



Newsletter 2018

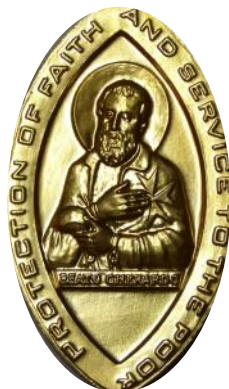
Annual Report 2017



Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard

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The **Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard**
is an Association
of the Roman Catholic Church,
a South African Public Benefit Organisation
and the Relief Organisation
of the Order of Malta in South Africa.

Caring without borders



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.



Mvelo

A short film about our AIDS-Treatment-Programme

Online available at: <https://youtu.be/q3m0WVyaNg>

Mvelo is HIV-positive. He was infected by his mother. Both parents have died. But he is fine. He regained his strength. His granny brought him here to the doctor in the Care Centre of the Order of Malta at South Africa's East Coast in Mandeni.

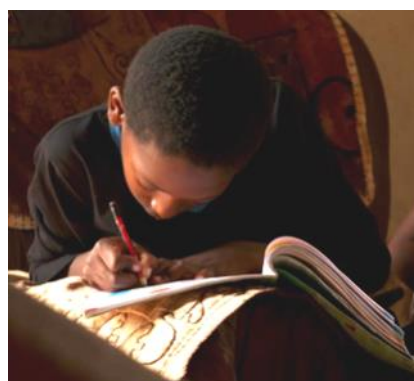


Father Gérard: „We are very glad that he is much better now. He had been admitted here because he was very ill. We were not sure if he would survive.“

That was four years ago when his granny brought him for the first time to Father Gérard and his team. The Order of Malta looks after HIV- and AIDS-patients in Mandeni since 1996 including those, who are terminally ill. The hospice enables them to die in dignity and without pain. Mvelo was four years old. He was so weak that he had to be admitted to the inpatient unit for a few weeks. Every time his granny visited him he was in tears. No consolation worked.



The local industry had attracted thousands of families to come to the area, but only a few people are still employed here. Meanwhile production is even cheaper elsewhere. What is left are impoverished families, frustration and despair, drugs and HIV. Two thirds of the inhabitants of the Province of kwaZulu-Natal are infected with the deadly virus. The highest rate in the world.



Mvelo is a quiet boy. You can sense what he went through and that he struggles to gain hope. After all, because of the regular check ups in the Care Centre and the medication to fight HIV he can go to school now and he enjoys it.

Father Gérard: „He has to take his medication every day. If he does that consistently he can carry on living in good health. He can go to school. He may get vocational training one day or even go to university.“

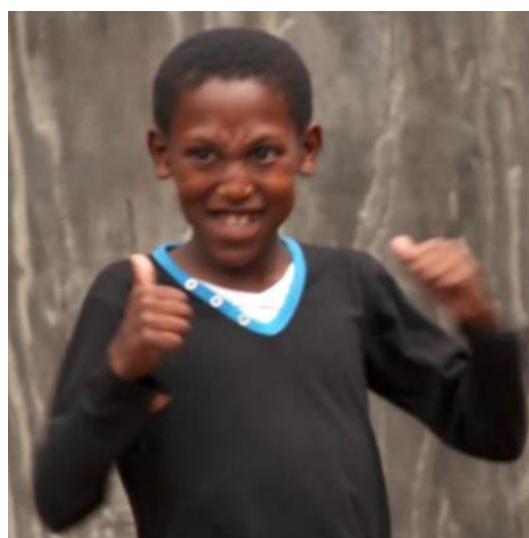
The eight year old boy is invigorated. He can be supportive, help his granny, play with his sister and the boys in the neighbourhood. The visits in the Clinic remain part of his everyday life. It is there where he gets the medication that controls the HI-Virus

Father Gérard: „We are infinitely grateful for that.“



Meanwhile Mvelo signs for receiving his medication himself. Luckily he still has his granny, even if she increasingly struggles to look after the four children of her deceased daughter.

Almost 50 orphans and vulnerable children have their new home in the Care Centre of the Order of Malta. They too have found their way back to life, because of Father Gérard and his team.



Mvelo progressed well.

He gains more strength and independence every day.

The granny is full of confidence since she hears him laughing in the backyard again.



I felt his little hand taking my hand

An unforgettable Sunday outing

by Maresi Rehder

Lakhiwe was four years old when he was admitted to Blessed Gérard's Children's Home together with his siblings. They had been very badly neglected. Their alcoholic mother had lived with them in a scrap car. They settled in quite quickly and after a while, their child laughter came back.



Only Lakhiwe was a quiet and shy boy and it took some time until we became friends. One day I saw him in the playroom standing and watching two other children. I smiled at him and said hello but he did not seem to notice me. Then I felt his little hand taking my hand and

when I looked down, he tried to climb up. I sat down and sat him on my lap. The only thing he wanted was to be hugged. From then on whenever we met he approached me with his shy smile, took my hand and asked for a big hug.



I will always remember Lakhiwe's first children's outing. We took four little ones to the beach and spent an afternoon playing in the sand, building castles and running around but Lakhiwe soon seemed to be exhausted and came back to us, climbed onto the lap asking for a cuddle. That was when I learnt that he was very ill. He was

HIV positive and due to neglect, he had not been given his medicine properly before he came to us. The problem with AIDS is if one does not take ones medicine regularly every day the virus can mutate and the AIDS treatment becomes ineffective. This

happened to this little boy. He got steadily weaker and in the end, we lost the fight for his life. His short life encourages us to keep on fighting against AIDS, to keep counselling the people how to live a good life even if they are HIV positive.

Lakhiwe's shy smile and his tiny hand in my hand will stay with me as a lasting memory.





I think Dr. Nzimande saved me

Help sustainably – Promote Education

by Maresi Rehder



Simangele is one of our students in our bursary program and she was a patient in our hospice.

She is a very positive and cheerful woman who likes to laugh a lot.

When I was looking for a bursary student who would like to tell me a bit about the reasons why he or she is applying for a bursary Simangele volunteered. I was impressed by her strength and her will to struggle for a better life.

"I am Simangele Khoza and I'm 36 years old. I study education in the UNISA and I want to become a teacher.

From the very beginning I was in my grandmother's care. I don't know my mother and my father didn't live with us.

It was only my granny, an aunt and me. My life was hard because my aunt didn't like me and she made me work very hard.



When I reached the age of five I started going to school but my grandmother couldn't afford the school fee, she could only pay half of the fee.

Because I loved going to school I had to think about something to earn my own money.

With six years I set up my first little business.

We all love Guavas. In my neighborhood grew some big guava trees and they were bearing lovely fruit.

I was small and good in climbing so I stole as many guavas as I could and sold them. The money I earned I used for buying sweets which I could sell for more money. This I spent on used clothes and after selling them I had enough money for the second half of my school fee.

It was difficult, earning the money, going to school and doing homework. I was always tired.

In grade seven I decided to stop this and I started braiding the hair of others. Braided hair is very much in fashion with the Zulu.

I was really good at it and I earned all the money I needed. Life became a bit easier.

I never failed a class and until I passed my matric.

When I finished school there was no possibility to carry on going to University. I had to look for work.

After my matric I met a man, he was a police man, who told me that he loves me. It was the first time somebody told me that. It felt so good and I was happy. For my granny and my aunt I was just another burden to them.

I believed him and fell in love with him. We have a daughter but in 2011 he left me.

In 2013 his mother called me because he was very sick. I went to see him and I learned that he had been HIV positive for years and that he was dying of Aids now.

He gave me the virus.

In 2003 I had started to work on our neighbor's farm and soon I was promoted to be a quality controller. I earned enough to save some money and in 2009/10 I was able to pay for my first year in University. I enjoyed it a lot and I had good results but after one year I had to stop because I ran out of money.

I had a lot of trouble living together with my aunt and my grandmother so I had to find a new place for me and my daughter.

I took a loan to build myself a house and I needed my savings to pay back the loan.

It is normal in our country that people study with big time gaps in between the courses. I always try to earn the money first before I spend it.

I desperately wanted to restart my studies again and when my friend Nomfundo told me about the Blessed

Gérard's Bursary Funds I applied immediately. The first time was in 2014 and I was very happy when I was awarded with a bursary.

This year is my last year in University and I am so happy that I will be a teacher. My final exams will be in November and I really hope I will pass because for the last few months I have been very sick and weak.

In hospital in Stanger they thought I have meningitis and gave me some tablets but they didn't help. They never really looked at me.

After a few days they told me that they can't do anything for me and discharged me.

That's why I came here and they admitted me into the hospice. Dr Nzimande is so nice and friendly, he really cares about his patients.

I was told by other patients that he will save me and I think he did.

Thank You."



Simangele was discharged in January and I met her again in February 2018. She was seeing the doctor and before that she came to Holy Mass as she had always done during her stay in the hospice.

She was good looking and smiling. Due to her condition in October/November she only passed two of her 4 subjects but she is redoing the lacking two in a few months.

I am very sure she will be a really good teacher.

By the way:

We would not have published any pictures and told any stories of our patients had they or their legal guardians not given us permission to do this and to mention their real names.

Being a Christian means to care

Why I want to become a doctor

Phakamani Langa's vocation

by Maresi Rehder



I met Thabo Phakamani Langa in Nana Masikane's office while she was counselling him. Mrs Masikane is the social worker who is in charge of our bursary fund and Thabo is applying for a bursary.

