



# Newsletter 2017

## Annual Report 2016



### 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](mailto:bbg@bbg.org.za)  
Homepage: [www.bbg.org.za](http://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 needy).

### "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>

A special vote of thanks is due to Mrs. Maresi Rehder who contributed most of the pictures and articles to this newsletter again.

### Brotherhood



## We are ...

- a group of more than 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 had been 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.**

# Where misery is overcome by love

An image film by Moritz Schreiner, Simon Rost, Peter Schöllhorn and Jessica Mayer

Mandeni, South Africa · HIV infection rate: 76%



## Father Gérard:

We are in South Africa, and there we are in the province of kwaZulu/Natal, in Mandeni.

We are helping the people through Blessed Gérard's Care Centre.

This Blessed Gérard's Care Centre is a centre of comprehensive care:

- We run a large inpatient **hospice**.
- One of our most important programmes is a large **AIDS treatment programme**.
- We have a **Children's Home** in this house.
- We run a **Clinic for malnourished infants**.
- We have a **pre-primary school and crèche**.
- We have a **bursary fund** where we help gifted children of poor parents to pay for their education.
- We have a **First Aid and Emergency Service**.
- We help people who unexpectedly run into some emergency situation (**Relief Fund**).
- And we have a **Poor-Sick-Fund** which helps poor sick people who need medical treatment and can't afford it themselves.

## Wiseman Zulu:

My name is Wiseman Zulu.



My job here: I am a therapeutic counsellor. A therapeutic counsellor has to go and monitor those patients who are taking medication from us. So, as they take medication here, they have to go home. While they are at home they have different problems:

- Some of them just feel isolated.



- Some of them don't have food. I have to look after them as they can't take medication without food.

**You just have to bring your heart.**

**Go in and be a solution in those problems.**

## Dr. Khaya Nzimande:

I'm Khaya Nzimande.

I work here as a doctor in the hospice and also in the HIV Clinic.



Well, people do ask me how do I deal with death and why am I in such a depressing environment?  
 And I must admit: Initially, before I came here, I also had that impression that if I am going to a hospice I am going to see people dying – you know – what’s the use?  
 But I have been here now for almost eight years and within the first year I changed the way I looked at hospice care and palliative care in the same sense.  
 We actually make a big difference in people’s lives, because people who are coming here are people who have been to hospital usually and the hospital has said “We cannot do anything for you” and we don’t have that line (of thinking) in our organisation.  
 So we know there is always something to do, even if it just means controlling the person’s symptoms and taking away their pain, making sure they are comfortable.  
 That makes a whole lot of difference in that person’s life, even if they do pass away.  
 But if they pass away or they die they are comfortable, they are smiling, they don’t have any pain.  
 It gives us a sense of fulfilment, that at least we made the person comfortable.  
 And it is a bonus if a person comes in a bed and walks out alive and goes back to the community we feel that, o.k., at least we made a difference in one person’s life.  
 So **it is mostly more about a sense of fulfilment and reward** more than a sense of pride.



**Hayne Clark:**

My name is Hayne Clark and I am the Children’s Home manager here at Blessed Gérard’s Care Centre.  
 In many cases the children that reach us are



often AIDS-orphans where their parents have died because of AIDS.  
 Some of them are very young when they come in.  
 There will be trauma that the child experiences in the whole environment of losing their parents and they don’t understand why and they don’t quite grasp the concept of HIV and AIDS and what has happened.



So when we bring them in we use our caregivers first of all to mother these children so that they feel accepted.  
 I feel so so proud when our children who have passed through our hands go out into the world and make something of themselves.  
 We are not looking for everybody to be a rocket scientist or a statesman, just to be a good upstanding person and then have the ability to say: I made it!

**It is not about a job. It’s a vocation** and there is no prouder feeling than to see a child that you know you had just a little part in making their lives what they are when they get out there.

**Father Gérard:**

These people have no health insurance and therefore we have to fundraise to pay for their upkeep, to pay for their care, to pay for their treatment.

We have all the wonderful helpers, we have all the buildings and we have all the cars.

All we need is the money to keep the whole thing running and this is why we say:

**Please do help us to help!**



# When children's safety nets have failed

An overview of Blessed Gérard's Children's Home by Philani Mathonsi



The Blessed Gérard's Children's Home is a subsidiary of Blessed Gérard's Care Centre. It was instituted by the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard in the year 2000, as the extension of care and support for children identified as orphaned and vulnerable and needing alternative care. One of the serious causes of children's vulnerability begins when their parents or guardians have terminal illnesses and are unable to provide necessary care during the period of their admission at Blessed Gérard's

Hospice.

The Children's Home takes over parental responsibility once the children's safety nets have failed and ensures a holistic development to all admitted children in its facility. There are currently 40 children admitted in residential care. The Children's Home staff include a manager responsible for overall functioning of the facility, a full time Professional Social Worker responsible for children's admission and therapeutic programs and sixteen Care Givers who are scheduled for a day and night shift; they have been extensively trained in child care and parenting.

