caregiver smiles at us as we depart and turns her gaze back toward the dying. On the way out, Gerhard turns to me and says, "he is still with us" and explains to me the process of dying.

"Do you know," he says, "this is a hospice. People come here so they won't die alone. Critically ill people often lie in their huts alone and die a cruel death. Here, we wash them. When it's possible, we bathe them. They get medicine and loving care. Some of them get to sleep in a clean bed for the first time in their lives. I always say that for the dying, the greatest culture shock of their lives is love."

As we sit in the hospice, in a place between life and death, I understand exactly what he means.

Each of the sick rooms and dying rooms in the Blessed Gérard's Hospice are named after a Saint or Blessed of the Order of Malta that was founded by Blessed Gérard in Jerusalem during the Crusades. A painting of their



work hangs at the end of the passage in the hospice. My brother took the name Gérard as his religious name when he entered the order of the Missionary Benedictines of St. Ottilien in 1982.

Dying People Need Professional Care Too



"Patients aren't made to feel ashamed when they need help or time. When the patients need an hour, or even longer, just to talk, they get it. Even if they only need a hand to hold."

There are many volunteer caregivers who make this level of loving care possible.

The hospice is divided into four wards of five to nine beds, one four-bed-ward and four single bed wards. They are all under the supervision of a professional nurse. Each of the beds can be separated off with a privacy curtain for examinations and personal care of the patients.

The area is large, bright and very well ventilated. Each of the beds can also be pushed out onto the terrace so that the patients with tuberculosis can get the fresh and sunshine they need to recover. They also have physiotherapy in small groups to help their muscles recover and they happily exercise both their lungs and their hearts.

Another room is equipped for mothers with children. Right now it is occupied by four young men because there are no women with children in the hospice at the moment.

All the voices in the sickroom are friendly and each of the patients get individual attention and care.



In the background many hands work together to keep the hospice running whether that is on the cleaning staff, in the kitchen or in the laundry room.



When a patient has more than three visitors, they are moved in a wheelchair or in their bed to a large visitors' room that also serves as a patient lounge.

Mechthilde Lagleder
A Day in the Bush with the Nursing Team

I am sitting on a bench in the back of an ambulance with a nursing sister and a nurse's aide. In the front, the head nurse and the driver – who is also a qualified medic – lead the way into Sundumbili Township. There we stop at the small nursing station where the nurse gives injections to the locals who are infected with tuberculosis before we are on the move again. Our next stop is another small, poverty-stricken house. The care team knocks before they enter through the unlocked door. We walk through a tiny kitchen and enter a bedroom at the back of the house. Lying in the bed is a young woman who is obviously in terrible pain. The care team know the woman from her earlier visits to the hospice where her condition was stabilized before she was discharged. They know, too, that she has AIDS.



The nurse's aide takes her blood pressure and records exactly how high the woman's raging fever is while the head nurse checks the medication supplies and dosage. The patient's condition has deteriorated so badly that the nurse decides the patient should be brought back to the hospice.

Info: Educating a fully-trained nurse in South Africa takes six years. They are hugely qualified and competent professionals. They can examine patients and administer medications both inside and outside the hospital.



We take the woman's medication with us. The only item she has for her personal care to bring with her is a tooth brush. With the help of two aides, the patient can walk with small, slow steps to the ambulance. We are taking her back to Blessed Gerard's Hospice. There, she will be examined by a doctor and admitted to one of the wards.



We have to continue on to Mangete. This time the route travels over gravel roads and dirt paths. Small woods give way to wide views if the sugar cane fields along the way. Zulu housing estates are scattered

through the softly dropping hills in the distance. Palms are everywhere. The ambulance forces itself through this hard-to-travel landscape, bumping and swaying. I hold onto the seat with both hands all the way to our destination. We take countless turns until we arrive at our destination.

I used to worry about my back because my bed was too soft, then I met a woman who had to lie on the ground because she had no bed at all.

Our next stop is in front of a hut made of broken stones. Inside, the room measures 2 by 3 meters at most. On the floor behind the open door lies the desperately



poor woman wrapped in a blanket. She too has a wracking cough from a secondary infection caused by AIDS. I am taken aback by the po-



verty. The sum of her possessions is a few dirty clothes, a piece of broken mirror, two cups, two plates and a few pieces of aluminium cutlery. In one corner, there are a few stones to mark the fireplace. There is a tin can holding cooked cornmeal. The pot the woman used to own to cook in was stolen. The aide spreads a blanket out on the ground in front of the house and they



help the woman outside to lie under the sun. The sunshine and fresh air seem to help. Together, we empty out the hut and put everything out in the sun. One of the nurses calls the care centre. One of the aides sprays a small amount of water on the dirt floor of the little dwelling. One of the nurses

starts sweeping out the dust and I take the broom to replace her. At first, she resists, but I explain that I have three children and no servants or household help and am used to working. We shake out all the blankets and clothing outside as well as we can before we put everything back in the hut. One of the aides arranges



the bedclothes so that they will be as comfortable as possible before helping the woman back inside. She smiles opening at everyone. Now the team can take her blood pressure and temperature and speak with her about her condition. The nurse informs me that this woman has already been to the hospice, but wanted to go home so her eight year-old son wouldn't be at home alone. Right now, he is at school. When we're finished, I go to see the woman one more time to wish her well. I stroke her arm gently. While I know she doesn't speak my language, she understands the meaning of my words. She gives me a smile.