He comes from a very poor family and his biggest wish is to study medicine. He finished school with a very good matric, he got seven "A"s but his family has no money to send him to university.

While he was studying in the local library he saw somebody filling in the application form for our bursary fund, that was how he learned about our programme.

He spoke to his grandmother and his mother and they encouraged him to apply for a full bursary for medicine.

Thabo's father died when Thabo was thirteen. He and his brother then moved to his grandmother and lived with her in Mangethe. The only income they had was his granny's pensioner's grant. His mother works and lives in ISithebe. She works in a clothing factory and earns very little money. It was impossible for her to pay more than the monthly transportation fee for her boys but nothing else. There are very few schools which don't charge fees and he was lucky to go to one of those.

He enjoyed learning and going to school and he was a good student right from the start. He loved science, physics and mathematics.

When Mrs. Masikane asked why he wanted to study medicine Thabo answered:

When I had the opportunity to do an internship in a clinic I discovered that I would like to become a doctor, because being a Christian means to care and to put people first. That's why I want to become a doctor.

**Caring
without borders**





The happiest day in my life

Sent by God to help people
by Nomusa Nxumalo

I am Nomusa Magnificent Nxumalo. I work as an Enrolled Nurse at Blessed Gérard's Care Centre. I wish to share a story about me and a wonderful thing that was done by Father Gérard. When I came to volunteer at Blessed Gérard's Care Centre I only had matric. I could not further my studies because my father passed away when I was doing Grade 11 and my mother was not working.

I started to help as a volunteer from 2003 to 2004. I first attended a Home Care Course and a First Aid Course at Blessed Gérard's Care Centre before I became a volunteer.

After one year of helping in the Hospice, I was transferred to help in the Children's Home .

I was there for many years helping children and also assisting in taking one of the children from the Children's Home to Chief Albert Luthuli Hospital with the Manager and Father Gérard. One day when we took a child to the Hospital it turned out to be the happiest day in my life. Father Gérard and Mrs. Kalkwarf asked me if I



would like to further my studies.

I was very happy about that and my family was very happy too.

In June 2004 I started my studies at St. Mary's Nursing College.

13th October 2006, graduation day. Nomusa is on the right

After completing my 2 years course I came back to continue volunteering at Blessed Gérard's Care Centre.

On the 01 June 2006 Father Gérard offered me job as Staff Nurse. At that time, I was the only bread winner for my family.

I started working in the hospice as a Staff nurse. I worked for three years helping helpless people, doing home assessments and admitting those who were in need of Hospice care.

It made me very happy to assist people who were in need of care. I enjoyed working in the wards.

After two years I was transferred to work in the HAART clinic. I have worked there since 2008 until today.

My job in the HAART clinic is to dispense medication, provide counseling and health education about different communicable diseases. I also enjoy assisting our patients with their needs.

I work very well with my colleagues and we all love our jobs.



Nomusa today

I would like to thank Fr. Gérard for his wonderful work that he has done to me and my family. I did not only benefit from your wonderful work but Mandeni community also benefitted from generous assistance.

Father you are an angel sent by God to help people from this community. May God bless your wonderful work that you have done to us and give you strength and long life to continue with your good work.

I would also like to thank your wonderful management team and my colleagues for their support and team spirit that we have all these years.

**We care
in any case**





I feel so comfortable here I feel safe

Maresi Rehder interviewing some of our patients



I was looking for volunteers in the hospice who were willing to give me a short interview, if possible someone who speaks English. Zanele Ntshangase volunteered, not speaking a word of English but one of the care givers helped with translation.

I asked him to tell me a bit about his life and although he was quite weak he smiled and started to speak:

My name is Sanele, that means "enough", probably because I was the fifth child. I have two brothers and two sisters and my mum died while I was still young. I am 39 years old and since I left school I make my living with casual jobs.

I helped in housebuilding, worked for security services or other smaller jobs.

By the end of last year I suddenly became so weak, I couldn't walk anymore, I had to borrow a wheelchair.

My brothers told me that they can't take care of me all the time and that I should look for a place where I could stay.

I had heard about Blessed Gérard's Hospice and neighbours told me that it is a very friendly house. When the ambulance team came they admitted me immediately into the hospice and I am very grateful for that. I feel so comfortable here, everybody is nice with me. I really hope that they stay on for many many years and continue their good work.

My name is Nobuhle Mavimbela and I'm 35 years old. My name means pretty in isiZulu.

I am completely on my own, I have nobody who cares for me. Sometimes I feel so lonely.

I grew up with one brother and we lived together with my mother in our grandmother's house.

I never knew my father. I lost my mum when I was fourteen in 1997 my granny died in 2009 and my brother two years later.

It is hard to live on your own, especially when you are sick. I worked wherever I found work, but there are very few jobs for people like me. I left school in grade 10.

I am on ARVs since 2008 and since last year my health deteriorated steadily. I became too weak to walk and it became nearly impossible to stay in my house.

First they brought me to Empangeni Hospital but after a while the doctors told me that they will discharge me but that I'm not able to stay on my own. I was very much afraid because I really didn't know where to go to.

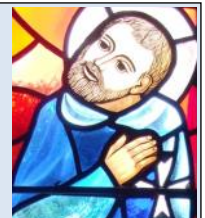
One of the doctors told me about the Care Centre and offered to phone Dr. Nzimande.

I am so very happy that he agreed to take me in. Here I feel safe. The nurses are nice and always smiling. The doctor takes his time to talk with me and to explain everything I want to know.

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!



25 years Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard

I love the Brotherhood

and all it entails

by Caroline Beaumont



I was fortunate to have met the President of The Brotherhood of Blessed Gerard shortly after the Brotherhood was founded. Fr Gerard was the Parish Priest at Mandini and Mangete. He was looking for help in the office because the work was becoming too much for the secretary to handle. I was approached and offered a position of assistant to the secretary. General office duties and data capturing was my earliest job description. I enjoyed starting our mornings in prayer and sharing business and family stories over a cup of coffee. Birthdays and feast days were always celebrated, we had a lovely family atmosphere in the office.

Not in my wildest dreams did I think that the Organization would grow as rapidly as it did.

Early projects like the Feeding Scheme (now called the Malnutrition Clinic), Basic training for Domestic workers, Twilight and Friendship Clubs, and our Bursary fund meant lots of paper work. People were in and out of the office and Father Gerard was constantly on the move, juggling the Brotherhood of Blessed Gerard work and his 2 parishes. There was always printing and posting of flyers to promote the Brotherhood. My fondest memory is of our old copier/printer. I would dance to the sound of the machine, getting in my daily exercise.

In July of 1995, Blessed Gérard's Pre-Primary School and Crèche was opened. I had just found out that I was pregnant. We had a work party in order to get the building cleaned and ready for the opening. I fondly remember climbing on the new jungle gym and riding on the swing. There was lots of fun and laughter together with the hard work going on around us.



In September of 1996 the Care Centre was officially opened. I began my work as the receptionist as well as the bookkeeper. Doing things like cooking a meal or washing and ironing when it was required. I

was so impressed with the work we were doing that I enrolled my newborn as a member of the Brotherhood at the tender age of 3 weeks. My husband and two older children also joined the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard as members and enjoyed learning things like Care Giving and First Aid. I learned to organize dinners for high profile guests, and prepare for functions like our two big feasts that are celebrated each year.



I have had the pleasure of assisting at the Tugela Raft Race with our First Aid and Emergency Team. As a buyer for the Care Centre I would order the milk and porridge for the Feeding Scheme and Creche. As the Organization grew I was moved to a corner office in the building to make way for another receptionist so that I might concentrate on the bookkeeping and the housekeeping duties in the Care Centre. Our staff and volunteer numbers were constantly climbing as the needs of the people grew. I was relieved of my duties of the bookkeeper and was given the position of just the housekeeper in the Care Centre. taking charge of the Kitchen, Laundry, Maintenance, Stock control and housekeeping duties of the Care Centre.



The Children's Home began soon after the arrival of our first child in 1999. The children were housed in the hospice part of the building. In 2000, a team from The Brotherhood went to Rome to assist with First Aid duties during the Millennium Celebrations. I was tasked with covering the duties of the then Manager of the Care Centre, Mrs. Clare Kalkwarf.

It was also the year that I received the President's award of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gerard, an honor indeed.

In 2002 began the first renovation. The Care Centre was just not big enough so another floor was added. This however, meant lots more work for me and trying to control an even bigger staff complement. The number of children were climbing and they needed to be housed somewhere.

All the while my work load increased but I loved what I was doing. I felt satisfied that I was given the chance to help people around me. I was growing spiritually and emotionally.

In the year 2006 My daughter was expecting her first child, my first grandchild. I flew to Johannesburg to support my daughter for his birth. I had just spent their first day back home when I received a call from Father Gerard with news that Clare Kalkwarf had been murdered. I did not hesitate and cut my time in Johannesburg short and returned home to assist Father and Clare's family in any way that I could. This was a very traumatic time for all of the people involved with the



of. This is not easy for me but it was something that had to be done. When you work in this environment, you are told or advised not to get emotionally involved. But I am human, how can you not get attached.

I have had the privilege of meeting and working alongside many people from different walks of life, from all around the globe. This opened my eyes to the strife that has engulfed this world of ours and I am so happy that I have had the chance to help ease the suffering of some people who have not had an easy life, be it through poverty, abuse or sickness.



Brotherhood.