A detailed description of Social Workers' responsibilities include

## Admission of Children

The Social Worker is responsible for administrative du-

ties on admission of children; these administrative duties ensure that each child's situation has been thoroughly investigated before removal by designated child protection organizations, a child has been legally removed from parents or guardian and a child meets requirements for children in need of care and protection as listed in section 151 (1) of Children's Act No 38 of 2005. The Social Worker is responsible for ensuring that all children have legal documents such as birth certificates, a completed form 36 for a child's removal and placement at a children's home, a completed integrated development plan (IDP), immunisation cards and school reports. Before a child is admitted in our residential care, Doctor's medical examination and HIV/AIDS, TB test are necessary to guarantee a child's health conditions and medication.



**Caring  
without borders**



The main guardian of Children at this Children's Home is Father Gérard, therefore upon admission of a child, he is informed and children are introduced to him.



## Social Work Therapeutic Program

The Social Worker is responsible for the advanced individual therapeutic program which enhances the situation of each child in a form of individual counselling based on the needs of each child. The purpose of individual counselling is to assist the child in gaining insight and coping abilities in relation to his or her situation. Depending on the age of the child, this counselling prepares the child to adapt to a new environment once the family safety net has failed.



The children are further assisted by a group therapeutic program that includes sessions of life skills where they learn important life skills that enable them to make appropriate life choices as teenagers. These life skills address the children's personal development; they educate them on aspects of peer pressure, substance abuse, intimate relationships, reproductive health, HIV and AIDS, teenage pregnancy, bullying and difficult behaviour. With these skills children were prepared to assume a responsible teenage hood. During June/July school holiday, the children attended these life skills learning sessions to enhance their situation in adolescence and their participation was good.



### Social Worker in Community Development intervention

During child protection week, the Social Worker was part of leading the awareness campaigns on Child Protection. This is the national child protection week commemorated to educate communities about the rights and protection of children. The targeted groups were Sundumbili Primary School and Cranbury Primary. More educational campaigns on children's rights and protection are still essential.

### Evaluation based on my experiences

In my experiences as a Social Worker of Blessed Gérard Children's Home, I have observed that this place



provides an excellent working environment. The management personnel are approachable and there are clear policies and procedures. My colleagues are easy people to interact with; so this good spirit makes good collective efforts in the performance of caring functionality.



The work environment is also superb because there are sufficient resources needed to execute our core business of child care and support. Most importantly, I have interacted very well with the children and they pursue a great human potential and I will support them in pursuit of their personal goals. Children's welfare and personal development needs are our focal strength as we ensure that they have healthy meals, emotional support and convenient schooling - their schools are easily accessible. There is no overcrowding in both female and male rooms so the living conditions are conducive for all children in our care.



# Providing love, nurturing and understanding

## My experiences of Social Work practice at Blessed Gérard's Children's Home



The purpose of this article is to reflect on my personal feelings and professional engagement as a Social Worker of children in residential care of Blessed Gérard's Care Centre. Social Work practice with children in residential care can be best achieved in two

practice models that are developmental and therapeutic forms of interventions to address the diverse needs of children who have been identified as "need of care and protection".

In my experiences in working with children at the Children's Home, I have realized that, there can be alternative from entering the child's life as an expert to the "self" that is plainly willing to help. The concept of "self" refers to the individual who comes willingly, empathetically, sensitively and purposefully plans to offer relief for the life of the child identified as the child in need of care and protection. I have used myself as an instrument to dwell deeply on the lives of children who need my help. Although I am a Social Worker guided by a professional ethos and legislative framework, I realize that my practice is more than that because in a children's home most children see a father figure in me. Therefore a father should come as the "self" to provide love, nurturing and understanding of the child's circumstances.

Many authors in the social work domain have also reflected on the concept of "skills use of Self" where the professional utilizes himself to genuinely help the individual needing therapy and in reaching developmental goals. With regard to this approach, I have been able to interact with children successfully in my therapeutic interventions because I have emphasized to them that the one on one interaction with them has specific goals to ensure the fulfillment of their individual needs and attainment of their personal goals.

In January 2017, I assisted children with school readiness. I asked several children about their career prospects and they mentioned career interest ranging from Doctors, Architect, Social Workers, Teachers, Dental Therapist, Physiotherapist, environmental health and Psychologist. In response to these children's developmental needs, I organized information session several professional that they have mentioned in to address them on these career choices. The career guidance information session benefited them very much and they were assisted in developing enthusiasm in their schooling. Responding to children's needs appropriately helps to maintain a good helping relationship and in this engagement, I have seen myself as a reliable source of

support to children's lives.

I have also realized that children feel valuable when I respond to their developmental needs substantially and this engagement creates a durable helping relationship. I have also used the "skills use of self" techniques in a diplomatic way to confront some of the children's mischief in an individual intervention. In several cases I have enabled children to realize that, although we love them and value their potential so much, they still need to be dutiful and submissive to life rules in general and be obedient to Children's Home rules. The bigger picture of this love is that God loves the world as the creator but there are Ten Commandments that we need to obey as human beings so that we can feel God's love. In a similar way, children need to obey rules of the children's home operations in maintaining a conducive environment.

The Blessed Gérard's Children's Home currently has 40 children in residential care and we have been able to cater for the therapeutic and developmental needs of these children. We provide a holistic approach in meeting each child's personal needs. In terms of meeting the performance standards and services to the children, we have been approved by the DSD and have developed a good working relationship with them. This has proven that our service is highly needed to rescue the state in child protection.

**M.P Mathonsi**  
**Social Worker**  
**Blessed Gérard's Children's Home**



# I want to dedicate myself to helping people

## Thabani Zungu and his vocation



I am Thabani Eric Zungu. I work as a care giver at Blessed Gérard's Care Centre in the hospice section.

