



Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard

NEWS LETTER
No. 17

Easter 1999

Dear members and friends of our brotherhood,

Celebrating Easter we commemorate Christ's death, which is our ransom from death and his resurrection which is our rising to life.

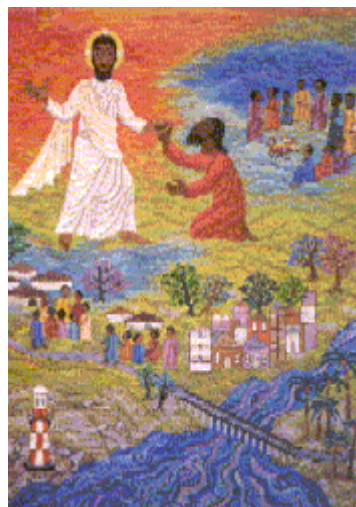
I wish you, for this Easter Season, that you may be able to make Easter, resurrection, new life possible in yourself, your family and others.

Our service is distinctly dedicated to enable people to live, to give them renewed life in body, mind and soul and we will experience the same new life in ourselves by doing so.

Christ's new life, his Easter gift, we received in baptism, but he renews it in the forgiveness of our sins and in the Eucharistic communion. God wants us to have life in fullness, eternal life and earthly life. This is why Christ healed the sick, consoled the grieving and encouraged the depressed and he said: As the Father sent me, so I am sending you. It is our vocation now to make Easter happen in others by giving them new life in every respect.

*Enjoy life!
Yours Sincerely*

Father Gérard



The Kosovo Crisis and the Order
of Malta



The Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard is a relief organisation of the Order of Malta. We thought that it might be interesting for you, our members, to know the assistance being given to refugees in the war torn area of Kosovo and the surrounding countries, by the Emergency Corps of the Order of Malta.

The newspapers, television and radio reports are all full of the tragedies which are taking place in Kosovo and Yugoslavia. There are graphic pictures screened on T.V. daily, of thousands of refugees fleeing from their homes. Some of them have been given five minutes to leave their homes. The old and the young, men, women and children, with nothing but the clothes they have on, are forced to leave. They have to travel hundreds of kilometers by foot, by cart, by tractor or any other possible transport to avoid the atrocities which are being committed against the people of that country.

The sheer numbers of refugees poses a huge problem for the neighbouring countries such as Albania and Macedonia. To give shelter, to feed and to provide adequate medical treatment for hundreds of thousands of traumatised people, is an undertaking which takes enormous good will, efficient personell, the infrastructure, many volunteers and millions of dollars.

The Order began assisting by working in the Montenegro region, through the German Malteser-Hilfsdienst. This work began as early as December 1998 when tens of thousands of people were expelled from Kosovo. At that time Malteser-Hilfsdienst set up a refugee camp for 10 000 people. While the German volunteers were in Montenegro, they managed to recruit enough local personell who could continue the relief work after the Germans had to leave the country.

Since then, in different towns in Albania, the Austrian, the German and the French Associations of the Order have set up refugee camps to house and treat 30 000 people. In Macedonia the Order of Malta has already distributed relief goods to the value of US\$280,000.

The cost of an operation on this scale is enormous and it is being funded by donations from the Order's entities from all over the world. It is wonderful to know that, in times of crisis, different nationalities do stand together. The British and Belgian Associations of the Order have donated thousands of blankets. The American and Spanish Associations of the Order and other non-Order organisations have made thousands of US dollars available for the work of the Emergency Corps of the Order for use in the Kosovo crisis.

We hope and pray for a speedy solution to the problems in this area and we pray for the safety of all the relief workers who have sacrificed their time and energy to assist in the crisis.



Letters to the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard

This is an extract of a letter from the parents of one of our patients.

Dated March 1999.

"Greetings to you all. My wife and I wish to thank the staff of the Care Centre for the wonderful love, kindness and attention meted out to our daughter, in the closing days of her life. We thank God she died in dignity, with God working in you all. May the good Lord bless and keep you all in the hollow of His hand."