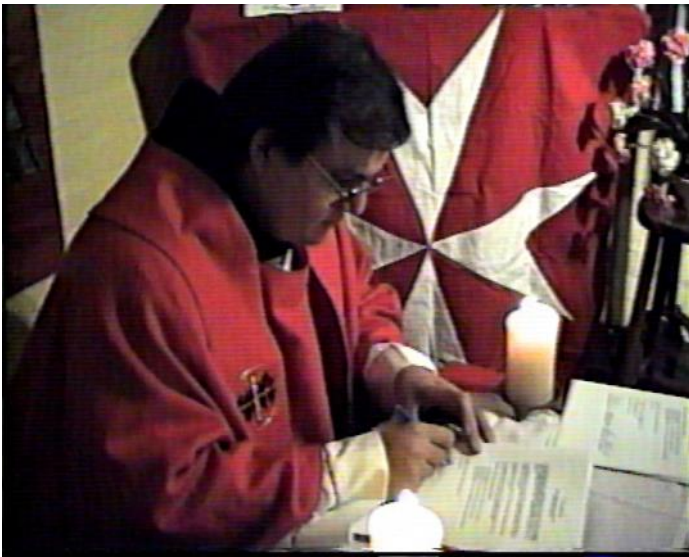
In 2008 our next renovations took place. Our building was now a three story building with a basement and two garages. Volunteers and staff joined us and left, patients and children came into the hospice or children's home and left or died. I was given the chance to run the Children's Home for a while, but on top of my other duties this became too much for me, and I stepped down as manager of the children's home. I could not cut ties with the Children's Home completely as I still controlled the stocks of clothes, school supplies, and household needs of the children.

I have had to identify the bodies of two dead children who had passed on, children that I had grown very fond

of. There are few who remain friends after all these years. We might not get to see them as often as we would like, but Facebook has made it easy to keep in touch and up to date with wherever life takes us. It has not been an easy ride for the past 25 years, I love the Brotherhood and all it entails, and given the chance, I would do it all again.



Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard Annual Report 2017



28 October 1992:
Father Gérard signs the foundation document



The founder members
(from left to right): Geoff Kalkwarf, Nokuthula Thabethe,
Father Gérard, Clare Kalkwarf, Dr. Paul Thabethe



28 October 1992 — 28 October 2017
25 years
Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard



Festive Holy Mass at the 25th anniversary of the establishment of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard

Activity Report 2017

The activities of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard and of Blessed Gérard's Care Centre in the year 2017, 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.

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.

72 patients tested

Antiretroviral Treatment

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

712 patients on ongoing life-long treatment
17 new patients admitted in 2017



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.

3827 home visits

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.

10740 social workers' consultations

(mostly for the Hospice, but also for the Children's Home, Bursary Fund and Relief Fund)

5825 outpatient consultations

434 new outpatients enrolled

191 new inpatients admitted

(re-admissions not counted)

76 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**.

1178 home visits by our home care teams

719 patients transported by ambulance

299 patients looked after at their homes

262 patient assessment visits done

162 new home care patients enrolled



Relief & Social Care



Relief Fund

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

We provided relief in 51 social emergency cases.



Poor Sick Fund

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

Activity Report 2017– continued

Child Care



Pre-Primary School & Crèche

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

81 children educated in 2017

Children's Home

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

84 children were admitted in 2017

55 children were discharged in 2017

1 child died in 2017 (See article on page 4)

54 children lived here on 31 December 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.

986 consultations in 2017

41 children (average occupancy)



Bursary Fund

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

242 bursaries were given in 2017



**Caring
without
borders**



Accumulated Statistics: Figures

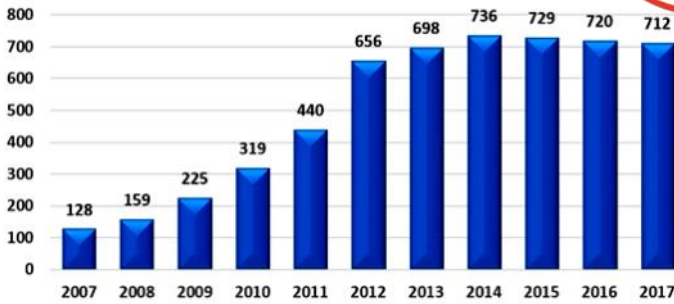
	2017	1992—2017	increase
New outpatients (Hospice)	434	2694	19.2%
Patients transported by ambulance (Hospice)	719	6581	12.3%
Inpatient admissions (Hospice)	191	5140	3.8%
New Home Care Patients (Hospice)	162	4802	3.5%
Social cases (Relief Fund)	51	2102	2.5%
New HAART patients (Hospice)	17	1560	1.1%



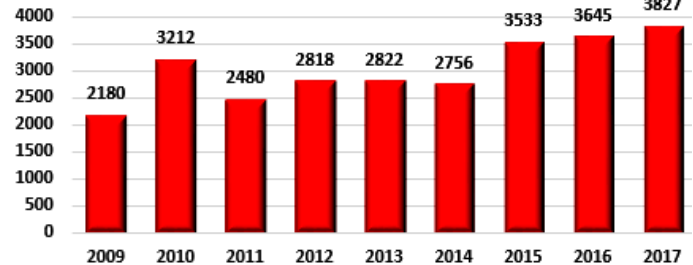
Statistics: Graphs



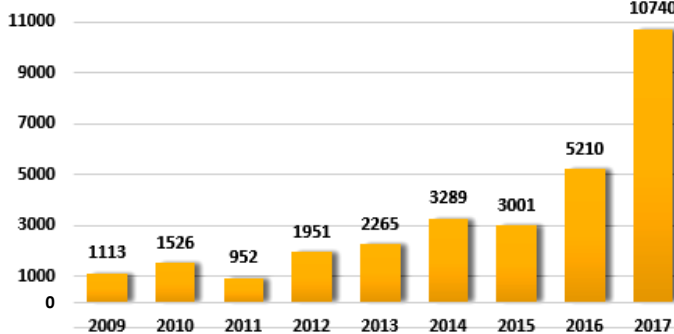
HAART Patients



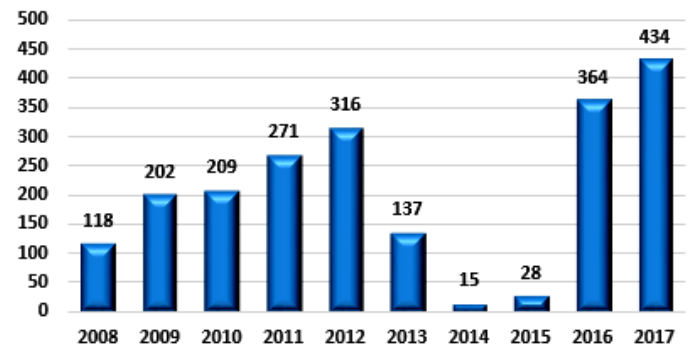
Home Care Visits - AIDS Treatment Therapeutic Counsellors



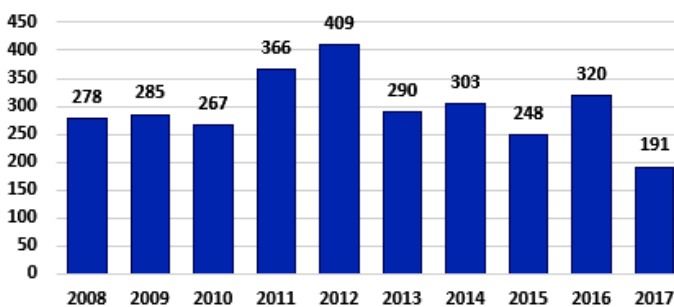
Social Worker Consultations



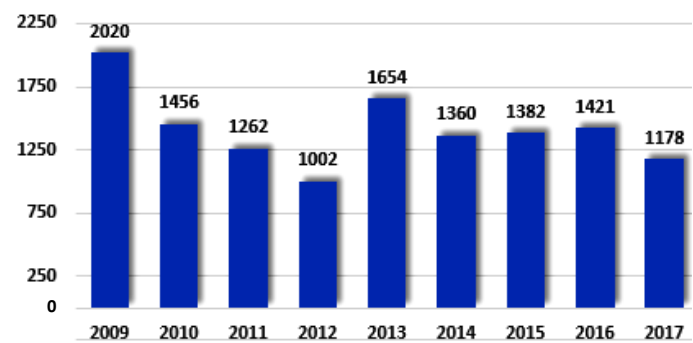
Hospice: New Outpatients



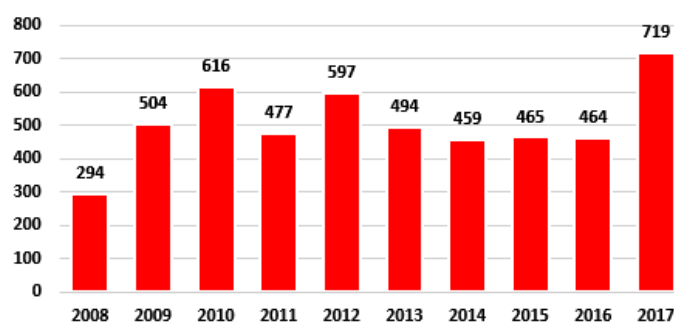
Hospice: New inpatients (re-admissions not counted)



