



Newsletter 2016

Annual Report 2015



Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard

P O Box 440
Mandeni 4490
Republic of South Africa

Telephone: +27 82 492 4043
Telefax: +27 86 693 8940
e-mail: bbg@bbg.org.za
Homepage: www.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.

Caring without borders



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.



We care in any case

Imprint:

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

This Newsletter and Annual Report is also published online at <http://www.bsg.org.za/en/our-organisation/publications-media/newsletters-annual-reports.html>



We are ...

- a group of nearly 2500 **idealists** with the aim to enable and empower people to help themselves and to provide direct aid in cases of emergency and immediate need.
- the South African **relief organisation** of the Order of Malta. The latter was founded as a nursing brotherhood by Blessed Gérard more than 900 years ago.
- a **faith based organisation** (FBO) putting into action what our motto "tuitio fidei et obsequium pauperum" means: "Protection of faith and service to the needy".
- a "**Private Association of Christ's Faithful**" in the Roman Catholic Church, open to members from all different faiths and cultural backgrounds.
- a **community based** (CBO) **non-governmental organisation** (NGO).
- a "**public benefit organisation**" (PBO) operated not for profit (NPO) and dedicated to the welfare of all people.
- a **non-discriminating** and **non-exclusive organisation**, which serves the needy irrespective of their creed, colour of skin, political affiliation, sexual orientation or social status.
- a **charity** which helps within its own capability according to the identified needs of the people.



is a "Non-profit Organisation" (Registration No. 080-935-NPO) and a "Public Benefit Organisation" [SARS Ref. No. PBO 18/11/13/2777, VAT No. 447 0252 182] founded and owned by the **Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard**. It provides a comprehensive system of holistic care in the wider

Mandeni area where a quarter of a million people are estimated to live. A large number of these have to live in poverty.

All its services are rendered free of charge.

Moved Hearts - Moving Pictures

Moritz Schreiner, Simon X Rost, Peter Schöllhorn and Jessica Mayer of Media Sue Film service (<http://www.mediasue.de/>) / Artyc (<http://artyc.de/>) filmed at Blessed Gérard's Care Centre from 15th to 25th January 2016.



They are producing and will donate two films about our work.



We are really enthusiastic and got the impression that they are about to produce absolutely magnificent movies and we want to ask all of you to support the further development of the film project through your prayers.





We care in any case

Neglect and Inconceivable Poverty

The Home Care Team of Blessed Gérard's Hospice Closes a Gap

Snippets from Maresi Rehder's diary

One of the worst things we have to deal with is the **neglect** of patients.

The state hospitals are badly overcrowded. This leads to a big number of people who leave hospital before they are really cured, or many don't go back for further treatment.



Ngane is a young girl who cut off half of her finger in an accident. The first medical care was done in hospital but then she couldn't afford the transport from her hut far out in the informal settlement back to Hospital to change her dressings.

When we were called for help for the first time we found her close to a septicemia because the amputated finger hadn't been treated for ten days. It took us quite some time to soak and loosen the dressings. The wound was badly infected but with regular wound care, changing the dressings every second day we prevented worse consequences.

As Ngane was too weak to go to work for several weeks, our social worker agreed on providing her also with food parcels for the time being for her and her three children.

Ferdinand Rehder, a young student from Germany, who spent his Christmas holiday at Blessed Gérard's Care Centre, left us a short report about his visit. He shares some of his impressions:

"One of the things that impressed me the most was the daily work of the Home Care team.

I was allowed to accompany the team and that gave me the opportunity to see and to experience how many of

the Zulu people live. They live in **inconceivable poverty**. We went to see a woman in her hut just outside Mandeni. There had been a fire in her old hut while she was asleep and she was badly injured; her whole back was one big burn. We went to change the dressings. She lay on a bed made of a rusty metal frame with cement blocks as legs, a mattress wrapped in plastic instead of a sheet. I saw the wounds. They must have been terribly painful, but this woman did not complain at all. She was so happy and grateful that our Home Care team comes regularly to dress the wounds. She was in hospital, but prematurely discharged and she was too poor to pay for the transport to have the dressings changed in hospital.

While the nurse and her helper were doing their work, the woman tried to chat with me. One of the nurses translated. She wanted to know where I come from and if I like South Africa. Then she sang Zulu songs for me. Despite the wounds and the poverty there was much laughing and chatting in this hut. I really have great respect for the work of this team and the friendly and hearty way they do it."



Left to His Own Devices and Nobody Around

The Ambulance Team of Blessed Gérard's Hospice Goes Out Of Its Way

Snippets from Maresi Rehder's diary

"The Home Care Team has a new patient on the list today. The address the team was called to lay somewhere at a lonely place in the hills beyond the township. They agreed to meet us near the market, and when we arrived, a young girl was already waiting for us. She climbed into our ambulance and showed us the way. It was her family's hut where we were going to, and the patient was a distant friend of the family.



We found Siphamandla lying on the floor, wrapped in a thin blanket. He could neither stand nor walk and even sitting was very difficult for him. As we asked for his details, he told us his story. He comes from a small village on the border with Mozambique and had left his home a few months ago to look for a job in Durban. He was not really successful getting work and something bad must have happened that sent him to prison – innocently as he stresses. He suffered a severe stroke in prison, which was not properly treated. On the contrary, Siphamandla was discharged from prison on medical parole and **left to his own devices**. How he managed to find somebody to take him to Mandeni, we do not know; but now he was really stranded. Of course his friend did not want to keep him; and Siphamandla himself had neither the money to travel on nor the strength. We admitted Siphamandla to our Care Centre where we rehabilitated him and looked after him well. Finally we helped him to organise his return to his home village where he is going to stay with his relatives."

Thandinkosi's residence was somewhere far outside in the bush and there had been heavy rain during the past few days. Our driver had to be very careful and with great dexterity she avoided the giant potholes climbing uphill on a slippery track across the fields.

The ambulance team of Blessed Gérard's Hospice is the only ambulance team that drives so far out into the bush.

Finally they found Thandinkosi's hut. There was **nobody around**. After waiting for a while and knocking at the door they entered the hut.

It was dark inside and it was hard to see anything. The hut had one room, no furniture and just two boxes with personal belongings. Thandinkosi was lying on the floor, only a grass mat underneath and covered with a very dirty thin blanket.