I wish I could tell the whole world about the work that is being done by this wonderful hospice. I started working as a volunteer at this hospice after finishing my Home Care training in 2010. This Home Care Course was sponsored by the Hospice itself.

As a volunteer I was very much surprised when I saw how the hospice team took care of patients that are under their supervision, especially the sick, the helpless and the handicapped patients.

That dedication got rooted in me and I also want to dedicate myself to helping people and I think that they also



need my love and care.

It is not always easy but I put God first knowing and trusting that he is going to lead me through – especially in saving people's lives.

In December 2015 I was offered a permanent job. I believe that this happened because of our dedication. To me it was a great achievement and I knew that my life was going to change for the better. I am now able to support my family and I work in a job and a place that I love.

At the Centre I am working as a care giver with the Home Care Team. We visit sick people within the local community. We change dressings, take care that they have their medication and admit those who are very sick into our hospice.

I want to thank my team for the dedication that they display. Sometimes we face some difficulties especially on rainy days when we have to drive on muddy and slippery roads. Sometimes there are no roads at all towards the entrance of some houses or mostly shacks. But we always make a plan and try to overcome these difficulties because our aim is to help the sick in our community.



Everybody is welcomed into our hospice. We don't know racism or xenophobia here.

I can say that Father Gérard was God-sent to our community. Without his work and this hospice many lives would have been lost.

I wish to thank Father Gérard, the management team and my team for the wonderful work.



# Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard Annual Report 2016

The activities of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard and of Blessed Gérard's Care Centre in the year 2016, as in the year before, were concentrated on maintaining momentum in our existing projects:



## years Blessed Gérard's Care Centre

2016



Blessed Gérard's Care Centre provides a comprehensive and holistic system of care.

# Activity Report 2016

We render a health care service to poor and needy persons, including the care for people living with HIV/AIDS at the hotspot of the AIDS pandemic in the world, the North Coast of Zululand in South Africa.

Our AIDS treatment (HAART) Programme comprises

Voluntary Counselling and HIV-Testing (VCT)  
We offer free and confidential HIV Tests to the general public.

48 patients tested



**HAART Readiness Courses**  
Before starting patients on the medication we ensure that they get sufficient information to give their informed consent and to understand that antiretroviral treatment is of vital importance for them.

**Antiretroviral Treatment**

We provide free Highly Active Anti-Retroviral Treatment (HAART) as comprehensive medical care including regular medical examinations, blood monitoring, on-going prevention or treatment of opportunistic infections, medical and psychosocial counselling and dispensing of the drugs.

720 patients in ongoing life-long treatment  
12 new patients admitted in 2016



**Adherence Monitoring**  
Our Therapeutic Counsellors make home visits to our patients on ARV-treatment to ensure that they adhere to the treatment and so to prevent treatment failure. This enables us to discover adverse drug reactions early and to prevent problems.

3645 home visits

**Support Groups**

We have several Support Groups where our HAART Patients meet voluntarily to encourage and support one another and prevent isolation.



**Motivation and Income Generation**  
Our Therapeutic Counsellors motivate and encourage our HAART patients to engage in income generating activities instead of expecting that their families or society would have to provide for them because they are sick.

Hospice & Palliative Care

We provide residential Palliative Care for terminally ill patients in our Inpatient Unit. We can admit up to 40 patients, which makes us the largest inpatient hospice in South Africa.

6547 outpatient consultations  
320 new outpatients admitted  
213 new inpatients admitted  
213 patients provided with counselling  
93 inpatients accompanied when they died



We send out mobile home-nursing teams, which supplement and support the family's home based care through hands-on-training and additional aids in the home situation of the respective patient. This includes the assessment of patients at home and proper medical home care.

1421 home visits by our home care teams  
464 patients transported by our ambulance  
285 patients looked after at their homes  
185 new home care patients admitted

**Poor Sick Fund**

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

R 10,000.00 spent in 2016 (over and above treating all our patients, wards and clients free of charge)



**We care in any case**

Child Care

Pre-Primary School & Crèche

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



78 children educated in 2016

Children's Home



We look after, counsel and give a home to sick and healthy "Orphans and Vulnerable Children" (OVCs).

26 children lived here in 2016

55 children live here (as on 3 March 2017)!!!

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 in proper baby care and nutrition.



772 consultations in 2015

60 children (average occupancy)

Bursary Fund

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

150 bursaries awarded in 2016

208 bursaries awarded on 2017



Relief & Social Care

Relief Fund



We provide poverty relief by helping people in our local community in genuine cases of immediate need.

5201 consultations by our social worker

(including Hospice, Children's Home and Bursary Fund)

62 social emergency cases provided with relief

First Aid & Emergency Service

We provide First Aid

at church and other events.