To Sundumbili for Physiotherapy



We bring an AIDS patient who had a stroke and now has partial paralysis in the ambulance from Sundumbili to the Physiotherapy clinic, so that his muscles can be strengthened and recover. I sit beside him for support since he is not able to hold himself upright. A nurse's aide helps too. The therapist has trained the aide to do these strength-building exercises with the patient on a daily basis. The patient is given an exercise plan with illustrations to help him remember what to do.



The man who receives on-going assistance from the physiotherapist sits with us in the ambulance on the way back to the hospice.

He has a relieved look on his face. He feels that the therapy has helped and it helps him to know that his health is important to others. The atmosphere is pleasant and the patient chats with the nurse and the aide. I wish I could participate in the conversation, I don't understand anything but the basic words of courtesy and a few prayers in Zulu and most Zulu people don't speak any English.



The Huge Outpouring of Love Becomes Visible to Me

We load a cardboard into the car. Another colleague holding a clipboard climbs in too. Where we are going is a complete surprise to me, but I know we've already been this way today.



I am truly pleased when I see we're going back to the hut where the woman without a bed lives. This time, her eight year-old son is standing in the door-

way. He is wearing the torn blue trousers that I shook free of dust and folded this morning. The whole team enters the little house. Now I can see that the cardboard box is full of corn meal, rice, sugar, oil, beans and a few other grocery staples. This is provided by Blessed Gerard's Relief Fund. The woman



with the clipboard who came with us is a social worker who works with the care centre. She spends a lot of time speaking with the little boy. He is worried that his sick mother is alone for so much of the day. He shares his fear that the groceries will be stolen just like their cooking pot was.



The sick woman makes eye contact with me while the other members of the team speak with her son. Her

eyes move from her son, back to me. I can understand that he is all she has. I realize how much the boy has hanging on him, how much depends on him. I will never forget this moment. He will remain in my heart forever. Meanwhile, everyone packs the food into the only plastic bag they have and hide it under a pile of clothes. Some of the sugar is placed in a small plastic box.



Everyone files out of the hut. I try to find the woman's eyes again, to tell her with my own gaze that there is hope for her. Her smile widens. I find leaving very difficult. The nurse reminds me that there are more patients to visit. The boy tells me that the groceries are safely hidden.



We arrive in front of a house and meet with the family. We explain the state of affairs and leave the supplies with them. The nurse makes a note of the telephone number of the woman's acquaintance. After a brief negotiation, a woman and her almost-grown daughter agree to come with us to the home of the patient. We drive on. Later, I come to understand that the patient's acquaintance has agreed to visit every day to keep an eye on her. Now, she really needs to be admitted to the hospice for treatment, but the timing is bad. She doesn't want to leave her son at home alone. The social worker will try to find out if anyone can care for the boy while his mother is in the hospice.

It is never too late to begin anti-retroviral treatment, but without treatment she will soon be dead. If she starts treatment, it could extend her life for years – long enough for her to see her son start working and move them into a better house.

Patients with HIV who start to decline often feel better almost immediately after they start treatment with anti-retroviral medication. It can extend their lives for 15, 20, and 25 years of good health. The medication must be taken regularly and without interruption to ensure a good outcome.



Now we wind our way back to the main road and then back into the scrubland before we enter the bush to find the home of the next patient. A man with many wounds on his back is waiting to be examined. His condition has improved substantially since the team's last visit and only



the scabs remain. The nurse writes her report down in the patient's treatment file. The man has plenty of reason to smile and that is the most important thing.

We are on the road again when the nurse gets a call. We turn around and go part of the way back. We head down a dirt track where a man is waiting in a pick up truck to show us which way we should go. Obviously, someone needs our help. After following the dirt track for a relatively short distance, we come to a house. The man with the pick up is already there and leads us into the house. His mother is lying in bed and the nurse pulls the covers back. The woman has a second degree burn on the ankle of her left foot. The nurse cleans the big open wound with a disinfectant, covers it with a burn salve, applies a compress and dresses it in sterile bandages. She measures the patient's blood pressure and temperature as part of the routine examination. The nurse also does a blood sugar test and recommends that the patient be brought to



the local clinic so an anti-biotic can be dispensed. The team gives its recommendations and we are on our way again.



On the way back, I look out the ambulance window into the distance of the hilly landscape where the light of the setting sun plays with the blades of grass. I am full of wonder at the compassion and strength of the whole team. They helped indefatigably, competently and humanely at every turn. In the end, it is their humanity that stays with me, becomes my lasting picture of them.

The Great Hope in the Battle Against AIDS – The HAART Clinic

Through the HAART Program AIDS patients are treated with anti-retroviral drugs. People with AIDS can live healthy lives up to 25 years longer with this treatment. In simple terms, that means a mother can live long enough to care for her children and see to their education though to adulthood. Patients who were once so sick they were admitted to hospice can often be discharged after the commencement of the treatment. Blessed Gérard's Care Centre employs two therapeutic counsellors who travel through the slums and shrub lands according to their appointment schedules to ensure discharged patients are taking their medications properly at home. They also transfer messages from the clinic to the patients, advising them of a doctor's request to see their children at the clinic, for example. The home visits also include advice about vegetable gardening and small animal husbandry so that the patients can live independently, generate income and support their families. I spent a day travelling with one of the therapeutic counsellors.