He was very weak and could hardly talk.

He had no family and the neighbours took care of him but not very regularly. They brought him one meal per day. That was what they could afford to spare. For drinking he had a small bottle of water next to him.

We don't know how long he had been in that state, he was too weak to answer questions



Photo: © Anselm Skogstad

and so we admitted him to our hospice.

He stayed with us for two weeks and then he died comforted by a volunteer sitting at his bed holding his hand.



We care in any case

We Don't Stop Caring

Therapeutic Counsellors of Blessed Gérard's Hospice HAART Programme

Snippets from Maresi Rehder's Diary

Among the various aid programmes Blessed Gérard's Care Centre provides, the HAART (Highly Active Anti-Retroviral Therapy) Programme is one of our most important ones.

We carefully prepare our patients before we start with the medical treatment.

It is even more important that **we don't stop caring** for them when they have started their treatment or even when they feel really good and healthy again.

In the first phase of the AIDS treatment, it is most important to encourage the patients to take their medicine regularly even when they suffer from some unpleasant side effects.

Later, when they get used to the medicine and when they start feeling better again, we still keep contact with our patients. We visit them regularly. We try to help wherever difficulties might appear that could prevent the patients from taking their pills. These difficulties can be family problems, unemployment and alcohol or drug abuse.



I remember an old woman being on antiretroviral drugs. She had to take care of her five grandchildren. Her sons had gone to Johannesburg long ago to look for work; her daughters in law had left the family. She started drinking to forget her troubles, especially in the morning when her grandchildren were at school.

One of our therapeutic counsellors for AIDS treatment visited her many times and little by little he helped her fight her alcohol problem. He helped her to apply for child care grants and we provided her and her grandchildren regularly with food parcels. Now she is a lot better and we only visit her once a month.

In that way we try to look after every patient in our HAART Programme in order to guarantee its success. Not to be proud of our high success rate, but because every man, every woman, every child is worth every effort.

Why do you drive many miles just to deliver some medication? Can't these people just come to the Care Centre and find help there? These are questions we are frequently asked by visitors when they see how far we go in order to see our patients.

The area around Mandeni is a very rural area with no public transport. The only possibility to go to town or to go and see a doctor is to take one of the taxis*. Most of our patients cannot afford these taxis and so they spend hours walking; or if they are too old or weak, they often don't go at all. They can't even call an ambulance because no public ambulance goes that far into the bush. We have seen several times that a family put their sick relative in a wheel barrow for transportation.

For our AIDS patients is it lifesaving to get their anti-retroviral medication on a very regular basis and if they cannot come to collect their medicine in the Care Centre we will go and bring it to them.



These visits also give us the chance to see our patients in their family environment and home so that we are always close to them which is especially important for counselling them in times of crisis. It is an easy and good way to improve the living conditions for the patients who are in our care.

*A "taxi" in South Africa is a minibus using a fixed route and picking up paying passengers at bus-stops or along the road.



We care in any case

Lying in a Bed for the First Time in Life

Blessed Gérard's Hospice · Inpatient Unit

Snippets from Maresi Rehder's Diary

"My name is Xolile, which means in your language, "She made peace". I am thirty-four years old and I am ill. I have AIDS. Before I became ill, I worked in a factory but now I am too weak to go to work. I lost my job and I have no health insurance.



Here in the hospice they treat me well and I can stay as long as it is necessary, even if I cannot pay for any treatment.

My parents died when I was very small. My five sisters and I grew up with an uncle and an aunt. I have a daughter but I am not married. My daughter's name is Lindile, which means: I waited for you. Lindile is ten years old and she now lives with one of my sisters. I miss Lindile very much but I am too weak to take care of her."

We asked her, "May I ask you if there is anything you would wish for yourself or for Lindile?" She replied, "I would like to lead an independent fulfilled life. I would like to help other people as everybody here helps me. For Lindile I wish that she becomes a helpful girl and that she will like to share. There are so many people who have nothing; we all have to share to make things better."



We care in any case

By the way:

We would not have published any pictures and told any stories of our patients, had they not given us permission to do this. Nevertheless we replaced their real names with fictional ones.

"In the afternoon while I was going from bed to bed with Sr. Mkhize to become acquainted with the patients, a young girl was taken into the hospice.

Bongiwe was weak and emaciated.

She could hardly walk.

She was 27 years old and suffered from AIDS in the final stage.

I was shaken about her destiny.

Bongiwe was just as old as my daughter and as a mother I could imagine the despair of her mother exactly.

The young woman was one of four sisters and brothers. Each of them was HIV positive or had already broken out with AIDS.

Bongiwe was brought to the hospice because her family was no longer able to care for her.



When Sr. Mkhize put her into bed, there was a tiny smile in Bongiwe's face. **For the first time in her life she lay in a bed.** At home they all slept with a blanket on the naked ground.

When we left Bongiwe's room, Sr. Mkhize looked at me thoughtfully and said:

"I'm thinking about it every time when I'm sitting at the bed of a dying patient: What will my death be like? Will I be alone and lonesome or will there be somebody to hold my hand? In our hospice nobody must die alone. We care for our patients; we pray for them and hold their hand until they die a peaceful death. It is our vocation."