We provided First Aid duties for the Vatican during the Jubilee of Mercy from 29 October—12 November 2016 (2 doctors, 2 nurses, 4 ambulance assistants)

Disaster Relief



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

Last deployment in 2000



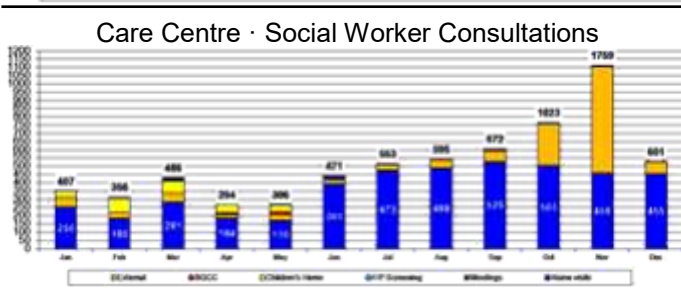
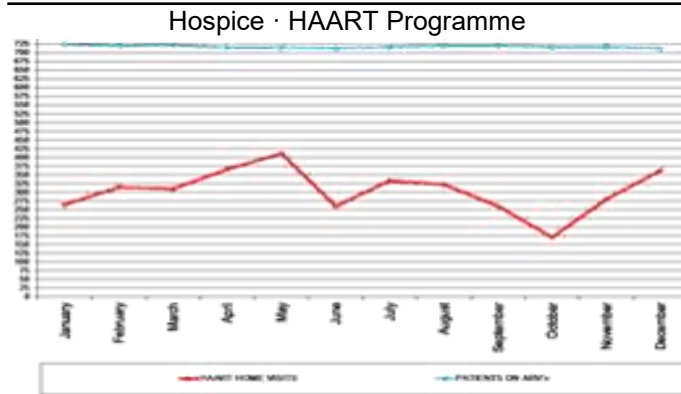
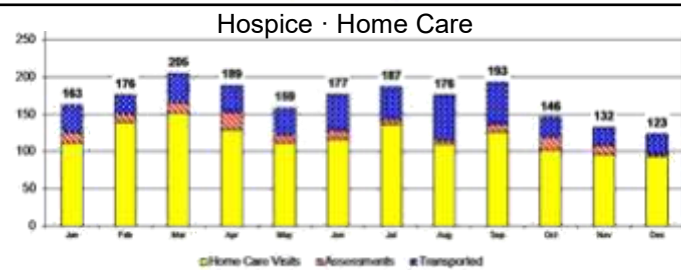
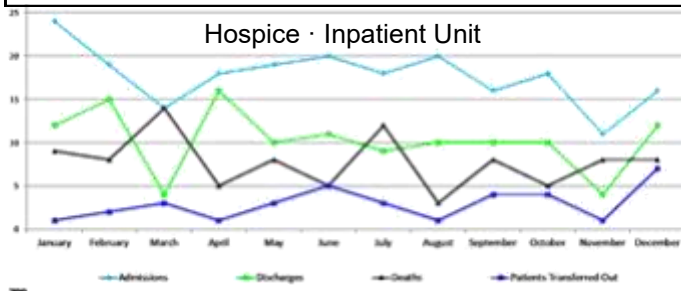
**Caring  
without  
borders**



**2016 Statistics: Figures**

Outpatient consultations	6547	Patients counselled (Hospice)	213	<b>Accumulated Statistics</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>1992-2016</b>	<b>increase</b>
Consultations done by our Social Worker	5210	Patients admitted to our hospice (Inpatients)	213	New outpatients (Hospice)	320	2260	16.9%
Home Visits by HAART Therapeutic counsellors	3645	New Home Care Patients (Hospice)	185	Patients transported by ambulance (Hospice)	464	5862	8.6%
Consultations (Malnutrition Clinic)	1514	Bursaries awarded	150	Patients counselled (Hospice)	213	3152	7.2%
Home Visits by Home Care team	1421	Patients who passed away in our hospice	93	Inpatient admissions (Hospice)	320	4949	6.9%
Home Care Patients	285	Children in our pre-primary school and crèche	78	New Home Care Patients (Hospice)	185	4640	4.2%
Patients in the AIDS Treatment Programme	720	Social cases (Relief Fund)	62	Social cases (Relief Fund)	62	2051	3.3%
Patients transported by ambulance (Hospice)	464	HAART: HIV tests done	48	New HAART patients (Hospice)	12	1543	0.8%
New Outpatients Hospice – day-patients	320	Children in Children's Home	26				
		New HAART patients (Hospice)	12				

## 2016 Statistics: Graphs



## Personnel:

### Membership Statistics

As on: 31 December 2016		increase 2016	
1492	Active members	+26	+1.8%
664	Financial supporters	+33	+5.2%
373	Spiritual supporters	±0	±0%
<b>2529</b>	<b>Members in total</b>	<b>+59</b>	<b>+2.3%</b>

### Employees

On 31 December 2016 we had 79 employees.

Two **employees left** us in 2016:

**Nomfundo Myeza** (Social Worker) and **Khensane Mthiyane** (Educator).

Three **new staff members** were welcomed:



**Nana Masikane**  
Social Worker

**Philani Mathonsi**  
Social Worker

**Sandile Mthethwa**  
Maintenance Assistant

## Public Relations:

### Internet:

Our new **homepage** moved to [www.bsg.org.za](http://www.bsg.org.za) while our old website is still available at [www.bbg.org.za](http://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:**