This woman has a healthy little girl. Thanks to infection prevention practices used during the delivery of the child, she did not get HIV during birth. When a pregnant mother is diagnosed with HIV early enough, she can begin anti-retroviral therapy and reduce the risk of infecting her unborn child to a minimum. The danger is

reduced further when the children are delivered by Caesarean section. Disinfecting the birth canal before a natural birth has also been shown to help somewhat, but hasn't been as effective in preventing mother-child infections.

Earlier worries surrounding the Prevention of Mother-to-child-transmission PMTCT program held that even though the child was not infected, the woman's condition may become resistant to further treatment have been addressed.

Two days later we saw this woman and her baby in the hospice waiting area where the baby waved at us happily.

All the Way into the Bush

The therapeutic counsellor drives the jeep deep into the bush along roads I would have considered impassable.

"I have been doing this for a long time and have a lot of experience heading into the areas our patients come from," the counsellor tells me as we come to two huts in the middle of the bush. This particular counsellor has been working with the Blessed Gérard's Care Centre since 1997 as a volunteer and full time since 2000.

As we approach a flock of chickens runs out. In this



family, the therapeutic counsellor tells me, the grandmother, her son, her daughter and their little girl all have AIDS and all of them are supplied with anti-retroviral drugs through the HAART program. The therapeutic counsellor talks with the patients to ensure everyone is taking their medications in the proper doses at the right time. Failure to take the medicines properly could result in the virus becoming resistant to



treatment. Both the therapeutic counsellors travel into the bush to provide aftercare to up to 13 patients per day, but ensuring that patients are taking their medications properly is not their only concern. They also help the patients cultivate fruits and vegetables. In this household, not only has the father developed



a small business selling his produce, but has started breeding and selling chickens. With the support of the Brotherhood of the Blessed Gerard, he has managed to create an independent living for himself and his family. As he shows us around, it becomes clear that he is proud of his small holding and all he has accomplished and we can see exactly what the work of Blessed Gérard's Care Centre can achieve.



It brought us great joy to watch the man climb his own Pawpaw tree to pick some of the tasty, juice fruit to give us as a present. As we left, he offered us a friendly handshake and

waved after the jeep until we couldn't see him anymore. This work is clearly enormously important. Without medication and support these people would be in such bad shape they wouldn't be able to get out of bed and would have been dying in front of our eyes.

The last patient we have to visit is a woman with oral thrush. Later the care team arrives with the ambulance arrives. She has a mouth full of sores which indicates her immune system has weakened. Her illness is at a stage when small infections become big problems and occur frequently.



That evening I asked my brother how it could be that an entire family could be infected with this deadly virus. "Don't you know? Many women are raped here, but that isn't the only problem. Many husbands go to work far away and "have fun" while they are gone. Then they come home, give their wives another baby and the baby is infected during the birth by a mother who usually doesn't know she is HIV positive until the symptoms begin to show a lot later."

"Can't the woman resist?" I ask my brother. "Can't she refuse him if he has been with another woman and gotten himself infected?"

My brother was quiet for a few minutes. "No. It doesn't work like that. She doesn't have any rights over her husband. He is the lord of the manor and his wife must obey him. The worst thing about this disease is that there are several different strains of the virus and there is a risk of being re-infected with each episode of sexual contact."

"We once had a graduate student from the University of Berkeley come here to find out why Mandeni is the AIDS capital of the world. He reached two conclusions: it's the inequality between men and women and the

poverty. In a place where men earn so much more than women, they have all the money in the bag and women have to do whatever they can to survive.

"For women here, that means the "sugar daddy" system, but one man is not enough. One man pays for the school fees, another for food, another for clothes, a fourth pays the rent. And so, promiscuity rages as a means of survival and an extremely high rate of infection with AIDS is the result. We aren't proud of any of this, but we are working against it.

Asked my brother if he didn't feel he was working in vain in the face of such a huge problem. They cannot save the whole world.

"The whole world, perhaps not, but there are thousands and thousands of individuals we can save...and each one of them is an entire world."



Dr. Nzimande examines a pregnant HAART Patient

Annual Report 2009

The work of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard and of Blessed Gérard's Care Centre in the year 2009 were aimed at faithfully continuing, consolidating and strengthening our existing projects and services.

A major instrument towards that goal was quality control and quality improvement with the aim to achieve full accreditation by the Council for health Services Accreditation of South Africa (COHSASA). That is an equivalent to a five-star-rating, which everybody knows from the ranking of hotels.

We have successfully completed Phase 1 of the accreditation process on 15.10.2009 which brought as an important step forward on our course to achieve full accreditation.

The outstanding events of 2009 were:

On 1 January 2009 Father Gérard was appointed Caritas Director of the Diocese of Eshowe.

On 7 February 2009 top officials of the government of the U.S.A. visited Blessed Gérard's Care Centre:

Jose Rafael Morales MD, FACOG, the Chief Medical Officer of the Global HIV/AIDS Program and Rodrigo Boccanera, MPH, the Public Health Analyst from the Department of Health & Human Services of the Government of the U.S.A., Celia Serenata from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Johan Viljoen, the Project Coordinator of the HAART Programme of the South African Catholic Bishops' Conference came for a site visit to see our Care Centre and hear about its impact through our HAART programme.