We Didn't Know Whether He Would Live or Die

At the Inpatient Unit of Blessed Gérard's Hospice

Snippets from Maresi Rehder's Diary



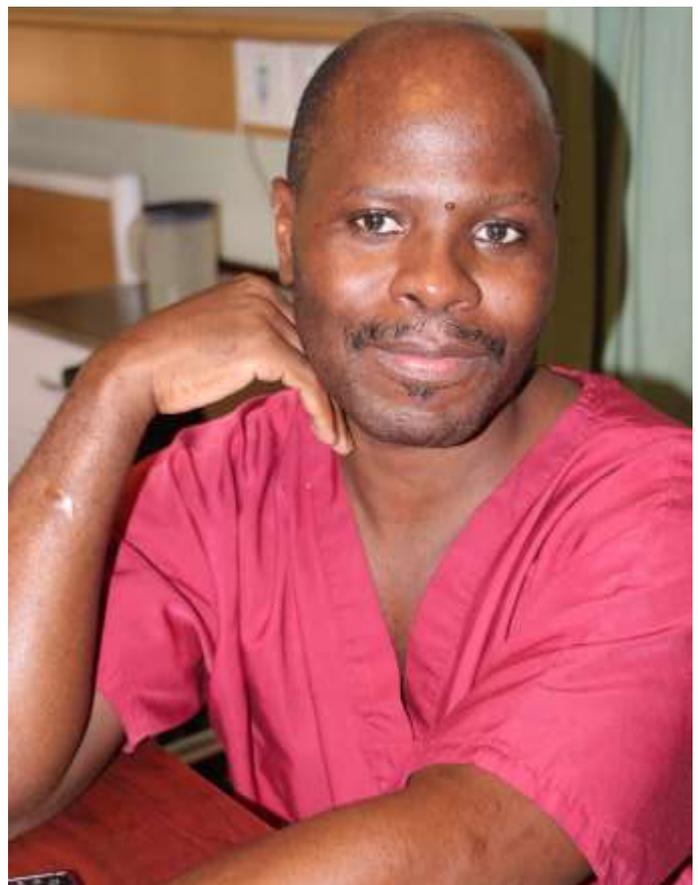
Siyabonga, a little boy, was admitted into our hospice two months ago. His name Siyabonga means "Thank You". He is eighteen months old but he is much smaller than he should be and he is physically underdeveloped. He looks not older than eight to ten months. He is just starting to stand up. His mother is HIV positive and has a severe problem with drugs and alcohol. She is not capable of looking after her son. Siyabonga is sick. He suffers from tuberculosis. It is vital for him to get his medication regularly but his mother wasn't able to ensure this. He had to restart his treatment several times. One day she abandoned her son. She left him with her mother and ran away. Meanwhile Siyabonga's state of health had deteriorated and the care of the ill child was too much for this frail old woman because she also has to care for six other grandchildren. She brought him to our hospice and entrusted him into our care. The first few days **we didn't know whether he would live or die**, but then with the right medical treatment he started to recover. Now he is everybody's darling.

You can hear his laughter in the passage and everyone loves to see him and play with him for a while. It won't be long until he will be able to go home. We are happy for him, but we will miss his laughter.



We care in any case

"My name is Joseph and I am 36 years old. I have been staying at Blessed Gérard's Hospice since March 2014. My brother brought me here because at home nobody was able to care for me. Before I became ill, I lived in Johannesburg and I had a good job. I worked in a community-development centre. We tried to create jobs for underprivileged people. I lived with my girlfriend and we have three children, aged twelve, six and three. I suffered a stroke in 2013 and had other severe health problems. I cannot walk and I cannot work any longer. I receive a small pension but I need this money to support my children. My health insurance does not pay any more because I have exhausted their limit. Before I came here I was in a hospital, which I had to leave because we could no longer pay for it. I am grateful because here in the hospice the nurses and volunteers are very nice. I feel like I am in a family. And I like going to church every morning because I believe in Jesus. It helps me a lot to pray and sing. While I'm in church I have no longings, I feel at home. What would you like to tell other people? When you are ill, as ill as I am, you have to accept your illness and you have to believe in God. Try to do your things well, and try to be good. Always try to help yourself but don't be afraid when you need help from others."



Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard

Annual Report 2015

The activities of the **Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard** and of **Blessed Gérard's Care Centre** in the year 2015, as in the year before, were concentrated on maintaining momentum in our existing projects:

Blessed Gérard's Care Centre provides a comprehensive and holistic system of care by running:

Blessed Gérard's Hospice and HAART Programme:

We render a health care service to **poor and needy** persons by providing - amongst others:

- hospice palliative care and counselling of **terminally ill** persons and the counselling of their families in this regard,
- hospice palliative care, 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

through home care, day care, outpatient and inpatient care.

Blessed Gérard's Children's Home:

We look after, counsel and give a home to **orphans and vulnerable children**.

Blessed Gérard's Pre-Primary School & Crèche:

We provide "educare" and an early childhood development service for **underprivileged pre-school children**.

Blessed Gérard's Malnutrition Clinic:

We provide a health care service to poor and needy persons by running a clinic, where we examine, treat and feed **malnourished infants** and teach their parent/carer proper baby care and nutrition.

Blessed Gérard's Poor-Sick-Fund:

We provide poverty relief by helping **sick** people from our local community, if they cannot afford urgently needed medical treatment.

Blessed Gérard's Bursary Fund:

We provide poverty relief by giving bursaries to **poor pupils and students** of our local community.

Special events in the year 2015:

1 January 2015 was the 20th anniversary of the opening of our pre-primary school and crèche.

The Bishop of Regensburg, Dr. Rudolf Voderholzer,



visited us from 7 to 8 February 2015, together with Vicar General Michael Fuchs, Cathedral chapter member Thomas Pinzer, Regional Dean Johannes Hofmann and the head of the Diocesan Mission Department Dr. Thomas Rigl.



Father Gérard's home-Bishop Rudolf celebrated our Sunday service, preached concisely and in fluent English and blessed the terminally ill after the Holy Mass. He expressed his great appreciation for our service even on the Internet blog of the Diocese.

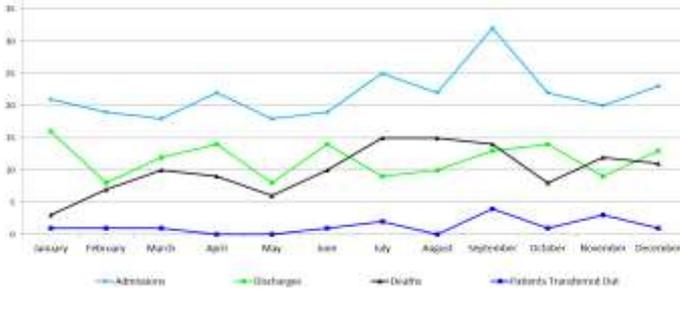
Father Gérard represented South Africa at the **Communicators' Conference of the Order of Malta** in Rome from **20 to 22 March 2015**.

July 9, 2015: 15 years ago, on 9 July 2000, **Clare Kalkwarf** was admitted to the **Order of Malta** and we opened the first **extension to the Blessed Gérard's Care Centre** and launched our **disaster relief project** and our **children's home**.