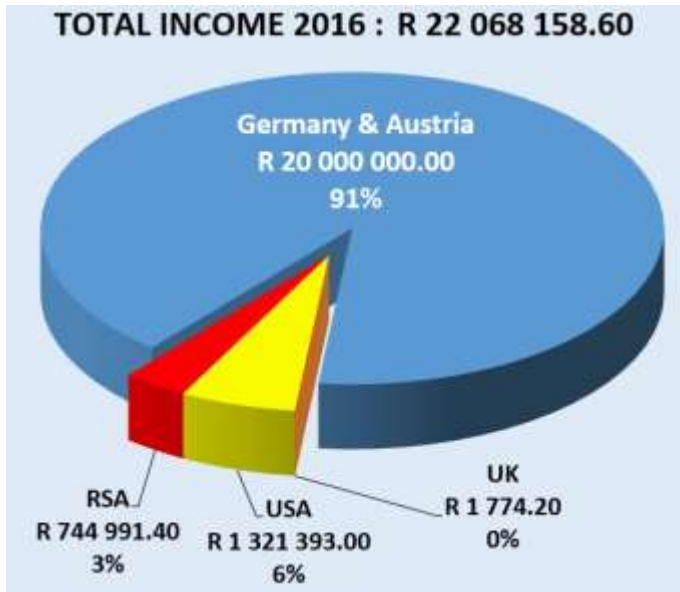
<http://www.youtube.com/user/FATHERGERARD>

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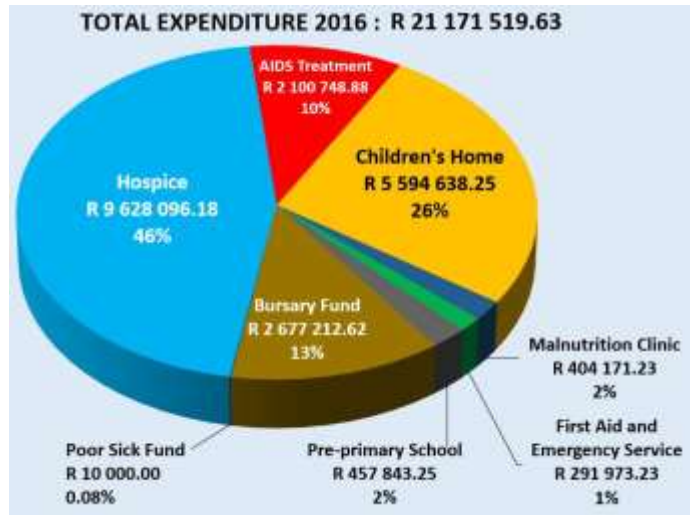
<https://www.xing.com/net/priffc80x/brotherhood/>

# Finance Report

## Income and Expenditure in 2016



Figures in South African Rand (ZAR) | 1 € = R 14 | 1 \$ = R 13 | 1 £ = R 16 | 1 CHF = R 13 (as on 30 March 2017)



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

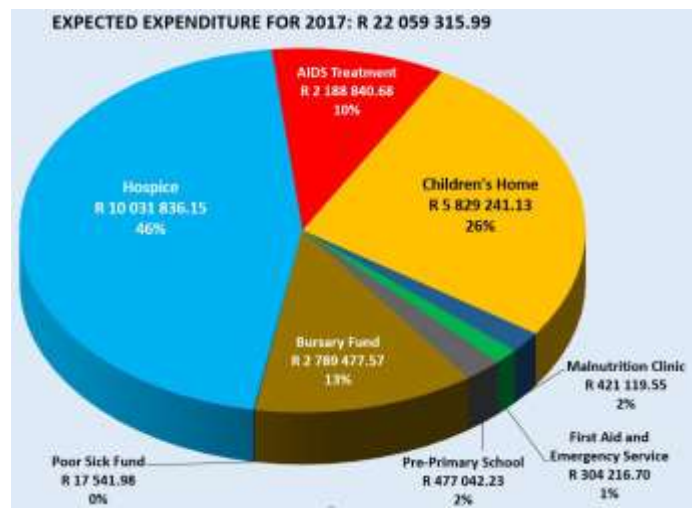
We serve an impoverished community. Therefore we have to offer all our services free of charge and must rely solely on donations and grants to finance our work.

### Financial Audit:

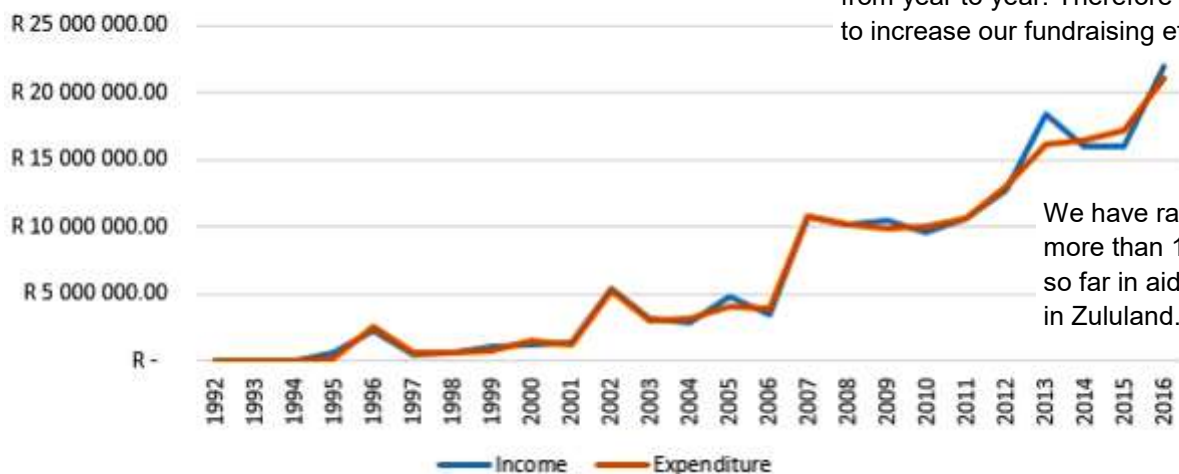
The Financial Audit of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard and of Blessed Gérard's Care Centre for 2016 yielded **impeccable results** again which we are absolutely proud of.