They were very impressed and expressed with emotion that seeing the success of the PEPFAR Programme through the impact of our HAART Programme makes them proud and makes all the hard work so worthwhile.

Our visitors presented us with a plaque expressing that "This project is proudly supported by the American people through PEPFAR". We are most grateful for the substantial support of PEPFAR for our HAART Programme.

Johan Viljoen commented on the visit: "Thank

you for a wonderful visit on Saturday. Everybody was highly impressed with the work being done at Blessed Gerard."

Rodrigo Boccanera commented: "It was an incredible insightful visit and it is truly a model site."

Between 2. March and 23 June 2009 we built a convent for a Sisters' Community of the Benedictines of Twasana within Blessed Gérard's Care Centre. Four sisters are supposed to move into our centre. One of them, Sr. Edith Zulu OSB, has been with us already since 5 December 2008, Sr. Conradine Mkhize OSB, joined us on 29 August 2009 and two more sisters are to follow soon.

This necessitated creating appropriate accommodation. We have converted a previous huge store room on the first floor of the Care Centre into a flat with four bedrooms and a shared lounge/kitchenette. Father Aquilin Mpanza blessed the Convent on 23 June 2009 at our celebration of St. John's Feast.

From 24. - 26. March Johannes Freiherr Heereman and Dr. Marie-Theres Benner performed an audit of our organisation for the Order of Malta. The audit team was very impressed about our good progress, our organisation and work and left us very content.

The Board of Directors & Extraordinary Meeting of the Council of the Dedicated Members of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard decided in their Meeting on 2 April 2009 a major restructuring of our entire organisational structure:

The major decision was to include Blessed Gérard's Relief Fund, Blessed Gérard's Bursary Fund, Blessed Gérard's Poor Sick Fund, Blessed Gérard's Malnutrition Clinic, Blessed Gérard's Pre-Primary School & Crèche, Blessed Gérard's First Aid & Emergency Service and Blessed Gérard's Disaster Relief Project into Blessed Gérard's Care Centre.

This became possible through a change in South African tax law, i.e. that all our charitable purposes are now tax deductible activities within South Africa.

That makes Blessed Gérard's Care Centre now the all inclusive operational Branch of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard in Mandeni and we hope and pray that other branches may develop in different places in due course of time.



On 23. September 2009 The Order of Malta issued a postage stamp featuring Blessed Gérard's Pre-Primary School & Crèche.

Personnel

Employees

In the course of professionalising our work we had to create many more vacancies for professional staff. Meanwhile we employ 86 members of staff (including the two nuns). 24 of these were hired in the past year 2009. That means a 39% increase of staff in 2009! Doing so we have taken on a huge financial responsibility, which we will only be able to maintain in a sustainable way, if we intensify our fund-raising efforts greatly.

Visitors

In 2009 we had many nice visitors. Amongst these were Dr. Vicco von Arnim and his family (3.1.2009), Susanne Neckermann (13. - 16.1.2009), Harry Hine (6.2. - 22.3. und 21.10. - 17.11.2009), Peter and Frau Anne Hehl (17.2. - 1.3.2009), Tim Stohrer (20. - 22.2.2009), Abbot Rhabanus Petri OSB (15.4.2009) and Mechthilde Lagleder (5. - 23.8.2009).

Public Relations

We entered significant new paths of public relations and fund-raising in the year 2009. "Social Networks" have developed and became a new forum, which we must not disregard. Otherwise we may miss the train of communication opportunities which is definitely shifting fast towards electronic media.

Therefore you will find us now

since 15.1.2009 at betterplace.org:

<http://de.betterplace.org/organisations/bbg>

since 23.1.2009 at XING:

<http://www.xing.com/group-33065.6c5a0a>

since 18.2.2009 at Facebook:

<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=56437476230>

since 5.3.2009 at LinkedIn:

<http://www.linkedin.com/groups?gid=1833474>

and since 14.9.2009 at KathSpace:

<http://kathspace.com/community/PaterGerhard>

Since 8.9.2009 we have our own BLOG at

<http://fathergerard.blogspot.com/>

TV, Radio and printed media contributions (even if these are meanwhile already considered rather "traditional" media)

The outstanding media contribution in 2009 was:

Vatican Radio: Interview about Blessed Gérard's Centre in Mandeni, South Africa

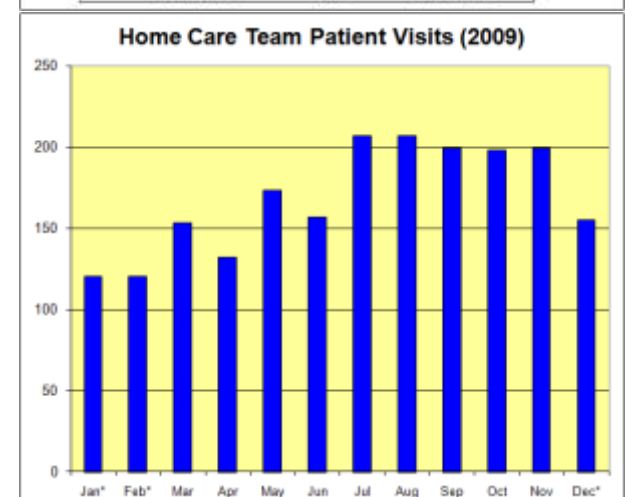
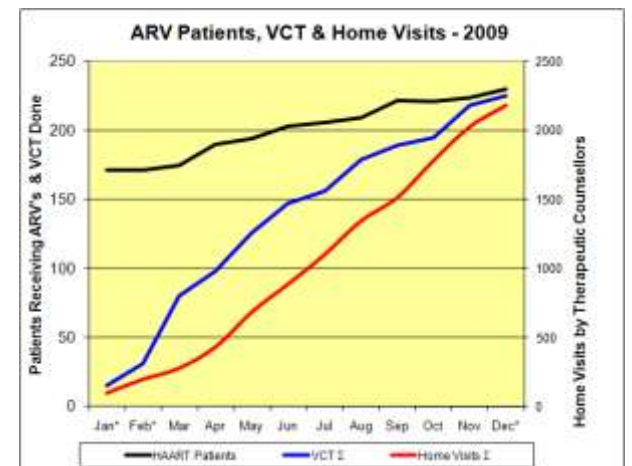
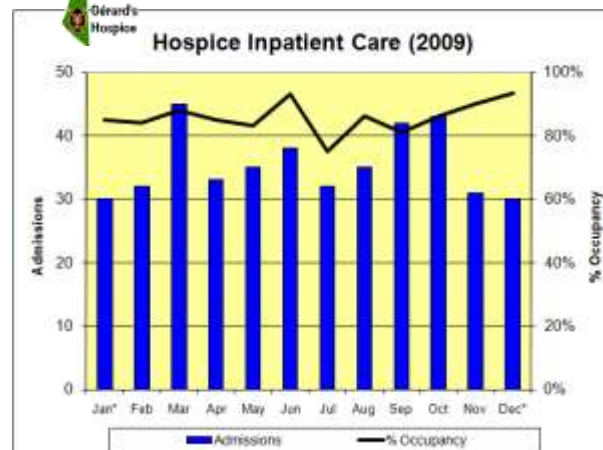
Membership statistics (as on 22nd December 2009)

	Increase in 2009
1184 active members	13%
550 financial supporter members	2%
370 spiritual supporter members	3%
2104 members in total	9%

Statistics by key performance indicators 2009

Patients receiving ARVs by December 2009	225
HIV positive patients who do not need ARVs yet	78
VCT (Voluntary Counselling and Testing) done	222
Patients admitted into hospice	426
Patients who passed away in our hospice	163
Hospice average occupancy rate	86%
Home visits by HAART therapeutic counsellors	2 180
Home visits by Home care team	2 020
Consultations done by our social worker	1 113
Children in Children's home	41
Children in our Pre-Primary School and Crèche	76
Bursaries awarded in 2009	31

In 2009 Accumulated Statistics	1992-2009	Increase
285 new inpatients in hospice	2746	12%
503 home care patients were added	2517	25%
504 patients transported	2290	28%
145 patients counselled	1256	13%
17 patients transferred	649	3%
202 day- and outpatients	920	28%
177 HAART patients were added	765	30%
12 paediatric patients were added	465	3%
14 First Aid patients	317	5%
6 emergency patients	259	2%
34 social cases	354	11%
Training		
151 home carers	756	25%



Diary of the year 2009

January 2009

17 January 2009: A first Support Group - calling themselves "Buhlebempilo Group" - of AIDS Patients who are being treated by Blessed Gérard's Hospice HAART Programme is established and started with 12 people attending.

22 January 2009: Tony Wende and a TV crew from Public Broadcasting System Network (PBS) Canada came to interview Fr. Gérard on the challenges of anti-retroviral treatment in Africa. The interview will be broadcast in Canada in the special reports and features of "World Focus".

February 2009

5 February 2009: Meeting of the Board of Directors and extraordinary meeting of the Dedicated Members of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard. Changes to our statutes are decided upon.



7 February 2009: Top officials of the government of the U.S.A. visit Blessed Gérard's Care Centre. (See Annual Report 2009)

11 February 2008: We extended our networking structure by joining SAOPF, the South African Older Persons' Forum.

14 February 2009: Another Support Group of AIDS-patients - calling themselves "Mpilenhle-Group" - who are being treated by Blessed Gérard's Hospice HAART Programme is established with 10 persons attending.

19 February 2009: Amra Chakravarti and Karen Hinton of the Hospice Palliative Care Society of South Africa (HPCA) workshop with our General Manager and Hospice Management Team about our continued way towards accreditation of our Hospice by the Council for Health Services Accreditation on South Africa (COHSASA).



24 February 2009: The new jungle gym at Blessed Gérard's Pre-Primary School & Crèche donated by Herbert Becker of Eintracht Frankfurt.

March 2009

13 March 2009: The mayor of Mandeni Councillor B L Magwaza awards a "Certificate of Appreciation" to Blessed Gérard's Hospice "in recognition of (y)our enduring and worthwhile service in caring for the communities within our municipality".

24 March 2009: We received a second Home-Care-Vehicle today, financed by Mr. Peter Wiedemann of Neuburg/Germany in conjunction with the Rotary Clubs

of Neuburg/Germany and Stanger/South Africa and a "matching grant" by Rotary International. The vehicle will be used for adherence monitoring home visits of our AIDS-patients under anti-retroviral treatment by Blessed Gérard's Hospice HAART Programme.