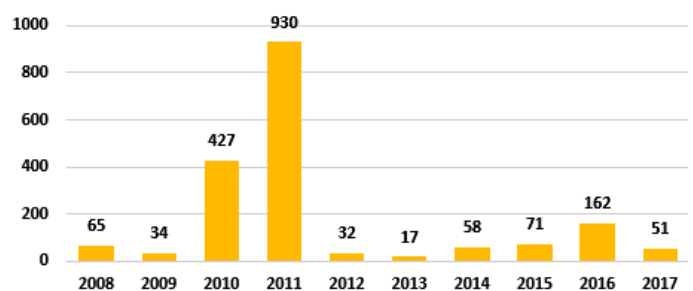
Home Care Visits - Home Care Team



Transported Patients

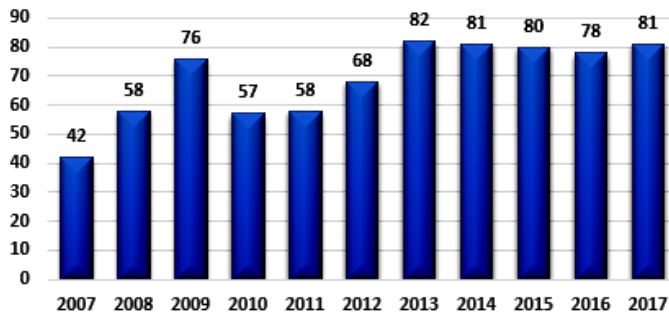


Social Cases - Relief Fund

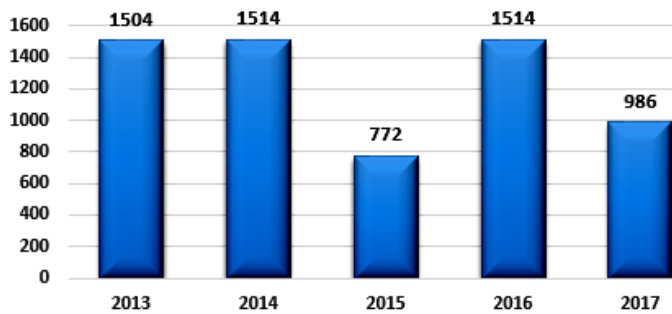


Statistics: Graphs (continued)

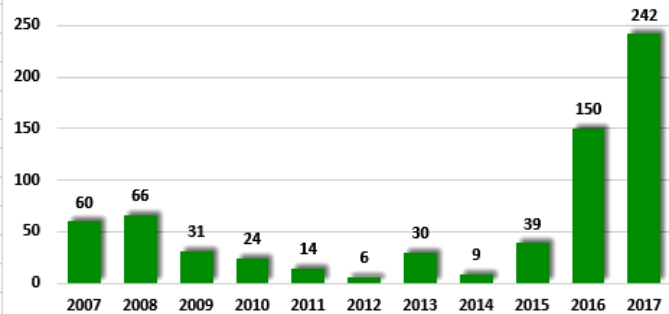
Children - Pre-Primary School & Creche



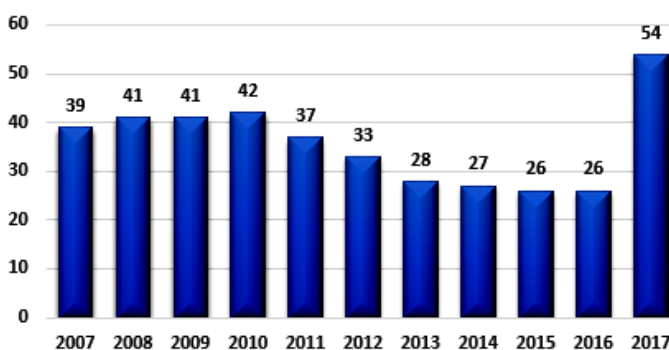
Malnutrition Clinic - Consultations



Bursaries



Children - Children's Home



**Caring
without
borders**

Personnel

Membership Statistics

As on: 31 December 2017		increase 2017	
1521	Active members	+29	+1.9%
694	Financial supporters	+30	+4.5%
366	Spiritual supporters	-7	-1.9%
2581	Members in total	+52	+2.0%

Employees

On 31 December 2017 we had 84 employees. Three **employees left** us in 2017: **Gugu Shandu** (ENA), **Xolani Maqwele** (Caregiver) and **Cynthia McQue** (Management Assistant).

Eight **new staff members** were welcomed:



Prisca Phumzile Mbatha
Reg. Professional Nurse



Lorraincia Bonisiwe Mthembu
Child Caregiver



Salmina Mamosobetsi Maduna
Educator



Thulisile Mkhwanazi
Catering Assistant



Phindile Suzen Mbonambi
Childcare



Balungile Sharon Ngcobo
Childcare



Sthuthukile Nonjabulo Ntuli
Childcare worker



Lucia Solani Mdletshe
Childcare worker

Public Relations

Internet:

Our homepage is www.bsg.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>

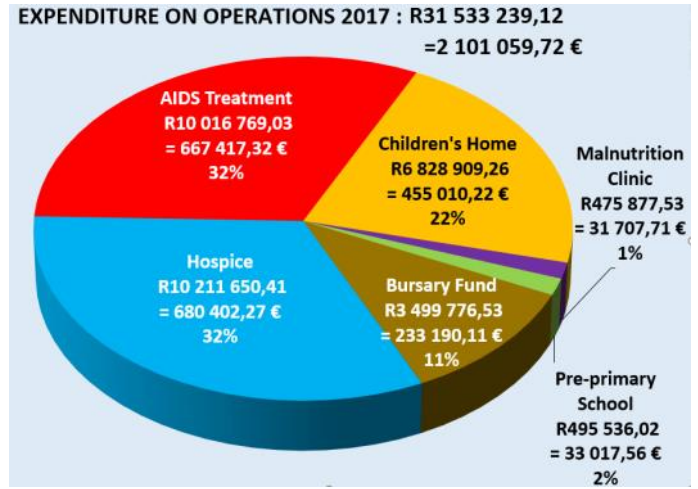
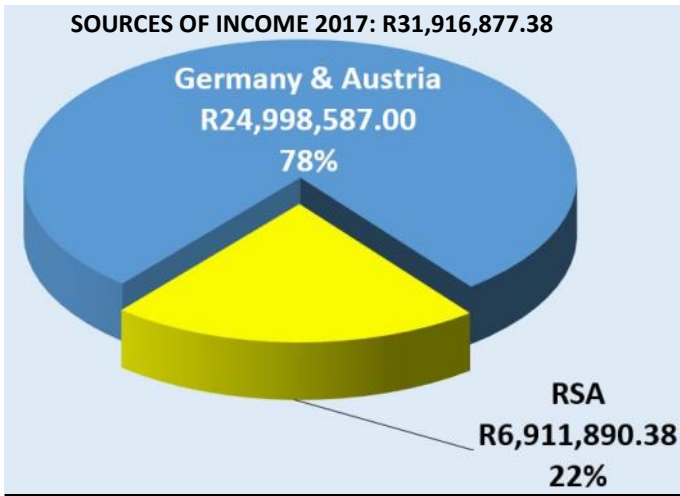
Twitter: @FatherGerard · <https://twitter.com/FatherGerard>

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

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

Finance Report

Income and Expenditure in 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.

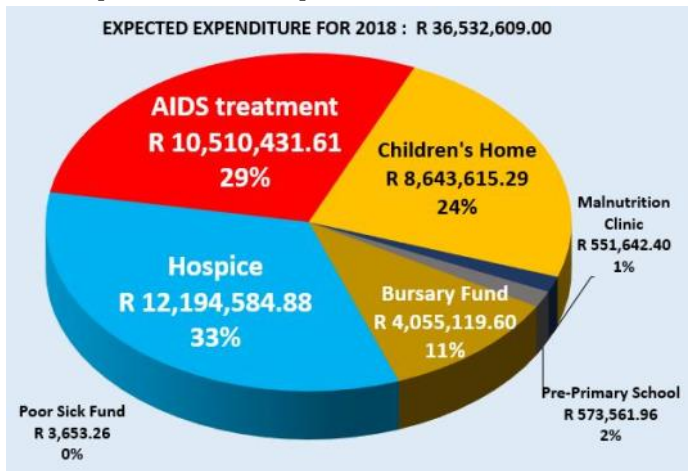
This year, for the first time, we included the monetary value of the benefits in kind (medicines and laboratory for our AIDS treatment programme) from the Department of Health of kwaZulu-Natal as income and expenditure in the financial report.

International donations via the PayPal account of our German benefit association are part of the donations from Germany.