A special vote of thanks is due to Mrs. Angie Botha of the bookkeeping company "Burrows & Associates" who has kept our books for years.

## Expected Expenditure in 2017



## Financial Growth



Our annual expenditure is rising rapidly from year to year. Therefore we have to increase our fundraising efforts accordingly.

We have raised and spent more than 165 million Rand so far in aid of the needy in Zululand.

# Our Chronicle

## Special Events in 2016:

15—24 January 2016: Shooting for our Image-Film „Where misery is overcome by love“.



1 April 2016: Our Medical Superintendent Dr. Khaya Nzimande gave a presentation about “Ethical dilemmas at end-of-life-care” at the **Catholic Health Care Association of Southern Africa** and was elected as chairman of their board.



29 April—  
3 May 2016:  
Father Gérard,  
Hans Peter Rehder,  
Christine Huber and  
Bernhard Enzenberg took part in the **Lourdes-Pilgrimage of the Order of Malta**.



16 May 2016: Meeting at the **Grand Magistry of the Order of Malta** in Rome.



29 May 2016: **Investiture of Dr. Victor Freiherr von Baillou, Alexandra Freifrau von Baillou and Guy Graf von Moy as Honorary Dedicated Members of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard at Salzburg/Austria**



The Honorary Dedicated Membership is the highest honour that we can award.



It may only be conferred to members who have supported us in exceptional ways.

In the picture: Archabbot Korbinian Birnbacher O.S.B. (centre) and Father Gérard (left) with the Honorary Dedicated Members Alexandra Freifrau von Baillou, Johannes Lagleder, Dr. Victor Freiherr von Baillou, Guy Graf von Moy, Max and Gabi Rauecker, Hans Peter and Maresi Rehder.





10 June 2016:  
Mandeni-Photo-Exhibition and Premiere of the **Image Film**  
“Where Misery Is Overcome by Love” at Stuttgart/Germany.



26 June 2016: Celebrating the **Solemnity of St. John.**



3 September 2016: Celebrating **20-years of Blessed Gérard’s Care Centre** (See article on page 22!)



27 October—13 November 2016: **First Aid Duties in Rome** during the extraordinary Holy Year “Jubilee of Mercy”.  
(See article on page 17!)



25 —27 November 2016: Father Gérard represents South Africa at the **Communicators’ Forum of the Order of Malta** in Rome.



## 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 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

If you are subscribed to **PayPal**, you may send us a **donation online** using our e-mail [father@bbg.org.za](mailto: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: \_\_\_\_\_

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State/Province: \_\_\_\_\_ Country: \_\_\_\_\_

☎ (home) Code \_\_\_\_\_ No. \_\_\_\_\_

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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.



# A person to be loved as God loves them

First Aid Duties in Rome at the "Jubilee of Mercy"

In 2015/16, the Vatican celebrated the Holy Year "Jubilee of Mercy" and the Order of Malta was called upon to provide the First Aid Service in the four Vatican Basilicas throughout the whole year.



Teams were sent from many countries and we are happy and proud that we were able to send two doctors, two nurses and four ambulance assistants to Rome.

After we had overcome some minor and major difficulties, everyone had his passport and the visa for Europe. On October 27<sup>th</sup>, Dr. Paul and Mrs. Nokuthula Thabethe, Dr. Khaya Nzimande, Sr. Conradine Mkhize, Sindisiwe Sithole, Vumile Zulu, Nkanyiso Mlotshwa and Wiseman Zulu flew from Durban to Rome.

Father Gérard, having been in Europe already for his fundraising tour, awaited them at the airport in Rome and two days later Maresi Rehder joined the group.



Every volunteer group of the Order of Malta had to be on duty one shift per day, either in the morning from 8:30 am to 1:00pm or in the afternoon from 1:00pm to

5:30pm.

The Grand Magistry of the Order arranged the shifts in a way that every team had the possibility to do duty in each of the papal basilicas.

We did our service in Santa Maria Maggiore, St. John in Lateran, St. Paul outside the walls and in the First Aid Post at St. Peter's Square.



Being on duty four and a half hours per day gave us enough time and the opportunity to discover the beauty of Rome.

We have conquered Rome on foot: the Trevi fountain, the Colosseum, Castel Sant' Angelo, the Forum Romanum, the Vatican Museums and many more attractions.

In the evening, some of these days finished off in one of those lovely small Italian trattorias.



The two audiences with Pope Francis were a very special highlight for us. In our first week, we were able to attend the regular audience that takes place every Wednesday.

In our second week, we were invited to attend the extraordinary audience especially for the volunteers of the Holy Year.

During his speech addressing the volunteers we had the feeling that Pope Francis was directly talking to us, having our work in mind and the way we should be devoted to it.

He spoke about God's mercy and that nobody is excluded from his mercy. The Love of God includes everybody.