April 2009

2 April 2009: Meeting of the Board of Directors & Extraordinary Meeting of the Council of the Dedicated Members of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard. (See above in the Annual Report 2009)

May 2009

1 - 6 May 2009: Father Gérard takes part in the International Pilgrimage of the Order of Malta to Lourdes/France

23 - 24 May 2009: Father Gérard preached part of their annual retreat to the Subpriory of Blessed Clement of the Order of Malta at Ehreshoven/Germany.

June 2009

16 June 2009: The children of Blessed Gérard's Children's Home celebrated Youth Day. The day kicked off with songs from the little children, aged 4-5. The older children put on a short play highlighting abuse in the community which is very prevalent. The message from their play was, "Let's Stop Physical Abuse In Our Families." A message that hopefully everyone will take to heart. There were drum majorettes, gumboot dancers, modelling, male dancers, female dancers and even a mime. The programme was fun-filled and enjoyed by all who attended. The grand finale of the programme was a short rendition from the hit musical Sarafina by our older children. This was a fitting end to our Youth Day celebrations. After their wonderful performance, the children were treated with juice, biscuits and

popsicles. Who knows what future stars are here in our Home!

21 June 2009: We celebrate the Solemnity of St. John: Feast of St John (See article further down!)

August 2009

5 to 23 August 2009: Visit of Fr. Gérard's sister Mechthilde Lagleder. She is a founder member of the "Bruderschaft des Seligen Gerhard e.V." and has been very active in public relations and fundraising for us for many years. (See series of articles at the beginning of this newsletter!)



7 August 2009: Radio Vatican broadcasts an interview with Father Gérard under the title "Responding to the AIDS problem in kwaZulu-Natal, the Blessed Gerard Care Centre."

17 August 2009: Radio Vatican broadcasts in interview with Father Gérard under the title "Misinformation about HIV AIDS is considered in the second part of our interview about the Blessed Gerard Centre in Mandeni, South Africa."

21 August 2009: Radio Vatican broadcasts an interview with Father Gérard under the title "At the forefront of Anti-retroviral Therapy in South Africa, the Blessed Gerard Care Centre."



29 August 2009: 50% of our emerging sisters' convent are complete: Sr. Conradine (of Twasana Convent) arrives at Blessed Gérard's Care Centre. She is a registered professional nurse and will work for the residential care programme of Blessed Gérard's Hospice.

September 2009



14 September 2009: Our honorary dedicated member Mr Maximilian Rauecker was awarded the Cross of Merit of the Order of Malta. He was presented with the decoration in Maxrain at the occasion of the visit of the Grandmaster of the Order of Malta, Frà Matthew Festing, to Germany.

23 September 2009: The Order of Malta issues a stamp featuring Blessed Gérard's Pre-Primary School & Crèche. (See Annual Report 2009!)

October 2009

11 October 2009: We celebrate Blessed Gérard's Feast at Blessed Gérard's Care Centre. (see separate article further down!)



14 - 16 October 2009: Diakonia Council of Churches runs a "Stress and trauma healing workshop" at Blessed Gérard's Care Centre.

15 October 2009: Amra Chakravarti from HPCA per-

forms a follow-up audit preparing for COHSASA accreditation of Blessed Gérard's Hospice.



24 October 2009: Kentucky Frief Chicken donates wheelchairs to Blessed Gérard's Care Centre at the occasion of a radio broadcast from Radio Gagasi 99.5 at Sundumbili.

December 2009

1 December 2009: Blessed Gérard's Hospice HAART Programme celebrates our traditional "Feast of Life" on World AIDS Day. (See article further down!)



3 December 2009: A giant washing machine and tumble drier was received as a donation from Lions-Hilfswerk Oberpfälzer Wald e.V. We are most grateful to Cargolux for flying the heavy machines to us free of charge!

The celebration of the Solemnity of St. John

The Solemn Mass was presided over by Fr A. Mpanza, with Fr TS Gamede (Vice President of BBG) and Fr SA Ngcobo (Acting parish priest of St Anthony's) as co-celebrants.



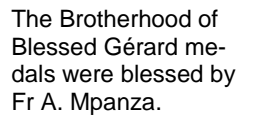
We had a full church of about 400 members, children and visitors attending mass.



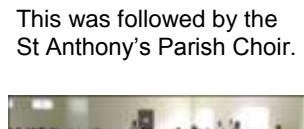
Mass was supported by the beautiful voices of St Anthony's Parish Choir.



After mass, our choir put on an enthusiastic show.



The Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard medals were blessed by Fr A. Mpanza.



This was followed by the St Anthony's Parish Choir.



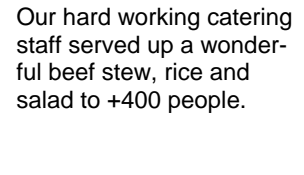
New members then received their Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard medals from Dr Thabethe and Mrs Thabethe.



Our guests, members and children were seated in the hall on the second floor.



This was followed by Fr A. Mpanza blessing the 4 rooms of the new convent,



Our hard working catering staff served up a wonderful beef stew, rice and salad to +400 people.



Ice cream and fruit salad was served as dessert, which was very popular with our children. It was a wonderful day which was enjoyed by everyone.



as well as our new Home Care Vehicle (HCV2).



A very special thank you to Caroline Beaumont and her team for organizing and doing everything so professionally for another successful feast of St John.