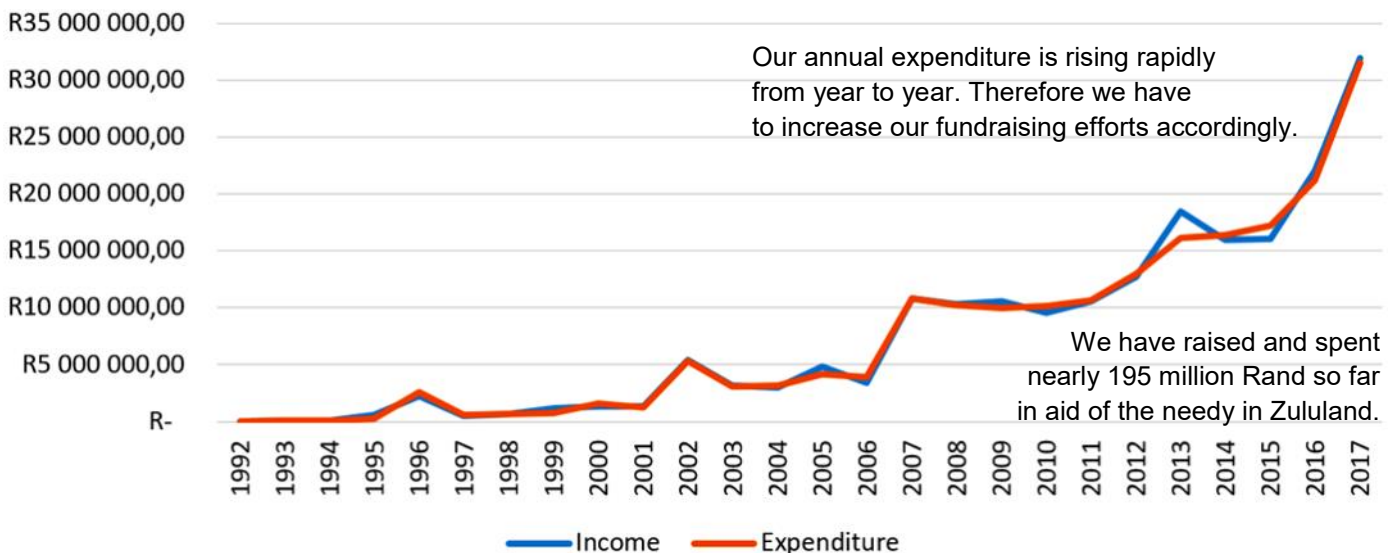
Financial Audit:

The Financial Audit of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard and of Blessed Gérard's Care Centre for 2017 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 2018



Financial Growth



Our Chronicle

Special Events in 2017:

The year 2017 was extremely eventful and exciting here in Mandeni in Zululand / South Africa:

January 6, 2017:

After all the children's homes in South Africa had to be re-certified according to new laws and regulations, after years of efforts with the very unholy bureaucracy, we were handed over our brand new state certificate as a **"Child and Youth Care Centre"**. The result was that our number of children grew from 29 to 61 this year and we are soon at our capacity limit of 70 home places.



17th - 18th March 2017:

For the first time in our history we were invited to the **International Hospitaller Conference of the Order of Malta**. Not only were we very impressed with the great work that the Order of Malta does in other coun-



tries, but the conference also praised our relief activities. Our image film, which was given to us by the Royal Film Company (Moritz Schreiner, Simon Rost, Peter Schöllhorn, Jessica Rank), was particularly well received. We have named it "Where misery is overcome by love". The film is online at: <https://youtu.be/x2dpaT11qnc>

From April 19 to June 23, 2017, Father Gérard travelled to Europe begging (Germany, Luxembourg, France and Austria). Since we can literally take care of the poorest of the poor, they of course pay nothing for the services we provide them. Although the Ministry of Health of kwa-Zulu-Natal provides us with AIDS drugs free of charge and we are allowed to use their labs for free, this covers just under one-third of our total spending on AIDS treatment. So we have no choice but to continue to beg for donations.



From the 6th to the 12th of June 2017 our Dr. Khaya Nzimande participated in the **Lourdes pilgrimage of the Order of Malta from Freiburg**. They were very impressed by his personality and he from Lourdes and the Order of Malta Freiburg.



June 25, 2017:
Our **St. John's celebration** at Blessed Gérard's Care Centre was a nice event.



The children of our children's home entertained the guests with their swinging dances and songs:

<https://www.facebook.com/BBG.ORG.ZA/videos/1548693821841912/>

28 October 2017:

Celebration of the **25th anniversary of the founding of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard**. (See article on pages 24—26)

On October 29, 2017, four of our members received the **Cross of a Dame/Knight of Magistral Grace of the Order of Malta**. (See article on page 27)

From 1st November to 15th December Father Gérard was back in Europe.

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

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.

Mending broken hearts

An interview of Philippa Leslie, Director of Communications of the British Association of the Order of Malta and Senior Communications Consultant to the Grand Magistry of the Order of Malta,

with Father Gérard on 15 May 2017

ABOUT YOUR WORK

How would you describe the work of your organisation, the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard?

The Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard is an Association of the Roman Catholic Church (FBO), the Relief Organisation of the Order of Malta in South Africa, a (South African) Public Benefit Organisation (PBO 18/11/13/2769) operated not for profit (NPO). The Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard was founded in 1992 at Mandeni in the Province of kwaZulu-Natal in South Africa. We established and provide a comprehensive and holistic system of care through

[Blessed Gérard's Care Centre](#) by running:

- **Health Care Projects:** [AIDS-Care](#), [Hospice](#), [Poor Sick Fund](#)
- **Child Care Projects:** [Pre-Primary School](#), [Children's Home](#), [Malnutrition Clinic](#), [Bursary Fund](#)
- **Relief and Social Care Projects:** [Relief Fund](#), [First Aid & Emergency Service](#), [Disaster Relief](#)

You founded it in 1992. Why? What was the need you saw that it could help?

One day I was called to bring Communion of the Sick to a dying lady. I visited her as I had done regularly during the previous months. When I arrived I noticed that she was in a very bad condition. She had terrible bedsores and she was totally emaciated. I gave her Communion of the Sick and the Anointing of the Sick and said to her: "I would be glad if you will allow me to take you to a good doctor." "I don't have the money", she replied and I went on: "Let me take care of that, because I think, that you really need a good doctor." She agreed then and I put a mattress in the back of my pickup, laid her on it and took her to the doctor. The doctor was Dr. Paul Thabethe whose surgery is in Sundumbili Township. On our arrival he said: "For heavens sake, she is in such a bad state that she has to go to hospital." She was transferred from there to hospital and died the same night. When I met Dr. Thabethe again he said to me: "Father, can't we do something? There are so many people here who simply die from malnutrition or from being totally neglected at home and that should not happen. This kind of thing should not be a cause of death. By saying so he was knocking on open doors with me.

The second event, which was very impressive, was this: There were two very poor families in Mandeni, living in one house. The fathers had no work. They could not feed their seven children. The landlord who they had rented a flat from had threatened to evict them. They had nothing to eat and nothing to wear: A totally desperate situation. As usual when people are desperate, they come to the Catholic Church, even if they are not Catholics. On Sunday after the service I made an announcement in church and asked "Is there anybody who could help to get these totally desperate families back on track again?" A member of the pastoral council, [Mrs. Kalkwarf](#) responded and said: "Oh yes, we can do something to

organise help." She went off and a day later she had organised the entire parish and other people. Some brought food, others clothes, others got the children back to school and others even found a job for the men, so that within three months the need of the families was alleviated. That was an inspiring revelation to me: "Well, there are people here in South Africa who know how to organise things!"

I had been aware of the urgent needs of the people. When I came to Mandeni I saw that the charity work of the Church was far from well organised and on the other hand there were people who were aware of the need, people who have their hearts in the right place and people who know how to organise help. That was my ignition. As I have been involved with the work of the [Order of Malta](#) in Germany for more than 30 years, where organising help became my second nature, it struck me: "Let's plan and do something to help the people here in Zululand on a long term basis." We missionaries are always accused of establishing gigantic projects which totally depend on foreign entities and funds and on our person as a missionary and when the funds would dry out one day, when the missionary dies or is transferred, everything would collapse. I said to myself: "No, we do not want to make this mistake. We want to try to get the South Africans to help the South Africans in South Africa. It would be good to found an organisation within the country, where the indigenous people make plans on how to give help to the local people who are in any kind of need." Therefore, I founded an organisation of South Africans, which is based here and works with local people.

Who funds it?

The work of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard is almost exclusively funded by private donations from individuals. A few corporate donors and a few organisations donate to us as well.

How many religious do you have?

Three Benedictine nuns and one Benedictine Missionary Father (=myself)

How many staff do you have?

82 full time employees and more than 1100 volunteers

How do you attract volunteers?

We are "overrun" by volunteers. Volunteering at the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard is considered a very prestigious activity. The volunteers proudly present themselves in our uniform and are well respected. We have a very good reputation and that echoes back onto the volunteers who are seen as the "angels of mercy". Volunteering here also reaps the benefit of getting two wholesome meals per shift, a financial reimbursement

for travel costs and other expenses, free medical treatment by our doctor and free medication and the pride of being part of a wonderful organisation.

You understand the importance of communication: you have a website, newsletters, a blog.

What reactions have these communications tools had, in terms of educating the public in general and attracting support?

Our “communications” as the Order of Malta would call it are essential means to spread the good news of our faith that translates into tenderly loving care for the less fortunate. We frequently get feedback that our work shows that the Catholic Church does not just waffle piously, but takes effective action against sickness, desperation, poverty and neglect.

It is difficult to determine which kind of communication may have motivated a new donor to support our work. We have subscribed to the intention to be always and everywhere present, in TV, radio, magazines, newspapers, our own print media, presentations, talks, sermons, in various social media (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, XING, YouTube, Twitter, Google+), in the Internet etc. When people keep hearing your name mentioned in a positive context they become acquainted with you and when they decide who they want to support you may be lucky.

What are your next plans for the hospice?

The hospice will just continue its enormous work, but we are dreaming of establishing a nursing school to provide professional training for “enrolled nursing assistants” in a one-year-course.

The Council (Board of Directors) of Blessed Gérard's Care Centre decided on 5th July 2017 to initiate a new institution: A **facility of "assisted living and occupation"** for young adults who had been wards of Blessed Gérard's Children's Home and attended special schools. We experienced that these have hardly any chance to live independently and to get any form of employment. Since we had accepted a parental role when we welcomed them into our Children's Home, we have a moral obligation to continue our assistance as far as necessary whilst trying to foster their independence as far as possible. We intend to help them to create their own income and are very much in a brainstorming and decision making phase in this regard. The idea is to employ a new Social Worker or a married couple where one of them at least is a Social Worker to “run” the facility.