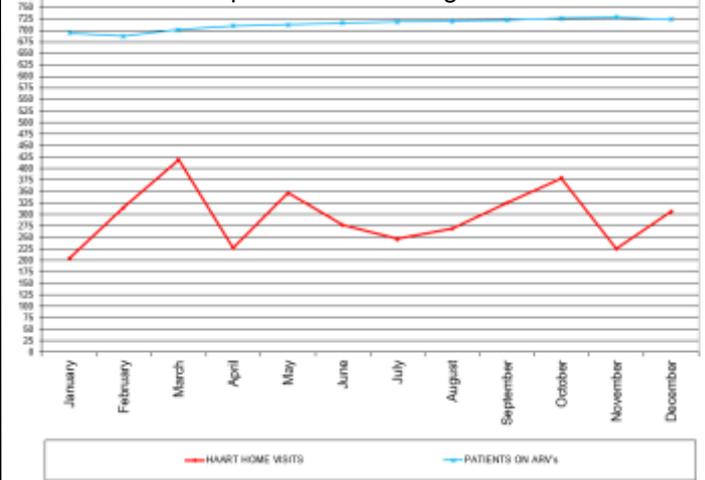
Activity Report 2015

2015 Statistics: Graphs

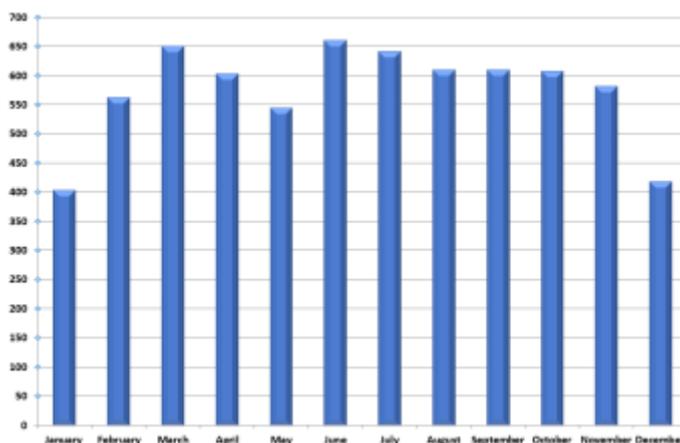
Hospice · Inpatient Unit



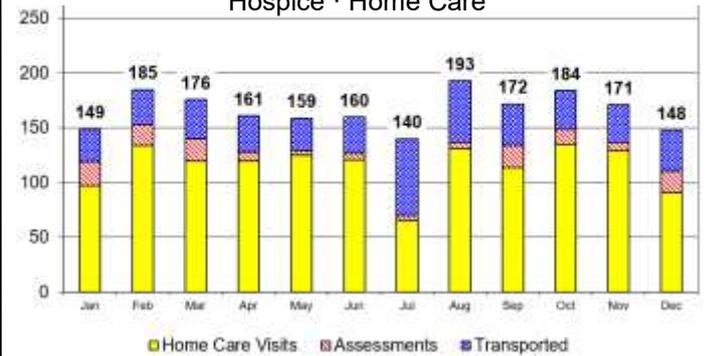
Hospice · HAART Programme



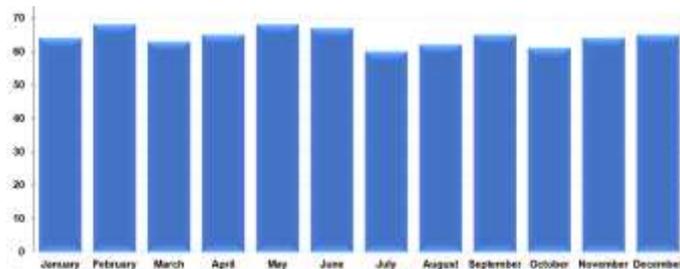
Hospice · Outpatient Consultations



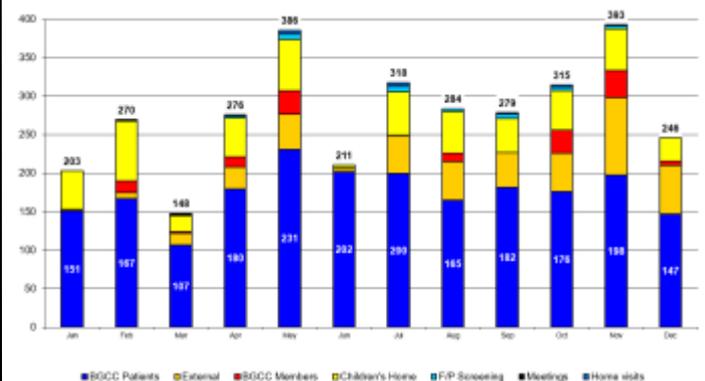
Hospice · Home Care



Malnutrition Clinic



Social Worker Consultations



2015 Statistics: Numbers

Accumulated Statistics	2015	1992-2015	Increase
Patients transported by ambulance (Hospice)	465	5398	9.4%
Patients counselled (Hospice)	249	2939	9.3%
Inpatient admissions (Hospice)	248	4629	5.7%
Social cases (Relief Fund)	71	1889	3.9%
New Home Care Patients (Hospice)	151	4455	3.5%
New HAART patients (Hospice)	25	1531	1.7%
New outpatients (Hospice)	28	1896	1.5%

Outpatient consultations	6464	New Home Care Patients (Hospice)	151
Home Visits by HAART Therapeutic counsellors	3533	Patients who passed away in our hospice	116
Consultations done by our Social Worker	3001	Children in our pre-primary school and crèche	80
Home Visits by Home Care team	1382	Children in Children's Home	71
Home Care Patients	1029	HAART: HIV tests done	50
Consultations (Malnutrition Clinic)	772	Bursaries awarded	39
Patients in the AIDS Treatment Programme	729	New Outpatients Hospice – day-patients	28
Patients transported by ambulance (Hospice)	465	Patients counselled (Hospice)	26
Patients counselled (Hospice)	249	Children in Children's Home	26
Patients admitted to our hospice (Inpatients)	248	New HAART patients (Hospice)	25

Financial Audit:

The Financial Audit of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard and of Blessed Gérard's Care Centre for 2015 yielded impeccable results again which we are absolutely proud of.