Blessed Gérard's Feast 2009

11th October 2009

Festive High Mass at 9:30 at Blessed Gérard's Church



The reading was read by Caroline Beaumont



Carolyn Nunn read the responsorial psalm



Father Gérard explained Blessed Gérard's biography and his importance today in his sermon.



Father Gérard blessed the members' medals after the sermon and received the new members of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard officially and solemnly: Father Gérard presented the members' medal to a special VIP: Mother General Theodora Ntuli O.S.B. of Twasana Convent.



Sr. Thuli and Dr. Paul Thabethe presented the members' medal to all other new members



and Father Gérard blessed all the new members.

Brs. George and Gabriel from Inkamana Abbey



Claudius from the Most Venerable Order of St. John



John Schnell and Victor



Trudy and Erich Winkler (a member of our president's council)



Zulu. The Brotherhood finds this kind of coverage to be advantageous as we can reach a greater number of people. The shocking fact is that there are still some people who have not heard of the disease called AIDS. 1st December, 1994 is World AIDS Day - let us remember all the victims of this terrible disease in our prayers."

quoted from Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard - Newsletter No. 04

Meanwhile Blessed Gérard's HIV/AIDS Education Programme has given many talks at youth meetings and factories, for industrial managers and peer educators and other people involved in HIV/AIDS work.

We have also been very busy with publications via different media:



Our AIDS work is mentioned as example of best practice in a DVD used for AIDS education in German schools and recently in a DVD used for AIDS education in the U.S.A.

We have published HIV/AIDS information online in English and German (even with streaming videos of an HIV/AIDS talk), in Italian and Spanish. Most of our HIV/AIDS education is now part and parcel of our Home Care Training and HAART Programme.

programme.

10 years of service of Blessed Gérard's First Aid and Emergency Service



In 1996 we got our first ambulance. In 1997 we held our first First Aid Course, did an Emergency drill (mock accident) and had our First Rescue: We helped to save a life (1997)

In 1999 we introduced Blessed Gérard's First Aid and Emergency Service and had our First First Aid Duty and inaugurated Blessed Gérard's First Aid & Emergency Service.

In the following years we provided First Aid services at the Tugela Raft Race, the Mandeni Spring Fare, at

Festive Function



The function was well attended Father Gérard welcomed the guests of honour:



nour: Sr. Theodora Ntuli O.S.B., the Mother General of Twasana Convent

The Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard celebrated



15 years of service of Blessed Gérard's HIV/AIDS Education Programme

In 1994 "Eighteen members of the Brotherhood attended a course given by the Diocesan team from Eshowe. Whilst we enjoyed these courses, we also found the subject of AIDS very shocking. Three teams were set up, one to

work in the Mandikini area under the leadership of Johannes Hlongwa, one in the Whebende area under the leadership of Conrad Khumalo and one in the Sundumbili area under the leadership of Dr. Paul Thabethe. Dr. Thabethe has had the opportunity to speak on many occasions and had one of his talks broadcast on Radio

Rugby matches in Mandeni and Stanger, at a Factory Sports Day in Amatikulu and at the Diocesan pilgrimage to Fatima (a service rendered every year). In the Holy Year 2000 we had the great honour to provide First Aid Duty in the Vatican's Basilicas in Rome.



5 years of service of Blessed Gérard's Hospice - HAART Programme - Highly Active Anti Retroviral Therapy

It was on the 5th August 2003 that BBC Newsnight broadcast "BBC Newsnight 5 August 2003: Hilary Andersson reported from

the first national AIDS conference in South Africa" where the South African Director of Health said in an interview: "You can't even think about antiretrovirals in that environment".

In September 2003 Johan Viljoen from the South African Catholic Bishops' Conference's (SACBC) AIDS-Desk phoned us asking whether or not Blessed Gérard's Hospice was prepared to become part of the ARV rollout programme of the SACBC. Johan Viljoen referred to Blessed Gérard's Hospice as "the flagship of the AIDS work of the Catholic Church in South Africa".

We accepted the challenge and it was on 1st April 2004 that we could employ a registered professional nurse and from 1st August 2004 also a medical doctor to become part of our HAART team.



On 7th September 2004 at 20:11 hrs the first dose of ARVs was given to our first HAART patient: Meanwhile we have close to 250 patients on continuous antiretroviral treatment. Dozens more are in preparation (some of them

not yet in need of the treatment as their CD4-count is still too high).

What makes our programme so special and distinguishes it from many others is

- that we insist on a proper preparation of every patient and their treatment supporter through our HAART readiness courses
- that we offer proper comprehensive AIDS Care through a multidisciplinary team

- that we offer proper after-care, which is more than just adherence monitoring through monthly home visits of our HAART patients, support groups and the inclusion of income generation and occupational therapy.



Father Gérard presented Mother General, Sr. Theodora Ntuli O.S.B. of Twasana Convent with a Candle of Blessed Gérard in acknowledgement of her sending Benedictine Sisters (Sr. Edith and Sr. Conradine and two more

to follow soon) to establish "Blessed Gérard's Convent" at Blessed Gérard's Care Centre.

Our General Manager Mr. Axel Pape was acknowledged in the same way for the tremendous work he has done for our organisations in less than a year of his most valued leadership.



Dr. Khaya Nzimande has also achieved an unparalleled improvement in leadership and quality of service as member of our management team, Hospice Project-manager and as our medical doctor. Father Gérard remarked especially on his excellent medical care but also on his friendliness to patients, staff and volunteers.