Quotation from Pope Francis' speech to the volunteers on Nov.12<sup>th</sup> 2016:

*"This aspect of mercy, inclusion, is manifested in opening one's arms wide to welcome, without excluding; without labeling others, according to their social status, language, race, culture or religion: there is, before us, only a person to be loved as God loves them."*

These words will be an incentive for our future work and for our attitude towards the poor and vulnerable people in our care.

Our visit to the Villa Malta on the Aventine was another highlight. At first a look through the famous keyhole and then a very interesting guided tour through the church and the villa let us have a look into the long history of the Order of Malta.



The invitation of the Order for a small get - together of all volunteer groups of the Order was especially pleasant. We received our Commemorative Medals and it was a great opportunity to come into contact with members of the Order from all over the world.



We met volunteers from Argentina, Cuba, the United States, France, Switzerland and Germany, only to mention a few. It was a special experience to meet people from all those countries, sharing the same ideas and ideals.



Two weeks we were on duty and we are grateful that we didn't have any major emergencies to attend to. It was a time rich in experiences and full of new and unforgettable impressions.

Throwing a coin into the Trevi fountain we said Good Bye to the eternal city, hoping that the next holy year won't be too far in the future.



# I really feel to be at home here

Maresi Rehder interviewing patients

## Grace Mbonambi, 81



My name is Grace and I live in a rural area outside Mandeni. I was never married. I have two daughters but one of them passed away a few years ago.

I have four grandchildren one of those

has also passed away, and I have ten great grandchildren.

I worked until I was 59, then I became sick and I had to leave work and went on sick pension.

My children are not living with me so that nobody could take care of me the way I needed it when my leg was amputated in July. I can no longer walk and lying in bed all the time caused severe bed sores. It was so painful. I never was in so much pain before. When I was brought to the Care Centre they really helped me, they healed my wounds.

A few days ago, I went to the clinic for a checkup and the Doctor praised the nurses of the Care Centre for their very good work. He told me that he only hears the best things about Blessed Gérard's Care Centre.

I would like to say something to the donors, may I?

"I want to say thank you from the bottom of my heart to the many people who help us with their donations. May God bless them and multiply for them the good deeds they do for us. God may give them a long life"



**We care  
in any case**

## Nelisiwe Mhlongo, 39



My name Nelisiwe and I am 39 years old. Nelisiwe that means "satisfied". My mother gave me this name because she was happy that I was a girl.

We were two brothers and two sisters and we lived in a very rural area on a small farm.

I started school at seven but it was difficult because I often had to help my grandmother working in the fields or at home and I had to stay home from school sometimes for weeks. During these times I felt sad because I always liked learning. But in the end I passed my matric six years ago. This had always been my dream.

I am not married and I have three children, two girls and a boy, sixteen, twelve and seven years old.

In 2015 I was lucky; I finally found a job with a NGO as a mentor in a hospital. I counselled pregnant women and patients with HIV/ AIDS. I really liked what I was doing.

Unfortunately I had to leave my job after one year, when I found out that I was HIV positive myself.

I was lucky; my family didn't expel me when I told them about HIV. For many people AIDS still is a taboo.

I talked to my sister and my brothers and they all help me a lot.

My children are now staying with my sister.

It is so important to talk about AIDS. Don't make it a secret! When you know about it, when you act in a responsible manner and you don't hide, you will find the help you need.

Here in the Care Centre I found the help I needed. When I came here I was so very sick, I can't remember who brought me here or how it was. But slowly I gain more strength and I hope to be discharged soon.

All the people are so very friendly and nice, that helps me a lot.

I am grateful that I can go to church every morning because I always want to say Thank you to God, that he has given me this place. I also pray for my children, that they will have a good life.

### 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 and to mention their real names.

## Wilfred Sibusiso Ngcobo, 53



Thank you for being interested in our lives, I appreciate it a lot.

My name is Wilfred Sibusiso Ngcobo

I am married and I have two children, a boy and a girl.

I am a teacher and taught English and Psychology in High School. I also studied Theology in Pietermaritzburg. I am Lutheran.

I got to know Blessed Gérard's Care Centre when my sister became ill with AIDS and tuberculosis. We were looking for a place where she was looked after well because we could not do it as good as she needed it. A friend mentioned it to us. My sister nearly died but here in the hospice they really cared for her and they healed her. After some months she was discharged and she is at home again and doing fine.

Therefore, when I became ill with tuberculosis and lost my job I decided to come here. The hospice is more a home than a hospice for me. All the nurses dedicate their lives to help us and they are always friendly, and do you know why?

It is because of the love father Gérard has for all of us, for all the people here.

His nurses pass this love on to us. His love for us South Africans is multiplied without his knowledge and will go on forever.

## Mthokozisi Khumalo, 28



I come from a small family which is quite rare for a Zulu family. I only have one younger brother, he is thirteen years old. We grew up with my mother whom I love very much. It was very hard for her to raise us and to send us to school because she is blind and the only money we had was her disability grant. She struggled hard and did everything she could for us.

I passed my matric and when I left school I had big dreams about having a career and about going to university. I wanted to study electronics but we didn't have enough money.

In 2010 I started to work in the laundry of a factory. At least I earned some money but it was never enough to go to university.

In 2014 I suffered a stroke.

They brought me to hospital but there they didn't send me on to a specialist because we couldn't pay for it. After a few days I was discharged.

I am not able to walk and to live on my own. My girlfriend left me right after this had happened; she didn't want to live with a cripple.