Personnel:

Membership Statistics

As on: 31 December 2015		development 2015	
1466	Active members	+35	+2.4%
631	Financial supporters	+4	+0.6%
373	Spiritual supporters	+6	+1.6%
2470	Members in total	+45	+1.9%

Employees

On 31 December 2015 we had 78 employees. Eight **employees left** us in 2015: Thulisiwe Ntombela, Mirriam Makhoba, Regina Masuku, Hloniphile Ntimbane and Thandeka Mbokazi (RPNs), Dorothy Wynne (ENA), Khethiwe Linda (child caregiver) and our maintenance technician Frederick Norris. Seven **new staff members** were welcomed: Hloniphile Ntimbane, Thobekile Xulu, Dunyisiwe Gumede und Ntokozo Khuluse (RPNs), Nompumelelo Buthelezi (EN) and the caregivers Xolani Maqwele and Thabani Zungu.

Public Relations:

Internet:

Our new homepage **moved to** www.bsg.org.za while our old website is still available at www.bbg.org.za

You will also find us on Social Media:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/BBG.ORG.ZA>
Google+: <https://plus.google.com/110017496259664788354/posts>
LinkedIn: <http://www.linkedin.com/groups?gid=1833474>
Twitter: @FatherGerard · <https://twitter.com/FatherGerard>
YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/user/FATHERGERARD>
XING: <https://www.xing.com/net/priffc80x/brotherhood/>

Photography:



Photo-artist Anselm Skogstad visited us from 12 to 26 February 2015. Apart from pictures of our work, he photographed scenes from the life of our local people of high artistic level.

Photo: © Anselm Skogstad



Film and Television:

We are very proud to have been chosen to display "The Face of Christ in the Neighbour" in the movie **"The Face of Christ. The Jesus Trilogy of Benedict XVI"**, which was broadcast on Bavarian Television on Easter Sunday **5 April 2015** at 7 p.m.

The film "the Face of Christ. The Jesus Trilogy of Benedict XVI" shows clearly and in a differentiated way in very different cinematic levels the way of thinking of Joseph Ratzinger/Benedict XVI, what arguments he uses in his search for truth, which historical-critical theses he contradicts, the justification of those who contradict him, but also where he highly appreciates the historical-critical method in theology.

Author and director **Ingo Langner has put himself on the search for the true "face of Christ"**. He did not intend to enter into a theological debate, but to take the audience along on a journey where he visualises the face of Jesus in many different ways: In the Bible, the neighbour, in the world, in others, in images and in prayer.

Ingo Langner's search has led him through Nazareth, Bethlehem, Jerusalem and on via Leipzig, Bavaria and England **to South Africa** and to the Vatican.

He met many different people on his way, among others the curia cardinals Kurt Koch and Gerhard Müller, Archbishop Georg Gänswein in the Vatican, the theologian Prof. Dr. Petra Heldt in Jerusalem, Prof. Dr. Thomas Söding from Bochum, Dr. Christian Schaller, Editor of Jesus books in Regensburg, **the Missionary Benedictine Father Gérard Lagleder in Mandeni, KwaZulu-Natal ...**

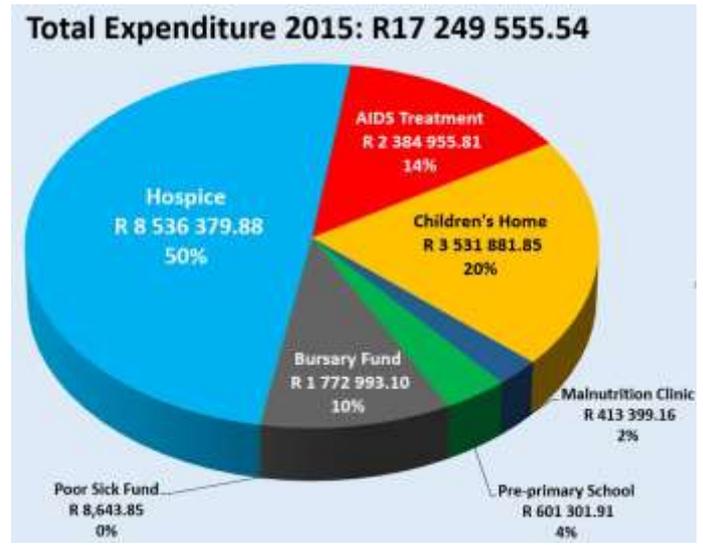
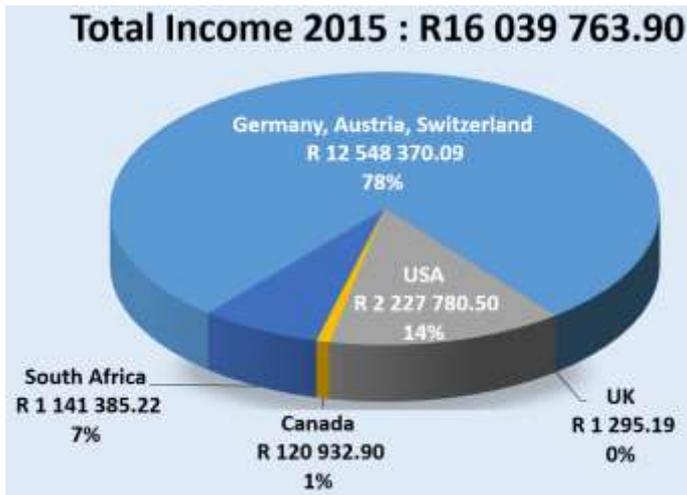
Ingo Langner wrote on 27 March 2015:

"In my interviews for Domradio and Radio Horeb I talked at length about the Care Centre. In response to the question whether I had found the face of Christ when I was filming: 'Yes, in the sick and terminally ill patients at Mass with Father Gérard', was my answer."