Victor Claudius, a pensioner from Durban, who has devoted his retirement to fundraising for Blessed Gérard's Care Centre received a special vote of gratitude and a personal gift from the Marian Shrine of Lourdes/France.



Father Gérard very proudly announced that the Order of Malta has issued a postage stamp depicting Blessed Gérard's Pre-Primary School & Crèche and presented Miss Zanele Zikhali with an enlarged print of the stamp and mentioned that the stamp does not only show her looking after the children, but was even issued on her birthday, the 23rd September 2009.



In gratitude for the establishment of a Benedictine Convent at Blessed Gérard's Care Centre Father Gérard presented Sr. Edith and Sr. Conradine with a statue of our Lady for the convent.



Entertainment



Everybody was most pleasantly surprised about the "secretly" prepared and not previously announced entrainment staged by children of Blessed Gérard's Children's Home and their friends, our staff members and volunteers

Gérard's Children's Home and their friends, our staff members and volunteers



Srs. Conradine and Edith



and DJ and sound technician Mthokozisi Xulu



We thank our management for having prepared everything so well.

Festival of Life on World AIDS Day 2009



On 01 December 2009 the Blessed Gérard's Hospice HAART Programme hosted its celebration of the Festival of Life on the World AIDS Day. This year we had invited other members of the Management team who are directly or indirectly linked to the HAART Programme.



The programme for the day was schedule to commence at 10:00AM although we still had some of the HAART patients still making their way into the hall. We had at least over a third of all the patients, some were absent due to occupational commitments.

Father Gérard Lagleder OSB opened the ceremony with a prayer after which the Programme Director took over. Father was first to address those present mentioning the importance of the patients to the Care Centre's cause, and he stated his gratitude to the patients, Council, Management and the HAART Team as a whole for all their contribution to making the Programme the success it is today.

Mr Axel Pape, the general manager, was second to address the audience. He thanked the patients, council, management and the HAART team as well.

He mentioned the important role the government has and its commitment in the fight against HIV/AIDS quoting the slogan, "I am responsible, we are responsible, South Africa is responsible".

Mrs Nunn subsequently presented a poem by Russel Kelfer, that was chosen by Miss Dube, the Social Worker, which was appropriately titled, "I am not an accident" and which was quite relevant on the day. The poem was translated in its totality so that its message could be understood by everyone.

Mr Zulu, on behalf of the Therapeutic Counsellors, namely Mr P Dube and the former, spoke on the progress the support groups have made. He also encouraged patients to be self sufficient by allowing one of the patients to present her hand craft work (hand bags) which is a source of income for her.



The HAART Team then presented a poem which it had written. Professional Nurse Simelane, Enrolled Nurse Nxumalo and Mr P Dube were the main actors. It was interactive which made it to be more energetic and effective in getting its theme across. The poem touched on stigma, testing for HIV, being initiated on ARVs and handling the latter's side-effects. It also encouraged people to fight for their health and to honour their HAART Clinic appointments.



It was then the turn of the patients to speak freely about what they felt about the HAART Programme and what it is like to live with HIV on a daily basis. Some of the testimonies evoked a lot of emotion, some quite energetic but they all shared a common theme, living positively with HIV infection.

Dr K Nzimande thanked Council, particularly Father Gérard, for giving the opportunity of working in the Care Centre. He also thanked Management, the HAART Team, especially the Therapeutic Counsellors for their sterling work. He finally thanked those in the HAART Programme for accepting him as their doctor and for being so strong in their fight with HIV/AIDS.



A delicious lunch was served, thanks to Mrs Beaumont and the Kitchen Staff, which everyone present enjoyed after the blessing by Father Gérard.



One of the Support Groups had a special surprise for Fr Gérard. They gave him a present, a Belated Birthday/ Thank you cake; the latter was shared by Father with everyone in the

hall. Wiseman also received a present from the same group.

Father Gérard was requested to close the day as he opened it, with prayer. Everyone subsequently dispersed with renewed vigour to continue the fight against HIV/AIDS.

Although it is quite difficult to put in words the atmosphere in that hall it is sufficient to say that if there are people like those (patients and staff) who still yearn to do so much in the field of HIV/AIDS, then there is still hope for humanity to be victorious in the war against HIV/AIDS.

Dr Khaya Nzimande

Blessed Gérard's Care Centre



We thank all donors, who enabled us to offer all our services so far!

We depend entirely on fund-raising to finance all our work and ask you to support us generously!

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.

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The **.Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard** Annual Report / Newsletter is the official mouthpiece of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard.

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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!**

## 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 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 the USA:

Thanks to the generosity of the Benedictine Mission House in Schuyler, Nebraska, we can 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 Great Britain / United Kingdom:

1. You may send a cheque:  
Please make the cheque out to “BASMOM Foreign Aid Service”, attach a note, that the donation is meant to support the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard and send it to this address:

#### **The Hospitaller BASMOM**

Mr Tim Orchard · Layer Breton Lodge  
Layer Breton · Colchester CO2 0PP

2. 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 Foreign Aid Service  
Bank: HSBC Bank plc, Pall Mall, London  
Account number: 61260561  
Sort/branch code: 40 05 20

3. In any case, please make a Gift Aid Declaration. You will find a form on-line at <http://bbg.org.za/finance/giftaid.pdf>