Signed - Neville & Nancy

To the
Brotherhood
of Blessed
Gérard.

Thank you for
lending me
the drip stand

From

Dane
Getkate

This is a copy of the letter from Dane Getkate. One of our junior members, who fell off his bicycle, fractured his arm and had to elevate it. Dane is a Grade 5 pupil and had to write this note with his left hand.

We pray that your arm will heal and you will soon be back in the saddle.

May we introduce you to our new Volunteer from "Overseas"?

Miss Melanie von Wolff from Munich, Germany, who arrived towards the end of March. She will work with us for five weeks. Miss von Wolff is a qualified nursing sister.

She writes:

"I would like to introduce myself to you: My name is Melanie v. Wolff. I am 24 years old and a student at Ludwig-Maximilian's University in Munich. I trained as a nursing sister from 1994 to 1998 in Vienna and Munich. I found the community of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard when I was looking for an institution, where I could experience another culture, religion, language and medical problems. I want to utilise these five weeks in South Africa to prepare myself to work for the "medicus sans frontiere", which is my big wish. I think this time here will bring me a big step closer to this goal."

Melanie v. Wolff



Introducing our new employee



Caregiver Miss Ntombizethu Radebe.

Blessed Gérard's Care Centre & Hospice



Fr. Gérard T Lagleder OSB, Patients, Staff and Volunteers in the Chapel of Blessed Gérard's Care Centre & Hospice

Daily Holy Mass is held in the Chapel of Blessed Gérard's Care Centre & Hospice for the patients, volunteers and staff. It is attended by all who find inspiration and comfort in beginning each day by partaking in a time of worship and recollection.

Tuberculosis Epidemic

The World Health Organisation has initiated a programme to eradicate Tuberculosis in Africa. Statistics given by the government prove that more people die from tuberculosis than from AIDS. If AIDS is as prevalent as the statistics prove, then we are looking at an enormous problem in our area. Between the two diseases, TB and AIDS, we face a very bleak future in kwaZulu/Natal. Therefore the Brotherhood is happy to be involved from the onset of the campaign. Our organisation's involvement is to work in a practical way, together with Dr. Jonathan from Stanger, who is the co-ordinator for this area and all other medical professionals and institutions and at grass roots level with the patients.



Our volunteers / active members at the Associate Members' meeting on 27th March 1999



Caregivers' Training at Blessed Gérard's Care Centre & Hospice

If only I had said NO!

(This is a short story written in the interest of promoting awareness of the impending disaster in our area and depicting the work carried out in Blessed Gérard's Care Centre & Hospice.)

This story is based on true facts, but for confidentiality reasons, the names are fictional.

There are many caregivers scurrying around, busy as bees. One patient being bathed, another being fed and yet another having her wounds dressed by the caregivers. But the lady in the bed next to mine lies still, with her baby by her side.

The baby is six months old, but is the size of a two-month-old baby. She cries continuously. Her arms and legs are like matchsticks. Her mother, Thokozile, is not much better, weighing only 40kgs. She has little milk left in her breasts. She cries as she watches her baby, listless and unable to swallow the milk formula given to her in her bottle. Thokozile loves her little one and ponders on the next few months, as that is all they may have left. Mother and baby both have AIDS. Thokozile asks her husband to sit next to her to comfort her, but he has to continue to try and find work - aware of what he has passed on to his wife and child. Knowing that he is also HIV positive, he sees his fate, as if in a movie, playing itself out before his eyes.

The voice of a caregiver interrupts my thoughts as she brings me the medication for my tuberculosis. Her compassion shows in her eyes and I hear it in her voice, for she knows what is to become of me. Because, you see, I

too am HIV positive and I too will one day be just like Thokozile and her little girl.

Suddenly my heart begins to pound when the sound of the buzzer goes and the little beacon of help shines red above the bed of Thokozile. The nurse comes, there is lots of hustle and bustle and then finally, silent tears.

The tiny lifeless bundle is carried from Thokozile. When the curtains are drawn back, I see the small forlorn shape of Thokozile, lying on her bed, her whole body trembling with the sobs of heartfelt pain. She has no more strength.