ABOUT YOUR PATIENTS

Please briefly describe the local environment.

Until 40 years ago, the Mandeni area was dense bush. Then a big paper factory was built there and had to employ many workers. These workers were recruited in the surrounding areas and settled near the factory. According to the former apartheid system, which was still in power in those days, there was a large township being a ghetto for black people, a settlement for white people, a settlement for Indians and a settlement for coloured people. In this black ghetto, the people are housed in partly very poor circumstances, which is a breeding ground of sickness, of course. That is not all. There is very severe poverty in our area. The official unemployment rate for the country is 52% of the employable population. This causes people to take desperate

measures, just to survive. If one does not know how to pay for one's rent, if one does not know what to put on the table to eat, if one does not know how to clothe oneself and the children, then one might often choose methods and ways out, which they normally would not consider. This is why, unfortunately, prostitution has become very common here. Young women and girls sell themselves, so that at least they can earn a living and care for their children. That, of course, is a breeding ground for HIV / AIDS. Therefore it is extremely difficult in our AIDS education to make it clear to people how they should behave. 76 % of people tested for AIDS in our area of Mandeni and Sundumbili and 88 % in the industrial area of Isithebe are HIV-positive. This is the overwhelming truth. One asks: “Can that be at all possible?” However, we see the very sad reality here day by day.

Tell me about your patients: who are they? Is there an average age?

The majority of people start being sexually active at about the age of 15.

That is when they are infected with the HIV.

It takes up to ten years until AIDS will develop.

Therefore, most of our patients are in their Twenties and Thirties.

On the other hand, we admit more and more patients with large and deep decubital ulcers who have been neglected at home or by public hospitals, since we are known to have a good record of accomplishment to treat these.

Most of our patients do not even know how to spell “medical aid”.

There is no compulsory health insurance in South Africa.

How do you find them?

Both the health care professionals and the broad population know us very well. We are just a phone call away. Nevertheless, sometimes we really have to look for their homes, e.g. when we get a sick call like “Please come and help, there is a dying person here and we cannot cope!” “Where is the patient?” “You know, here ema-Bhananeni (= at the bananas)”. “How can we get there?” “You know, go to ekuJulukeni (=place name meaning “in the sweat”), carry on until you get to the Bumba river, cross it at the low level bridge and carry on until you get to a rusty scrap tractor next to the road in a ditch. Turn right there up the hill where the banana plants are. I will wait for you there.” When the ambulance crew finally will have arrived there, they may have to go for another half an hour driving off road on a pedestrian track until they will find the patient in a dilapidated clay hut with a thatched roof.

What are their family situations?

First, there is hardly any family.

An estimated 90 % of children are born out of wedlock, often by teenage mothers.

There are many child-headed “families” because a large percentage of the parents, i.e. the young population have succumbed to AIDS and when granny has died, the older siblings have to take over the parental role. Siblings though cannot claim childcare grants for their younger brothers and sisters or for themselves. The older girls often see no other means of survival for themselves and their siblings than engaging in transac-

tional sexual relationships most probably resulting in their own HIV infection.

76 % of our local population are HIV positive.

52 % of the employable population in our area are unemployed.

Poverty and desperation prevail.

Many of the former "family clans" where extended families all lived in one place and which used to be typical for African society have fallen into pieces

- through urbanisation, i.e. young people to move out of the bush into the towns and cities looking for employment as migrant labourers
- through the fact that most of the young family members have died as a result of the AIDS pandemic.

**Tell me about the orphanage
and the future of the children you care for.**

Our Children's Home, meanwhile officially recognised as a "Child and Youth Care Centre" by the South African Department of Social Development is not just an orphanage. We provide a cosy home, love, security and medical treatment to abandoned, previously neglected, physically, mentally and sexually abused, HIV-positive and sick, handicapped and orphaned children between birth and adulthood.

Where adoption has failed*, where foster parenthood has failed** and where re-integration into the "families" has failed, we provide the children with a cosy home in a safe and sound atmosphere, send them to school and raise them as good as we can.

We do not abandon our children when they have reached adulthood, but we continue our parental role by paying for their vocational or professional education and/or their studies through Blessed Gérard's Bursary fund.

* The "market" in this regard is over-saturated due to the high number of AIDS-orphans and hardly anybody wants to adopt a sick, maladjusted or handicapped child.

** We have many children who have been assigned to us because they were abused by foster parents who see the foster care grant as means of income only and are not interested in raising these children.

What has working with the patients taught you?

Patience with the patients ("Europeans have a watch, Africans have time")

and with myself ("One step at a time!")

Respect for their beliefs, traditions, customs and culture and the necessity of enculturation in our approach

Trust in God as the only absolutely reliable anchor and rescue vessel in an ocean of misery

Admiration of their resilience, their thankfulness even for small things, their musical talent and so forth ...

What is the outlook for AIDs patients in the region?

Well, we have been pioneers and are part of the success story fighting AIDS in Africa, the victory over the pandemic, in so far as after twenty years of ever more increasing infection rates we have come to a standstill, i.e. the rate is not further increasing but stalled on a high level. The number of new infections and the number of AIDS related deaths have equalised now. If we succeed to carry on consequently with our "Highly Active Anti-

Retroviral Therapy" (HAART = AIDS-Treatment) and even get those who so far have evaded detection and/or treatment, we will achieve a decrease in the infection rate and finally eradicate AIDS one day. Recently we spoke about up to 35 years of added lifespan at good quality of life resulting from HAART. Meanwhile AIDS patients under HAART have no longer a decreased life expectancy. The outlook is: "Without treatment, once you have entered the AIDS-phase, you will die within plus-minus a year's time. With treatment, AIDS won't shorten your life any longer. Choose treatment – choose life!"

Local community reactions to your patients: Are they marginalised? For example, many Order programmes are about re-integrating patients into their local communities: is that an activity that is relevant to your patients and their environment?

Yes, especially AIDS patients are still largely considered outcasts of society.

Popular belief holds that sickness were caused by a spell or evil spirits and people are reluctant to help the patients for fear the evil spirits may haunt them in revenge for them spoiling their aim to make the patients sick. We are very glad and proud that nearly all of our patients, that means thousands, have been re-integrated into their local communities.

Well, originally a hospice would aim at re-integrating patients into their heavenly home, but through our AIDS-treatment programme, but even through the fact that we have treated numerous patients who were admitted "to die" so well, that they could be discharged home again. In this regard we somehow have redefined the aim of hospice from purely palliative end-of-life-care to providing optimal care and treatment and leave the decision which door will be used at their discharge to the good Lord in heaven.

Our children's home aims very clearly at the re-integration of the children into their family, extended family or local community where this may be a viable option.

ABOUT YOU

Where did you grow up?

I lived in Regensburg (in English called "Ratisbon" with its medieval name) from birth (2 July 1955) until my priestly ordination (26 June 1982)

**How – and why - did you get involved
with the Order of Malta?**

Attending a First-Aid Course at Malteser Hilfsdienst, the German Relief Organisation of the Order of Malta, in 1969 awakened my interest and desire to learn more about the subject, but advanced training was only offered to members of Malteser Hilfsdienst. Being a minor in these days I needed parental permission to join the organisation and after joining I subsequently enrolled and absolved every training that was offered by Malteser Hilfsdienst and ended up as a paramedic (Emergency-Medical-Technician) and first aid, nursing and paramedic instructor. Later I became head of the nursing departments of Malteser Hilfsdienst first in the Diocese of Regensburg and later in the Diocese of Limburg. When I was at Limburg I also became the deputy manager of Malteser Hilfsdienst in the Diocese of Limburg and in the Province of Hesse.

My theological dissertation “Das Neue in der geistlichen Tradition des Johanniterordens” about the innovation and new ideas that the Order of Malta brought into the spiritual tradition of the Church was later published under the title “Die Ordensregel der Johanniter/ Malteser” (The Rule of the Order of St. John / Order of Malta).

After I had founded the South African relief organisation of the Order of Malta in 1992 I was invited in 1994 to join the Order of Malta as a member.

Being a relief-corps-volunteer and member of the Order of Malta is the basis of my fourfold “MMMM” vocation: **M**alteser – **M**inister of religion – **M**onk – **M**issionary. (See “[The four M’s of Father Gérard](#)”)

How did you find yourself in Africa?

On the day of my priestly ordination, the Diocese of Regensburg granted me leave of absence to join the Missionary Benedictines of St. Ottilien.

Archabbot Notker Wolf O.S.B. (who later became the Abbot Primate of the entire Benedictine Order) assigned me as a missionary to Inkamana Abbey in KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa on 6 January 1987.

Becoming a missionary was the fulfilment of a long-lasting dream since my days of childhood.

I had been scheduled initially to become part of a team to make a new monastic foundation in the Philippines, but a severe shortage of priests in Zululand induced my superiors to change their mind and rather to send me to South Africa. I had been silently apprehensive about me as a paleface going into Apartheid-South-Africa where because of my colour of skin I may be seen as one of these so called oppressors. Today I am more than glad that I did not refuse to go to South Africa, since I have found the fulfilment of my life here. I would not like to swap my assignment with anybody else’s.

What drew you to Mandeni?