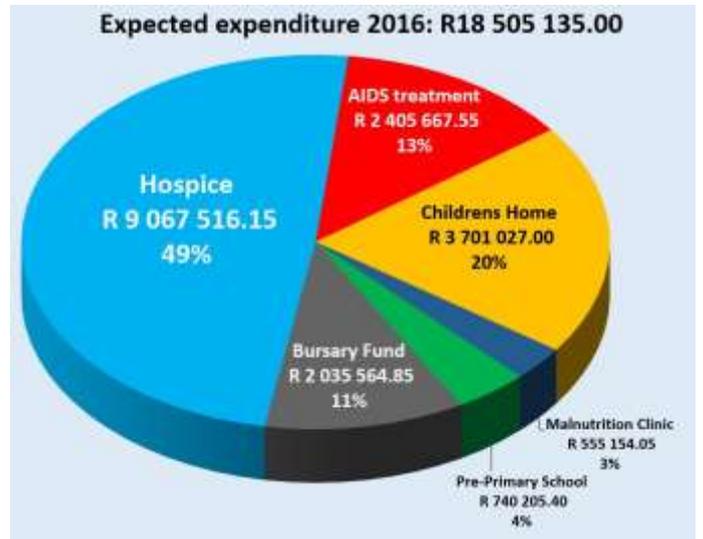
Finance Report 2015

Figures in South African Rand (ZAR) · 1 € = R17 | 1 \$ = R15 | 1 £= R21 | 1 CHF = R 16 (as on 8 April 2016)



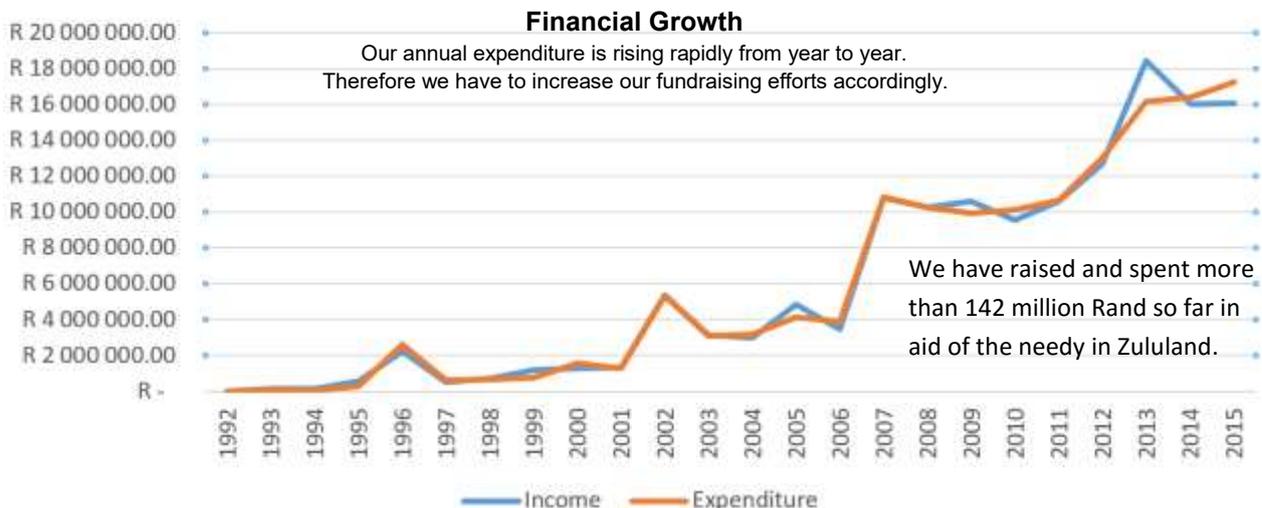
The following **Special Expenditures** are not contained in the list of expected running cost:

1. **Floor tiles** in the passage of the **Home Care Office**
R 19,900.00
2. Replacement of the defective **air-conditioner** at Blessed Gérard's **Church**
R 31,150.00
3. **Floor tiles** in the passage of the homework room, the play room and the dining room of the **Children's Home**
R 51,850.00
4. Conversion of the area between our community centre and the priest's house into a **sports field** (basketball court) for our **Children's Home**
R 195,150.00
5. 25 new **hospital beds** and 20 new **bedside lockers** for the wards of our **Hospice** inpatient unit to replace the irreparable furnishings that we had been given 20 years ago as already decommissioned furniture
R 424,900.00



We wholeheartedly thank all our donors for enabling us to render our services.

We serve an impoverished community. Therefore we have to offer all our services free of charge and must rely solely on donations and grants to finance our work.



Children Regaining Their Health Blessed Gérard's Malnutrition Clinic

The Blessed Gérard's Malnutrition Clinic is one of our longest running programs and sad to say, it is still necessary.

We have consultation hours in a parish hall in the centre of Sundumbili every second Saturday.

On a normal Saturday we see up to 30 babies and small children.

The young mothers often are HIV positive and then they are not allowed to breastfeed their babies because there is the danger that they infect their children.

We examine the children, weigh them and keep exact records of their progress.

Where poverty is the reason for malnutrition and breastfeeding is not sufficient or impossible, we give them milk, baby food and protein - enriched porridge free of charge.



But as important as feeding the baby is educating the mother or whoever takes care of the child.

Mrs. Nokuthula Thabethe, a qualified nursing sister, counsels the mothers in hygiene and health questions and explains the importance of a healthy feeding.

Severe malnutrition in early childhood leads to permanent brain damage.

For us it is a great joy to watch these children grow and to watch how **they regain their health** and their cheerfulness.



**Caring
without borders**

No Chance to Receive Support? Blessed Gérard's Relief Fund Helps

*"Last week - let us call her Ms. Hlupheka - came to see me during my office hours. She asked for assistance for a family in her neighbourhood. Two boys aged six and nine, living on their own. Their mother died eight months ago. The father is unknown. They have an uncle living nearby who lost his ID, which means **he has no chance to receive support** from the government. He earns a bit of money with car washing but he spends his money immediately drinking. They also have an aunt, but she has two children of her own. She is unemployed and also abuses alcohol. Neither the uncle nor the aunt show any interest in taking care of the children.*

The neighbours assist the two boys wherever they can but they need more help. The older boy is on AIDS treatment and might be defaulting which means mortal danger for him.



Ms. Hlupheka herself is taking care of her own grandchildren and working as a domestic worker, she cannot do more. She and the neighbours therefore request any assistance to help these two children.

