



Newsletter 2021

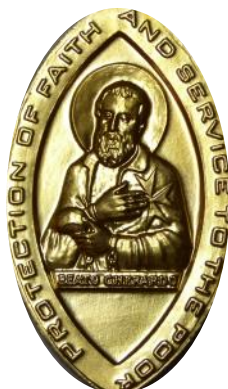
Annual Reports 2019 & 2020



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 some pictures and articles to this newsletter again.

We are ...

- a group of more than 2600 **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"
(PBO number 13 000 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.



Blessed Gérard's Hospice



Sister Mbatha, who has been working for more than two years now at Blessed Gérard's Care Centre, gave an interview to a German volunteer.

What do you like most about your job?

What I like most about my job is that it enables me to prevent diseases by educating the community, by educating the patients how to take their medicine, how

to cope with the side effects and what to do when they are feeling lonely. It is very interesting to help patients with their different problems.

What are the biggest challenges in your job?

One of the biggest challenges for me is to nurse a dying child, to see this young small body fighting for its life. There is never a routine in that. I find it also very difficult to cope with a patient who is in a state of denial. Nothing you teach him about his condition and how to cope with it sinks into his mind. He refuses to take medicine or to see the doctor regularly and he does not understand that he puts his life into danger.

Why do you think that young men and women should become nurses?

Young people should join us because we nurses are warriors. We fight diseases. We fight for our patients' life. Many people become still infected with AIDS that means we nurses are not enough; we need young men and women with new energy and strategies to help us fighting HIV and AIDS.



Nhlanhla's fate is not unusual in the townships around Mandeni. Nhlanhla is a young man of 28 years without vocational training and he used to live like so many others from casual work.

His family is a bit better off. They managed to own a small house. However, there is no money for education or health insurance here either.

A few months ago, Nhlanhla went out with some friends. On his way home, it was pitch dark on the unlit streets, it happened. A car driver overlooked him. Nhlanhla barely survived the accident and has been paralyzed from his neck since.

In South Africa there is no rehabilitation system for patients like Nhlanhla. Hospitals send the patients home as soon as possible and the families have to see how they can cope with their son, daughter etc. who suddenly needs constant nursing care.

We were called by Nhlanhla's family to show them how to deal with such a patient, how to position him so that he does not get bed sores, how to wash him, just about all that is needed for proper care.

The family can now handle him well, but we still look after them regularly to prevent difficulties or complications.

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.

**We care
in any case**





Last week I accompanied the Home Care Team in their work in the townships and informal settlements around Mandeni. I am always impressed how carefully Sindi steers the ambulance to the most remote huts.

Our patient was in a half-ruined hut, a small room without a window, a second room with only half a roof. The corrugated sheet metal rattled loud in the wind.

Fred came shuffling out of his shack very slowly and sat down on a chair, the only piece of furniture in this hut.

He was obviously in great pain.

A few days ago, he had handled an electrical device that caught fire and set fire to his shirt. Fred's upper body was badly burnt. His wounds were treated at the clinic but then he was sent home.

Neighbours called our hospice for help, because there was nobody who could care for his wounds, which need special care.

We visit him every day, cleansing and bandaging his wounds and see whether he is well cared for by his neighbours, gets enough food and is recovering.

We care in any case



Media review:

Order of Malta Website:

Father Gerard: Here in South Africa we're waiting for the tsunami to arrive, we have to act quickly
<http://www.orderofmalta.int/2020/03/31/padre-gerard-south-africa-waiting-tsunami-arrive-act-quickly/>

Statement on the Corona Pandemic
 at YouTube (1 April 2020):
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qtGJSOZ71Rk>

Interview und Article in **Vatican News** (6 April 2020)
Covid-19: Order of Malta in South Africa preparing to cope in poorest areas
<https://www.vaticannews.va/en/church/news/2020-04/covid19-south-africa-order-of-malta-fr-gerhard-health-care.html>

Interview:
https://media.vaticannews.va/media/audio/s1/2020/04/06/19/135554173_F135554173.mp3

Jabulani, which means "be happy", is 55 years old and he is in our hospice since April 2019. He grew up in Lambothi near Mandeni with his siblings, a brother and two sisters. He finished grade 5 in school but then he had to start looking for work because his parents had run out of money. He found a job with a carpenter and that is what he did most of his life. He loved working with wood. He got married when he was twenty years old and now he has a family with five children aged 35 to 17. Since he fell sick he has been receiving a small pension from the government and this pension is the only money his family has. All of his children are without jobs. The boys find work for one or two days, then they have to wait again until somebody calls and needs them. His two daughters have babies. When he was diagnosed with TB and other diseases he didn't know where to go to for help. He couldn't walk anymore and he lost the ability to bend his fingers. The day he was admitted into our care he wasn't able to hold a spoon. He told me that he often saw the ambulance of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard and started asking if anybody of his neighbours could tell him what kind of organization it is. A friend told him that these people help without charging and that they are very nice. His wife phoned the Care Centre and they really came to look after him. They suggested that he should be admitted in the hospice, there they could help him in a better way. And now he is happy to be here. His hands are a lot better and he is able to hold a spoon again. A physiotherapist comes once a week and shows him how to train his fingers. He also gained some strength and is feeling much better now.





Sinenhlanhla has been a patient in our hospice since December 2019.