The Abbot of my mission monastery, Inkamana Abbey, had agreed to the request of the Bishop of Eshowe to assign me to become the Parish Priest of Mandeni in 1991.

What African language(s) do you speak? How did you learn it/them?

I speak **isiZulu** (spoken in Zululand and far beyond) fluently.

I understand a bit of **isiXhosa** (spoken in the Cape Provinces) and **isiSwati** (spoken in Swaziland) because these languages are very similar to isiZulu and I understand **Afrikaans** (spoken by the Dutch immigrants – called isiBhunu by the Zulu – “the language of the Boers”) because it is similar to my mother tongue German. Sr. Romualda, a Zulu nun, who speaks English sufficiently, taught me isiZulu for a few months. When I kept asking her why although she had told me the rule to be like this and that, the people would say something quite different, she told me: “Don’t worry, Father, it will come!” That was the end of my private lessons but indeed, it “came” with lots of trial and error and practising. The great advantage in this regard was the fact that the parish priest and I were the only “palefaces” in the entire district. Therefore I had to either remain silent or speak and Zulu was the one and only option to make myself understood. Three months after my arrival in South Africa the parish priest of this parish Mahlabathini went on a 104-days leave to Europe. I still remember the number

of days because I counted the days until his return. The retired priest who was supposed to replace him during this time died in the very night of the parish priest’s departure. That resulted in me being the one and only priest in the second biggest parish of the diocese with its 28 different church congregations to be looked after spiritually, pastorally and charitably, spread over an area of about 1000 km² and connected by unpaved bush roads. I had no choice but to speak isiZulu and I did.

What most inspires you about what you do?

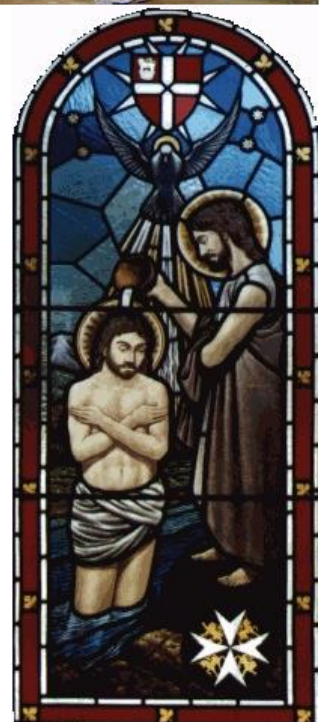
I think that the good Lord in heaven had quite a plan with me and guided me swiftly and decisively to the very place where I find myself right now.

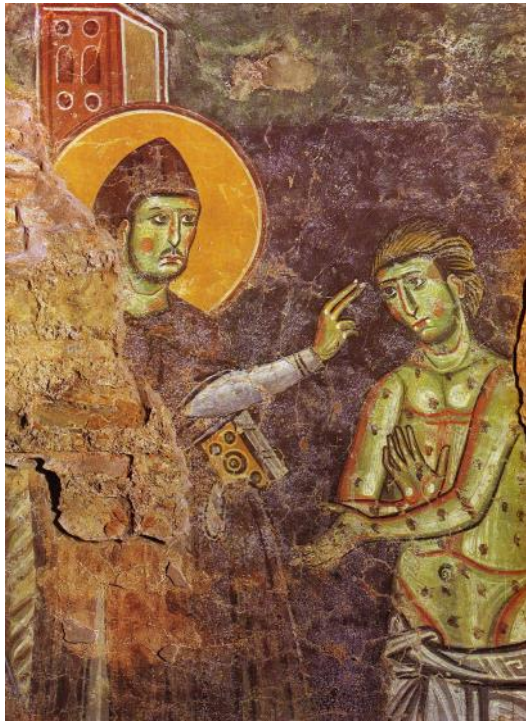
Many things inspire me about what I do:

- The fact that I feel needed and useful, satisfied and fulfilled because of what I am and what I do.
- The fact that I feel privileged to be called to walk quite closely in the footsteps of my great examples



- **Blessed Gérard** as the founder and leader of a Hospitaller brotherhood, whose members came “ad obsequium pauperum et tuitionem fidei catholicae”
- **St. John the Baptist**, who prepared the way for the Lord, seeing how countless people can experience the tender loving care of the Lord through our various services.





- **St. Benedict of Norcia**, who wrote in chapter 36:1-4 of his Rule: "Care of the sick must rank above and before all else, so that they may truly be served as Christ, for he said: I was sick and you visited me (Matt 25:36), and, What you did for one of these least brothers you did for me (Matt 25:40). Let the sick on their part bear in mind that they are served out of honour of God."



- **St. Teresa of Calcutta**, whose language we copied by calling our operational wing "Care Centre" and whose unlimited dedication inspired us to use the captions "We care in any case" for the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard and "Caring without borders" for Blessed Gérard's Care Centre. I used a picture meditation about the vocation and work of "Mother Teresa" as my

sermon in order to tune our evolving organisation into harmony with her ideals at the Holy Mass during which we founded the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard 25 years ago on 28 October 1992.

- Another great inspiration is the fact that we have **given value to the life of the people**
 - who we are looking after in and through our Care Centre.
 - We have also given value to the lives of our volunteers and given them dignity, recognition, knowledge and abilities, food and reimburse their expenses.
 - We have created job opportunities. One breadwinner in KwaZulu-Natal feeds five mouths, ten mouths, many fifteen and more mouths from their income. Eighty-five employees feeding fifteen mouths each makes thousand-two hundred-and-seventy-five full tummies three times per day! That is more dignified for the recipients than handing out food to beggars. Therefore, we have made a tremendous impact in our society.
- However, what I actually even consider more important and inspiring is the fact that we **give the Church credibility**. There is a common opinion claiming that there are many other churches, which just do "happy clappy" and nothing for the poor. We do not just talk but we put our prayers into action.
- I am inspired by the **dedicated service of our members**. Many people in other continents consider Africans selfish, greedy and lazy. Our members prove the contrary. I praised them at the 20th anniversary of the blessing and opening of Blessed Gérard's Care Centre:
 - "you are the smiles that our patients get,
 - you are the hugs, that our children so dearly need,
 - you are giving the food, that the hungry need and
 - you are mending broken hearts, which is what we are all about."

**We care
in any case**



25 years Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard

Our celebration on 28 October 2017

28 – 29 October 2017:



The Grand Hospitaller of the Order of Malta, Dominique Prince de La Rochefoucauld-Montbel, the President of Malteser Hilfsdienst, Dr. Constantin von Brandenstein-Zeppelin, the Diocesan Superior of Malteser Hilfsdienst Freiburg Maresi Rehder and her husband Hans Peter, the Vice Consul of Italy in Cape Town Antonio Rapisardi, the Diocesan-Foreign-Aid-Co-Ordinator of Malteser Hilfsdienst Freiburg, Dr. Andreas Heinze and his wife Martine Sutter with their friends Thierry and Marie-Claire Gantzer and Father Gérard's second cousin Alexandra Lagleder had arrived from Rome, Germany, France and Cape Town, to celebrate the **25th Anniversary of the Establishment of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard** with us.

Prince de La Rochefoucauld-Montbel was the keynote speaker,

followed by a very cordial address by Dr. von Brandenstein-Zeppelin.



The Sovereign Council of the Order of Malta had issued a „Commemorative Medal for the 25th anniversary of the establishment of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard“, which by law is just a commemorative medal, but it has been minted only in limited edition and was therefore in fact awarded like a medal of merit to personalities who gained out-

standing merits over a long period of time for the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard.



The General Manager of Blessed Gérard's Care Centre Sven Anderson presented long service awards to many of our staff members and Father Gérard presented



the President's Award of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard to the most outstanding employee and volunteer.

Prince de La Rochefoucauld-Montbel was „tribally invested“ in great gratitude for the great honour of his visit.



Caroline Beaumont presented Father Gérard with a new alb, as his had fallen victim to an ironing accident.



Bishop Xolelo Kumalo celebrated the festive Holy Mass in concelebration with Abbot Godfrey Sieber O.S.B., Father Prior John Paul Mwaniki Gutu O.S.B., Father Sylvester Ngema and Father Gérard.





Father Gérard addressed the festive assembly:

Dear guests of honour – and that is every single person here,

I had a dream ...

... when I was a small boy and my god-mother, who went to Brazil with her brother as missionaries, kept sending us information about their work to promote the faith. **I had the dream** to become a missionary myself, **but then I woke up** and found out that I had to grow up and learn and do a lot to put my dream into action. **Not long thereafter**, I found myself in school to prepare for the challenges of life.

I had a dream ...

... when I was a youth and my parents had initiated and run a self-help- organisation for elderly, sickly and lonely persons. **I had the dream** to get involved myself and help all those countless people who often just needed a good word and a smile and a helping hand now and then, **but then I woke up** and found out that I had to grow up and learn and do a

lot to put my dream into action. **Not long thereafter**, I found myself volunteering there and for Caritas

I had a dream ...

... when I was a young adult and had made a First Aid Course at the German relief organisation of the Order of Malta. **I had the dream** to help people as much as I could, **but then I woke up** and found out that I had to grow up and learn and do a lot to put my dream into action. **Not long thereafter**, I found myself as an active member of Malteser Hilfsdienst, and finally as emergency medical technician, First Aid and Nursing instructor and deputy provincial manager.

I had a dream ...

... when I met exemplary priests who were ideal good shepherds of their flock. **I had the dream** to become a priest myself, **but then I woke up** and found out that I had to grow up and learn and do a lot to put my dream into action. **Not long thereafter**, I found myself in the seminary and finally at the altar of ordination.