I advised her to go to the Department of Social Development and to report

the case. They have to be informed first. We agreed to keep in touch in case further help is needed. We also provided her with shoes, clothes and blankets for the boys and food parcels for three months."

Nomfundo Myeza, Social Worker

By the way:

The picture above is a nice shot of a granny with her grandchildren, but does not depict Ms. Hlupheka.



A report by Hayne Clark



"It's not fair," they said, grumbling under their breaths.

"What's not fair?" I asked.

"It's not fair that the boys get to go on a camp and we don't, just because we're girls"

"You're right" I replied. "I just thought you girls wouldn't be interested in camping. Would you?"

Huge smiles lit up their faces as shouts of "YES, YES, YES WE WOULD!!!!" filled the room.

I knew from that moment that it was going to be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to contain the excitement as the time drew closer to the camp.

Our chosen location was Zinkwazi Forest Camp, tucked along the banks of the Zinkwazi lagoon, on the east coast of Kwazulu-Natal. Since the boys had gone camping during their winter break from school we decided that the girls would go in the last week of their summer break, just before returning to school.

As I had expected, the excitement was nearly unbearable for the girls as we checked and double checked everything. Special consideration had to be given to wardrobe, as you could imagine with young ladies, with some needing to be reminded that we would be on the beach and in the forest and some chosen items of clothing just wouldn't suit that environment or the summer heat. After much deliberation all bags were packed and we were ready to go.

The girls were in a joyous mood as we entered the gates of Zinkwazi Camp and found our allocated site. Everybody bundled out of the bus, emptied the trailer of all the bags, tents and supplies and then stood there with a "What now?" expression on their faces. It was obvious that many of them had never seen a tent being pitched before as Father Gerard, Miss Myeza and I began erecting the big, main tent the girls and Miss Myeza, our children's home deputy manager, would be sleeping in. What the girls lacked in knowledge they made up for

in willingness to help. The tents were pitched, beds made and camp set up. We were now ready for 3 days of fun and laughter.

After the hard work of setting up camp in the heat of a sub-tropical KZN summer, everybody was longing to cool down and from the minute they had seen it, the girls were 'chomping at the bit' to get into the swimming pool. Miss Myeza joined them in the pool while I went about making a fire and arranging the cooking station in preparation for supper. With night fast approaching I opted for a quick and easy meal and prepared hot dogs for the girls who kept asking for a five minute extension on their time in the pool. Eventually they returned to the camp, ravenously hungry. We all enjoyed our supper and sat around the fire chatting about the day. The evening was capped off on a sweet note as Miss Myeza pulled out a bag of marshmallows and shared them amongst the girls. None of us had ever had 's'mores' before and the roasted marshmallows between two plain biscuits was delicious and true to the name of the sweet



treat, the girls asked for s'more. Thereafter it was off to bed to get some rest, for we had planned a full day of fun in the sun on the beach the next day. I had expected that after the heat, work and swimming that the girls would be exhausted and fall asleep in minutes but as I lay in my tent I could hear them talking. Miss Myeza's red, sleep deprived eyes the next morning, told me that the chatting had continued long after my eyes had closed.

The next morning the girls were, surprisingly, up early and full of energy, ready for a day on the beach. After a five minute walk we were there, admiring the beautiful blue Indian Ocean. Zinkwazi Beach was the perfect location with the calm waters of the lagoon soothing those



who were not brave enough to contend with the crashing waves of the surf, while the rest of us dove into the cool, refreshing blue. The day was spent playing on the beach and in the water stopping only for some lunch. As the tide went out, the rock pools became exposed and the girls explored the rocky shore and jumped in the pools and small waves breaking near the rocks. As the day wound to an end we walked the short road back to camp. On our way back we stop at the local shop for something to drink and after hearing who we were the shop keeper gave all the girls a free soft-serve ice-cream each. That was the perfect end to a hot and sunny day.

When we got back to camp, there was the small task of preparing supper before it got too dark. It took a little persuasion but eventually the chores were done and a hearty supper stew was on the boil. Miss Myeza made a simple dough and taught the girls how to make 'stick-bread' which is dough wound around a dry stick and roasted over the open flames of the campfire. The girls loved the activity and the tasty bread that resulted from it. I had thought that this would certainly be an early night after a strenuous day but it seemed like these girls had inexhaustible batteries. Somebody mentioned the word "pool" and suddenly everybody was complaining about how unbearably hot it was. We relented and they went down to the pool to have a swim in the dark, which the girls found most exciting.

The next morning we went down to the Zinkwazi lagoon, walked along the banks looking at the natural environ-

ment and sat on the jetty, talking and enjoying the scenery. A choice was given to the girls as to where they would like to spend the day. To my surprise they chose to stay at camp instead of going to the beach. I soon realized that by "stay at camp" they actually meant "stay in the pool". So needless to say, most of the day was spent at the poolside or lazing around camp. Breakfast and lunch was prepared by the girls themselves with small groups being responsible for different chores, from chopping vegetables, cooking, setting out of plates and cutlery to washing up. They soon realized that co-operation was needed if the chore was to be successfully completed and their action had a direct effect on the final outcome. So slowly they learnt to get along and work together for the benefit of everybody.

The next day was divided between beach activities and swimming pool activities, with the swimming pool getting the lion's share of the time. In the afternoon I informed the girl's that Father Gerard would be coming over to join us for our last supper of the camp. The girls, eager to impress, scurried around to make sure that the camp was neat and tidy and began to prepare for the barbeque chicken meal we would have. We spent a lovely evening with Father Gerard, with the girls on their best behaviour. While the chicken roasted over the coals we played charades which turned out to be hilarious.



After supper Father treated us to ice-cream and chocolate sauce at The Raffia Restaurant which was situated within the camp premises. Ice-cream always has a way of making everything perfect. We thanked Father and made our way back to our tents to spend our last night around the fire, telling stories and laughing.

We were all sad the next morning as we had to break camp, take down the tents and say goodbye to Zinkwazi Forest Camp. But there was just enough time for one last dip in the swimming pool before the bus arrived to take us back home.

As we drove home, just as the boys had done, the girls asked, "So where are we going to next year Mr. Clark?"

"I'm not sure. Where would you like to go?" I replied.

"Anywhere" they replied "As long as it has a swimming pool."