I had to go home and my poor mother had to care for me like for a small child. She did that for nearly two years and I am very grateful to her.

For three months now I am in Blessed Gérard's Care Centre. My mother is too old and she has health problems herself and so she needs help herself. She can't look after me any longer.

The Care Centre is a very good place, because everybody is friendly and they take very good care of me. I may stay here until we find a place for me where I can stay permanently. It is a safe place

**Joan Allen, 76**



My name is Joan Allen and I am from Durban. There I lived in an Old Age Home and I liked it there. After a while they started to raise the rent and after four years I had to leave the home because the rent was more than I could afford. First my two sons helped me with the rent but in the end I had to move out. I moved to Stanger in a home for elderly people but they didn't have any professional help there. I suffer from osteoporosis and arthritis and so moving is a problem for me. One day I fell and broke my leg. There is a lot of metal in it now and I can't stand on it. I was in hospital for two months and when I was discharged I was afraid because I didn't know where to go to. My bed neighbour told me about Blessed Gérard's Care Centre, I had never heard of it. I am so very grateful that they took me in and that I may stay until I get my special wheelchair and until I know where to go and who is able to care for me.



**We care  
in any case**

**Zama Cele, 23**



I am 23 three years old and I have one younger brother. We live together with my grandfather because my mum died long ago. Nobody in my family can work and the only income we have is the old age pension my grandfather gets.

I went to school and passed my matric but then I became sick. I have AIDS and I was too sick to work.

I had to stay at home. My grandfather took care of me.

When I left school I wanted to become a doctor or a nurse and help other people, but these were mere dreams.

I am in the Care Centre since August and I like being here very much. All the nurses are so friendly and when I ask for something like for something to drink they are nice and give it to me.

In the afternoon they sit with us and we talk, they have time to answer my questions and we laugh a lot.

They make me feel that I am special and I really feel like being at home in the Care Centre.

Blessed Gérard, our patron saint, is quoted to have said:

**"Our brotherhood will be everlasting**

because the soil on which this plant is rooted is the misery of the world - and because, God willing, there will always be people who want to work on it, to decrease these sufferings and increase resilience to this misery."



Blessed Gérard, pray for us!

# 20 years Blessed Gérard's Care Centre

Our celebration on 3 September 2016



It was exactly 20 years ago, on 3 September 1996, that the Bishop of Eshowe, then Mansuet Dela Biyase, blessed Blessed Gérard's Church and Blessed Gérard's Care Centre.



"Blessed are you, Lord, God of mercy, who through your Son gave us a marvellous example of charity and the great commandment of love for one another. Send down your blessings on these your servants, who so generously devote themselves to helping others. When they are called on in times of need, let them faithfully serve you in their neighbour. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen."



It was an indescribable honour and joy that at that time, that the Grand Master of the Order of Malta, Frà Andrew Bertie, pre-

sented a relic of Blessed Gérard as a gift personally delivered by the Grand Commander Frà Ludwig Hoffmann von Rumerstein.

Twenty years later, on 3 September 2016, the current Diocesan Bishop of Eshowe Xolelo Thaddeus Kumalo celebrated the jubilee with us.



During Holy Mass, Bishop Kumalo blessed the medals of the new members of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard and the Dedicated Members present handed them the medals and received them solemnly into our community.

Subsequently, the bishop blessed the new members:



Children of our children's home brought the gifts to the altar in a traditional processionary dance.

Bishop Kumalo solemnly expressed our gratitude to God for the twenty years of our ministry at Blessed Gérard's Care Centre in the Holy Eucharist.





The Jubilee Function at Blessed Gérard's Community Centre began with Father Gérard's speech. He said the most important thing we did in our care centre is that we have given dignity and appreciation to the people entrusted to us. He thanked all the employees and volunteers that they assisted and effectively helped, in tens of thousands of cases, the poor, the sick, the desperate and the needy. He said, "You are the smile our patients receive. You are the embrace that our children need so much. You give the food that the hungry need. You heal the broken hearts."

Then the President's Award for the most outstanding volunteer was handed over to Lindeni Mwandla.

The President's Award for the



most outstanding employee was awarded to Mthokozisi Xulu.

Carolyn Nunn,



Nomusa Nxumalo and Fikile Mashaya celebrated their ten-year employment anniversary and Esnet Ndlovu celebrated her five-year employment anniversary, and our General Manager, Sven Anderson, handed over the long-service certificates to them.

A large number of members and friends of our community celebrated in an intriguing atmosphere.



Lindiwe Vilane very vigorously recited a poem of praise for the Care Centre and its founder.



Active members of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard excelled with their powerful singing.



Children of our Children's Home sang and danced with great joy,

and performed a small play on the history of the Zulu.



The manager of our Children's Home, Hayne Clark, proved to be a talented and engaging program director.



Bishop Kumalo expressed the gratitude of the Diocese for the twenty-years of devoted activity of the Care Centre: "Many people would like to go to a Catholic institution because they are touched by the love of God and are lovingly cared for. May God bless you and protect you all!"





It is with utmost gratitude for all the countless blessings that we were privileged to receive in all these years that the founder of the **Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard** hereby invites you to celebrate with us the **25th anniversary of the foundation of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard** on Saturday, 28 October 2017, at 9:30 am at Blessed Gérard's Care Centre in Mandeni, KZN, South Africa.

*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](mailto: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.