I try to get up to go to her, to comfort her in her time of loss - but I too do not have the strength. Suddenly, shockingly, I am totally aware that I will follow little Dumisile. But unlike her, I know why I am sick. I ask myself how long do I have, one month, or two or maybe one year?

If only I had said NO!



Caregivers looking after another patient

Yet Another First for the Brotherhood!

The Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard renders emergency services at the Mandeni Raft Race.

At the request of Mandeni Round Table, the organisers of the Mandeni Raft Race to render First Aid & Emergency Services we assisted at this annual event. The response from our active members was very encouraging. A nurse, a paramedic, a Basic Ambulance Assistant and a driver, manned the ambulance. It was initially stationed at the start of the race and then at the finish.



The secondary emergency vehicle, which was used as a backup for the ambulance, was based at the Care Centre & Hospice. A nurse, a first-aider and a caregiver/driver were the voluntary personnel.

The volunteers and staff of Blessed Gérard's Care Centre & Hospice are on call 24 hours per day anyway for the patients of the Care Centre & Hospice. But if someone is in dire need, we never refuse to respond to a call for help. Our ambulance has often been dispatched to such emergencies as motor vehicle accidents, people injured in violence, shootings and other sick calls e.g. strokes, heart attacks etc.

In response to this need in our community, we have decided to start a new project, which we call

Blessed Gérard's First Aid & Emergency Service.

To develop this project we want to equip our secondary emergency vehicle with a trailer, containing a First Aid tent, First Aid materials, field beds, blankets and other supplies to enable us to render First Aid services at

large functions and major accidents. This would also increase our effectiveness as a part of the local disaster control and civil defense strategy. We also want to add to our numbers of qualified First Aid volunteers for this project.

If you or anyone you know would like to get involved in first aid and voluntary ambulance service, please contact the Brotherhood office.

Thank you to..

those volunteers who went out of their way to assist the Brotherhood during the Mandeni raft race. We mention especially **Sr. Sanet van Zyl, Sr. Laurin Bishop, Mrs. Beverley Dunn, Mrs. Elise Bozas, Mr. Nkosinathi Dlamini, Mr. Martin Brits and Fr. Gérard**, all of who went out of their way to help.

We would also like to express our gratitude to their families for their understanding and patience.

Blessed Gérard's Bursary Fund

We would like to congratulate Mr. P. Dunn and Miss Mthembu, who both excelled during the academic year of 1998, in their studies at technikon and university.

Mr. Dunn, who is studying Analytical Chemistry, was awarded the prize for the highest overall mark and achieved a distinction in Chemistry.

Miss Mthembu, who is studying B.A. Social Work, passed her second year with a first class in sociology.

Blessed Gérard's Bursary Scheme is currently sponsoring ten students at junior school, high school, Technikon and university levels.

Blessed Gérard's Pre-primary School & Crèche



Our teacher, Miss Patricia Zikhali and the children who attend Blessed Gérard's Pre-primary School & Crèche.

We are happy to report that due to the encouragement of our new project co-ordinator, Rev. Father Siphon Gamede, and the happy atmosphere which Miss Zikhali has created in our Pre-primary School & Crèche and also because of her bubbly personality, the number of children attending on a daily basis is now 28. This facility was built to accommodate 30 children.



The management committee has always found the children to be content and attentive whenever they have paid a visit to the project. We would like to thank Miss Zikhali and congratulate her on the many achievements in the three months she has worked for the Brotherhood.



MEMBERS' NEWS

We wish a blessed and very happy birthday to



Helene Gierl on her 86th
 M. Claudia Damm on her 80th
 Johann Priller and Regina Jenczmionka on their 75th
 Myrtle Dunn on her 70th
 Sr. Bernice Donharl and Michael Brombierstäudl on
 their 65th
 Margaret Hawthorn, Guy Dunn, Tine v. d. Steege
 and Theodor Zeisel on their 60th
 Carmella Lazarus on her 50th
 Brigitta Seifert, Wilhelm Bader, Agrineth Khumalo,
 Anthony Ordon, Maximilian Rauecker and Anna
 Devita on their 40th
 Patricia Zikhali, Wilma Jenkinson, Beate Nießl and
 Gloria Nhlangothi on their 30th
 Nkosingiphile Mthembu and Prena Kadirveloo on their 21st

Guess Who!