Adventure and Excitement

Walks and Outings with Children of Blessed Gérard's Children's Home

Snippets from Maresi Rehder's Diary

"One of the most pleasant things I did during my stay at Blessed Gérard's Care Centre was the daily walk with the smallest children.

*They were too small to attend pre-school and so Mr. Clark, the manager of the Children's Home, or one of the caregivers took them for a long **adventure** walk to the bush next to the Care Centre.*



There were so many things to be discovered, little beetles, lizards and from time to time a huge crab. The three little ones could spend a long time watching them.

Another thing they always loved was a so-called jumping competition. Who jumps the highest or the farthest?

Knowing their hard fate before they found a home in the Children's Home, it touched me deeply to see the fun they had on these walks.

It is not that these outings are so very special, it is about the possibility of giving these children a normal childhood with all the love, care and fun they deserve."



**Caring
without borders**

*"Easter Sunday and Easter Monday were like always very **exciting** days for all of our children in Blessed Gérard's Children's Home.*

After Holy Mass all children, especially the younger ones, waited impatiently for the Easter egg hunt. They had to stay inside in the playroom and were not allowed to look outside into the garden.

As soon as Mr. Clark, our manager of the Children's Home, had hidden all the lovely chocolate eggs he called them and they ran as fast as they could to the playground.

27 children running round and searching everywhere for eggs, climbing trees, looking under stones and bushes, 27 children laughing.

In the end every child got his just share, a handful of chocolate and sweets.



But this lovely day hadn't ended yet.

Easter and Christmas we take our children for a special outing, like families do.

Many of our children come from most difficult circumstances and it is our task to give them a sheltered childhood as normal as possible.

This year we invited the children to a musical. It was the smaller children's turn on Sunday, the other ones on Monday.

Many of them were in the theatre for the first time and were absolutely fascinated. They watched quietly and with big eyes and when two of our children were invited to the stage to dance together with the "Princess", they were delighted.

On our way home while we had a Hamburger and an ice cream three of the girls came and said: this was the best Easter outing ever. – Thank you"

Celebrating the Feast of Blessed Gérard

on 18th October 2015 in Mandeni



Main celebrant Prior John Paul Mwaniki Gutu OSB of Inkamana Abbey, the new parish priest of Mandeni, David Mthiyane, the Dedicated Members of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard Dr. Paul Thabethe and Mrs. Thuli Thabethe, Yvonne Renaud, Maresi Rehder and Father Gérard at the festive Holy Mass.

and finally Prior John Paul gave all new members a special blessing.



The gifts were brought to the altar in a liturgical dance.



Prior John Paul and Dr. Nzimande, who was the MC as usual, rejoiced at the festive function that followed. Father Gérard expressed his special gratitude.



Prior John Paul blessed the medals for the new members of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard after his sermon

and Father Gérard conferred the members' medal first to him and then to Fr. Mthiyane as a



sign of their solemn reception into the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard. Thuli



and Dr. Paul Thabethe, Dr. Khaya Nzimande and Maresi Rehder conferred the members' medals to the other new members



The children of our pre-primary school & crèche expressed their joy in an even more moving way.

Father Gérard handed Sven Anderson, the General Manager of Blessed Gérard's Care Centre, his long service award and he honoured other



employees for their long service.





Father Gérard gave an Order of Malta rosary as a private gift to Mrs. Patricia Ntuli, the head of our pre-primary school & crèche, as a sign of his gratitude. He honoured the manager of our Children's Home, Mr. Hayne Clark

and the General Manager of our Care Centre, Mr. Sven



Anderson, with the same personal gift.



The children of our Children's Home sang and danced afterwards in exuberant joy.

A young singer from the audience asked permission to take the microphone and sang with amazing confidence and admirable talent.



The new members Prior John Paul and Father David Mthiyane beamed



— the Prior nearly as bright as his medal — closely followed by our sound engineers Mthokozisi and Muzi.



Prayer

on the Feast of Blessed Gérard

O God, who exalted Blessed Gérard because of his care for the poor and the sick, and through him founded in Jerusalem the Order of St. John the Baptist, give us the grace of seeing, as he did, the image of your Son in our brothers and sisters. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit One God, for ever and ever. Amen.



Blessed Gérard, pray for us!

Kindly help us to help!

All our services entirely depend on your support!

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:**

Donations to **Blessed Gérard's Care Centre** are tax deductible. [Reference 18/11/13/2777]

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.

If you want to donate regularly, please organise a stop order on your account.

If you live in the **U.S.A.:**

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.

Checks 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, NE 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 are subscribed to **PayPal**, you may send us a **donation online** using our e-mail father@bbg.org.za

Pledge to donate

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

I want to support the **Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard** as a **Donor member** through an annual quarterly monthly donation of (amount): _____ (currency) _____

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

First Names: _____

Surname or Company/Society: _____

Date of birth: _____

(use letters, not figures for the month) _____

Postal address: _____

Postal/ZIP Code: _____ Town/City: _____

State/Province: _____ Country: _____

☎ (home) Code _____ No. _____

☎ (work) Code _____ No. _____

Fax Code _____ No. _____

E-mail Address: _____

Homepage URL: <http://> _____

Signed at: _____ Date: _____

Signature: _____

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

Fax +27 86 6938940

See <http://bbg.org.za/finance/donation.htm> for information about obtaining tax deductible certificates in several countries.



Once we had a visitor from the United States of America. He was a physician well experienced in hospice and palliative medicine.

He said it was amazing and he was not used to the fact, that patients in our hospice were happy and smiling in spite of their poor prognosis.

Thank you for helping us to do much more than just putting a smile onto the face of terminally ill patients!

Asked how we can cope with the fact that we treat, nurse and accompany patients during their last days on earth all the time we usually respond: If you could experience what situations they are often coming from, you would understand that we are proud to be able to give them

a culture shock of love.

May God reward you for your generosity!

Father Gérard

We, the children of **Blessed Gérard's Children's Home**, express our gratitude for all your benevolence and support on behalf of the several thousands of people, who have been helped, cared for and looked after by the **Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard**.



Kindly update your current contact details

by sending an e-mail to bbg@bbg.org.za or a SMS to Father Gérard at +27 82 4924043
That will make it much easier for us to contact you. We will never share your private details with anybody.