I had a dream ...

... when I met with wonderful monks and nuns who happily lived their monastic vocation in its fullness. **I had the dream** to become a monk myself, **but then I woke up** and found out that I had to grow up and learn and do a lot to put my dream into action. **Not long thereafter**, I found myself in the novitiate as a Benedictine monk and finally at the altar of monastic profession.

I had a dream ...

... when I was sent as a missionary to Zululand and saw several people die from neglect. **I had the dream** to alleviate their sufferings and to make their misery bearable, **but then I woke up** and found out that I had to grow up and learn and do a lot to put my dream into action. **Not long thereafter**, I found myself at many sick beds in the bush and in talks with our local people what to do about the dire situation.

I had a dream ...

... when I became the Parish Priest of Mangethe and Mandeni **I had the dream** to make the parishioners part of the solution of their own problems and to establish a relief organisation, **but then I woke up** and found out that I had to grow up and learn and do a lot to put my dream into action. **Not long thereafter**, I found myself in the chapel of the priest's house here next door signing the foundation document of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard.

We had a dream ...

... when we needed more than just good willing volunteers alone to meet the needs of our growing organisation. **We had the dream** to construct the buildings needed to look after children and poor sick people, **but then I woke up** and found out that I had to grow up and learn and do a lot to put my dream into action. **Not long thereafter**, we opened the new building of Blessed Gérard's Pre-Primary School and Crèche and a year later, we opened Blessed Gérard's Care Centre.

We had a dream ...

... when our work and our organisation grew more and more. **We had the dream** to put it onto a sustainable human resource and financial basis, **but then I woke up** and found out that I had to grow up and learn and do a lot to put my dream into action. **Not long thereafter**, our membership steadily grew and today we have welcomed the 2861st member into our organisation. We are proud of our currently 1378 active members, 558 financial supporter members and 355 spiritual supporter members. 85 of our active members are full-time-employees of our Care Centre.

Our annual turnover grew from R2,500.00 in 1992 to 2.5 Million Rand in 1996, to 5.3 Million Rand in 2002, to 10.8 Million Rand in 2007, to 17 Million Rand in 2015 and in this year we have already raised and spent 26 Million Rand. In these 25 years we have raised and spent 190 Million Rand (That is close to 12 Million Euro).

In these 25 years

We treated 1 ½ Thousand AIDS-Patients in a life-long therapy.

2100 destitute and desperate people were enabled to start a new life through our Relief Fund.

3300 terminally ill people were admitted to our Inpatient Hospice.

We looked after 4800 desperately sick persons – some of them over months and years – through our Home Care Programme.

We transported 6 ½ Thousand patients by ambulance, mostly from their home to our hospice.

We treated 2600 terminally ill people as outpatients, many of them over a very long period of time.

All these services were rendered free of charge and often we did not even get a "Thank you" for this.

The biggest Thank you of today is due to our most wonderful staff members and our volunteers. You are the smiling face, the helping hand, the consoling word and the loving heart of our organisation. We are what we are through you! Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!

We are proud and grateful that our German benefit association, the "Bruderschaft des Seligen Gerhard e.V.", which raises most of our financial support, guarantees our financial sustainability.

We are grateful to the Benedictine Mission House in Schuyler/ Nebraska in the U.S.A. for their own support and for acting as a donation portal for our American donors.

We are grateful to my own monastic home, St. Ottilien Archabbey, for their great support. They donated our photovoltaic and solar thermic system, and three of our vehicles bear a sticker "Donated by St. Ottilien Archabbey", to name just a few of their donations.

We are grateful to all people who fund-raise for us and for all our donors. Amongst these is Malteser Hilfsdienst.

We are grateful to the Order of Malta whose ideals "tuitio fidei et obsequium pauperum" we put into action in this part of the world. We are most grateful to the Sovereign Council, the German Association. Moreover, a very special and profound Thank you is due to our guardian angels Hans Peter & Maresi Rehder. They have admitted us into the Intensive Care Unit of their eight-pointed hearts and adopted us as their special way to live the spirituality and apostolate of the Order of Malta. Hans Peter and Maresi you are an inspiration for all of us. Thank you!

We are grateful to our most wonderful management committee of Blessed Gérard's Care Centre, for their good governance and leadership and keeping our services on track. They have also taken the brunt of the preparation work for this fest today. You are jolly good fellows! Hip-hip-hooray!

We are especially grateful to those many – the Bible would call them – poor widows, who give from the little they have, because they know that there are others who are worse off than they are.

We have a dream ...

... as the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard on its 25th Anniversary of establishment has now finally outgrown its childhood shoes.

We have the dream that the words which are frequently laid into Blessed Gérard's mouth, who founded the Order of Malta more than 900 years ago, will apply to the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard, too: "Our brotherhood will be everlasting, because the soil which this plant is rooted in is the misery of the world and because, God willing, there will always be people, who wish to work towards easing these sufferings and making this misery more bearable."

I have a dream ... and this dream are you!

I thank you all!



The children of our Children's Home,

of our Pre-Primary School & Crèche,



and employees and volunteers presented a rich and engaging entertainment programme that literally knocked everyone off their stools. The mood can be best characterised by the

German song "Such a day as beautiful as today should never pass".



A raffle with considerable prizes, which had all been donated to us, was very well received. As a thank you for their tireless service, the employees and volunteers received a lot free of charge.



Unfortunately, the Apostolic Nuncio (Ambassador of the Vatican in South Africa) Archbishop Peter Wells could not come to us until the end of the celebration because of a car breakdown. His participation was an extraordinary honour and joy to us, especially as he himself is a honorary conventual chaplain of the Order of Malta. He concluded the celebration with his blessing.



Drum majorettes escorted the guests of honour to the community centre.



Prince de La Rochefoucauld-Montbel & Bishop Kumalo.



Dr. Antonio Rapisardi and Hans Peter Rehder



Our Medical Superintendent and proven MC Dr. Nzimande



The children stormed the jumping castle



The day ended with a festive dinner for the special guests of honour in Eshowe.

Investiture

of four of our members as Dames/Knights of Magistral Grace

of the Order of Malta

on 29 October 2017

On 29 October 2017, the Grand Hospitaller of the Order of Malta, Prince de La Rochefoucauld-Montbel, presented to our Vice President Dr. Paul Thabethe, our Director of charity, Sr. Thuli Thabethe, our Administrator of goods, Yvonne Renaud and our Medical Superintendent Dr. Khaya Nzimande the Order's Cross awarded by the Sovereign Council of the Order of Malta as Dames and Knights of Magistral Grace of the Order of Malta.



This increase in rank is also a great honour for the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard because it was granted due to the special merit of these members for the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard and the Order of Malta.



(from left to right): Yvonne Renaud, Dr. Paul Thabethe, Dr. Khaya Nzimande, Sr. Thuli Thabethe, Father Gérard, Dominique Prince de La Rochefoucauld-Montbel, Dr. Constantin von Brandenstein-Zeppelin, Maresi Rehder, Dr. Antonio Rapisardi, Hans Peter Rehder.



Father Gérard at his sermon.



Prince de La Rochefoucauld-Montbel at the intercessions



Dr. Paul Thabethe, Sr. Thuli Thabethe and Yvonne Renaud



Dr. Khaya Nzimande



and the actual guests of honour: Our Lords, the Sick.

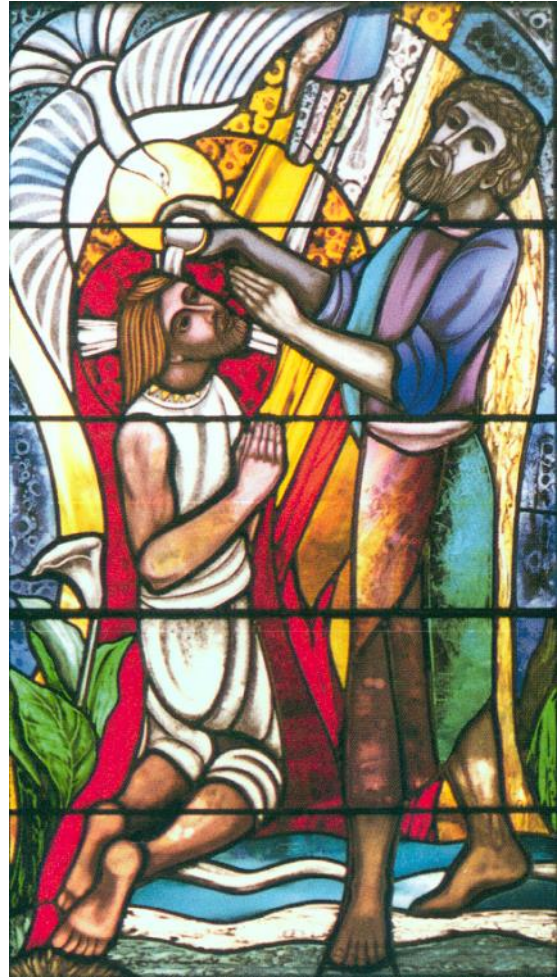


You are cordially invited
to join us at the celebration
of the patron saint
of the Order of Malta,
St. John the Baptist,

on Sunday, 24 June 2018,

at Blessed Gérard's Church,
61 Anderson Road,
Mandeni 4490,
South Africa.

9:30 am Festive Holy Mass
followed by lunch
and entertainment.



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.