Congratulations to Louis & Yvonne Renaud
 on your Golden Wedding Anniversary.
 You are an example to all of us. We wish you
 God's blessings and may He grant you good
 health and happiness now and in the future.
 Mr. & Mrs. Renaud were the first people in
 South Africa to join the Brotherhood after
 the founder members. Their support and
 hard work in our organisation has been
 invaluable. Mrs. Renaud even became a
 Dedicated Member of our organisation.

Congratulations to

all our members who have passed their Care Giver's Course
 Nkosinathi Dlamini, Annastacia Geswindt, S'Thokozile
 Gumede, Joice Buselaphi Khoza, Nokuthula N
 Khumalo, Patience Mabaso, Abigail Qondeni
 Mabaso, Bridget B Maphumulo, Happiness Mfeka,
 Dee-Ann Morris, Hildah M Mpanza, Angel N
 Mpanza, Purity H Mthethwa, Promise Khanyi
 Mzimela, Nqabile Ncube, Jabu Shange, Nozipho
 Shange, Thembile Eunice Shezi, Gizelle
 Terreblanche, Ntombizonke P Zungu.



Fare well & Good luck to

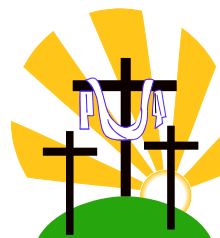
Niklas Rohlf who left in January to continue the practical part of his
 training, in Germany. He spent five months working with us in Blessed
 Gérard's Care Centre & Hospice. We wish him all the very best for his
 future and thank him for all the good work he has done.

Stephan Killian, from Germany, who has been volunteering for us for
 many months. He has now gone home to begin his studies in the nursing
 field. We wish him everything of the very best in his career in the medical
 field. We have no doubt that he will be very successful. Thank you for all
 your wonderful and dedicated help.

Heather Kalkwarf who will be working in Germany for one year before she
 returns to South Africa to begin her studies.

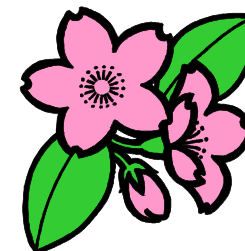
Sincere condolences to

Mrs. E E Luthuli from Empangeni, whose daughter
 passed away



Best wishes for a speedy recovery

to
 Herrn Werner Neckermann who was involved in a
 severe accident. We wish you lots of patience and
 courage and keep you especially in our prayers!



WELCOME to all our new members:

Mr Michael Perigo, Mr Antonio Carlos del Campo, Mr Nkosiyathanda Emmanuel Mthenjane, Mr Martin Brits, Herrn Ludwig Rein, Frau Centa Rein, Mrs Florence Joseph Gerard Lejeune, Miss Sylvie Andree Pierre Leonard, S H Dr Peter Freiherr von Fürstenberg, Herrn Franz X Stegerer, Prof Edmundo Pellizari Fiho, Provinzhaus der Marienschwestern vom Karmel, Herrn Johann Priller, Mr Daniel de Jesus Ruiz Flores, Mr Nkosinathi Magnificent Dlamini, Frau Marianne Richthammer, Mr Fredrick Peter Dunn, Miss Themobile Eunice Shezi, Mrs Sindisiwe Promise Buthelezi, Frau Luise Schedel, Miss Patience Ntombenhle Mabaso, Mrs Sibongile Lindiwe Gumbi, Mrs Ntombizodwa Sindisiwe Dangazela, Mrs Zethu Sithembile Ngobese, Mrs Thandekile Nonhlanhla Mabaso, Mrs Lillian Sibiyi, Miss Sthokozile Beatrice Gumede, Mrs Sindisiwe Gumede, Mrs Yvonne Dudu Gumede, Miss Angel Ntombifuthi Mpanza, Miss Abigail Qondeni Mabasa, Miss Mati Hildah Mpanza, Miss Purity Hlengiwe Mthethwa, Mrs Sindisiwe Gumede, Mrs Thuleleni Sagacious Gumede, Mrs Gugu Patricia Zwane, Mrs Nomsa Valencia Gumede, Mrs Victoria Nomkhosi Mthethwa, Miss Bathabile Bridget Maphumulo, Miss Nokuthula Nomusa Khumalo, Mrs Cleo Rose Firmin, Miss Nozipho Shange, Mr Claude Bidal, Mrs Thulisiwe Lillian Mathonsi, Miss Jabu Pretty Shange, Mrs Nelisiwe Rebecca Sibiyi, Mrs Goodness Lynette Mathaba, Miss Promise Khanyi Mzimela, Mrs Nonhlanhla Fortunate Nkosi, Mrs Joyce Zodwa Ndwandwe, Mrs Gloria Zandile Buthelezi, Mrs Zibuyisile Cynthia Ndlovu, Mr Sibusiso Mabaso, Mr Stephen Alloy, Mrs Theresa Schepers, Miss Ntombizonke Philisiwe Zungu, Mrs Gloria Ntombi Nhlangothi, Mrs Cynthia Sthembile Msebeni, Miss Gizelle Terreblanche, Miss Lindokuhle Happiness Mfeka, Mrs Sibongile Constance Ntsetha, Mrs Senamile Kindness Sokhulu, Miss Thandekile Nonhlanhla Mabaso, Mrs Nozipho Nokuthula Mbonambi, Miss Lulu Jane Gumede, Miss Agrineth Khumalo, Mrs Monica Philile Zikhali, Mr Ntokozo Goodman Mthokozi Khuzwayo, Mrs Yvonne Sibongile Ndimande, Mrs Khethiwe Thabisile Nene, Mrs Chalote Nkosingiphile Zulu, Signora Vietri Raffaele, Signora Michelina Luciano, Dr Thomas P. Belson, Miss Thembisile Memory Dube, Mrs Thina Ntombenhle Mkhwanazi, Mr Collin Ntuli, Mrs Johanna Dumazile Mkhize, Mrs Mumsy Cabangile Dlamini, Mrs Coby Veronica Mathonsi, Mr Raphael Njabulo Mathonsi, Miss Veronica Nokulunga Mokoena, Mrs Kornelia Johanna Spyropoulos, Miss Ntombezingane Re-joyce Mbonambi, Mr Joseph James John Stanford, Miss Sizakele Euphemia Nhleko, Malteser-Hilfsdienst Landsberg.

Membership statistics on 15.4.99	Active Members	Donors	Spiritual Supporters	Total
South Africa	264	85	24	373
Tanzania	0	0	1	1
Austria	0	1	4	5
Belgium	0	2	1	3
Germany	18	165	70	253
Denmark	0	1	16	17
Finland	0	0	1	1
Great Britain	9	1	1	11
Italy	2	20	1	23
Ireland	2	6	1	9
Hungary	0	0	1	1
Malta	0	0	1	1
Switzerland	1	0	0	1
USA	10	21	17	48
Canada	0	2	2	4
El Salvador	0	0	2	2
Chile	0	0	1	1
Brazil	0	0	1	1
Mexico	0	1	0	1
UAE	0	1	0	1
Japan	0	0	1	1
Australia	0	2	2	4
Total	306	308	148	762

NB: Active members outside South Africa are members, who have worked in South Africa as volunteers. These members keep their active status. Many of them continue to support us actively, e.g. through fundraising and canvassing for membership.

Making your donation

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

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

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

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

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Don't Forget

Dates:

26 th June 1999	Celebration - St. John's Feast
21 st August 1999	Associate Members' Meeting
16 th October 1999	Celebration - Bl. Gérard's Feast
28 th October 1999	7 th Anniversary of the foundation of our Brotherhood

Please make your plans around these days to enable you to attend the celebrations and meetings!