She is 31 years old and has two children, a boy aged 12 years and a girl aged 4. While Sinenhlanhla is staying with us both children are taken care of by an uncle.

She lost her mother when she was 14 and she and her siblings were raised by her grandmother. Sinenhlanhla's father is unknown.

She had to help her grandmother a lot but she was also lucky that she was able to go to school.

School was the best time in her life, she loved to study.

After finishing school she had big dreams of what she wanted to be in her life but it came differently. There was no money for an apprenticeship or for university and there are unskilled job seekers like sand at the sea.

She stayed at home with her grandmother and lives on odd jobs. The only regular income of the family is grandmother's pension.

When she got sick and too weak to do anything herself she thought it was a blessing that she was admitted to the Care Centre.

"The Doctor and the nurses are so nice, always smiling and friendly and I can ask them everything, they always take their time to explain. Thank you"



Father Christmas never forgets to visit his „children“ at our Hospice. A small gesture that puts a smile on the face of our patients and the joy of Christmas in their heart. Usually all staff members go from ward to ward singing carols, but in 2020 for Covid-19 precautionary reasons the nurse in charge had to present the Christmas gifts on her own.



**We care
in any case**





Mbongani Mthembu has been in the hospice for several months. He was admitted to our hospice because of advanced TB and severe skin problems.

Mbongani went to school for two years, then he left school because of the advice of an isangoma (she is a diviner) to his parents and started to look for work. He has been without real work ever since.

When he fell ill with tuberculosis, he was in big trouble because he had nobody who could care for him and not being able to work it was difficult for him to pay for his room or to buy something to eat. He became too weak to go to the clinic for his consultations. Because of this, there were irregularities in the medication and his tuberculosis, which had been well under control previously, broke out again.

TB is not only the number one cause of all deaths in South Africa.

The cure rate dropped within the last two years from 76% to 70 % due to an increasing treatment interruption rate.

This sad fact spurs us on to improve our therapy program constantly. It confirms the importance of the work of our therapeutic counsellors.

**We care
in any case**



Blessed Gérard's Hospice HAART Programme



Last February I was tested and I found out that I was HIV positive. I decided to be honest and not to hide. I told my family about my problem but it turned out to be worse than I expected. My family has withdrawn from me, they couldn't accept my illness. I was at home but nobody had time to cook a meal, nobody had time to take care of me. I was getting weaker and weaker. I was bitterly disappointed and developed a severe depression. I really hadn't expected that they would abandon me. I shared my salary with them for 14 years but when I came down they left me. I realized that I can't rely on anyone and I started praying hard for help.

Then came this letter to my father, who has died in 2005. I was curious and opened it. It was the Newsletter from the Brotherhood. My father must have been a donor but we didn't know that and so we never told them that he had passed away. Thank God we hadn't because I started reading and realized that there is a place for me to go to. I called and talked to the doctor. I told him all about me and my family problems and I would like to come because I wish to be in a place where I'm feeling at ease with myself.

When I was admitted I only weighed 37 kg but I am recovering slowly and gaining strength. The nurses are nice and caring and now I know that God took care of me, he led me to the right place.





Blessed Gérard's Pre-Primary School & Crèche



We are often asked if it is necessary to run a pre-primary school and crèche in such a remote area like oWhebede. Yes it is. The poverty rate in Zululand is very high. People often live from hand to mouth and single mothers are struggling very hard to make a living. Children are left to themselves from a young age; larger siblings take care of the very small ones.

Our pre-primary school provides these children with security, education, a wholesome meal that meets the nutritional



needs of a day, helping them to get off to a good start in school life. Providing children with all they need to develop well is our contribution to equal opportunity for the poorest in this underprivileged area. It is always a great pleasure to experience these lively, alert children in our Blessed Gérard's Pre-Primary School and Crèche.



In Blessed Gérard's Pre-Primary School and Crèche, we have taken care of more than eighty children this year. Children from families who otherwise have no access to early education. The goal of every pre-school education is to make children grow up as healthy and happy people: People who are able to relate, have a positive outlook on life and are willing to help others. It conveys values that are important in our society, self-confidence and self-reliance but also social behavior and consideration of the weaker. In the last year before school enrollment, children are prepared even more for school entry. Our crèche teachers are specially trained to meet these requirements. Just as important as good education is good nutrition of our kids. Many children come from families where there is not enough food. That is why our children get a wholesome meal every day. A special porridge that provides them with all vital ingredients. Our goal is to give disadvantaged children a good start into their school days.

Media review:

Interview with **Vatican Radio** (27 May 2020):

South Africa: Order of Malta

feeding the most vulnerable amid the Covid-19 crisis

<https://www.vaticannews.va/en/church/news/2020-05/order-of-malta-south-africa-food-poverty-hiv-aids-covid-19.html>

Listen to the interview: https://media.vaticannews.va/media/audio/s1/2020/05/27/18/135606297_F135606297.mp3

Order of Malta Website (28 May 2020):

<http://www.orderofmalta.int/2020/05/28/south-africa-order-of-malta-feeding-the-most-vulnerable-amid-the-covid19-crisis/>

Order of Malta Australia (10 June 2020):

South Africa: Order of Malta staving off starvation

<https://www.orderofmalta.org.au/south-africa-order-of-malta-staving-off-starvation/>

Order of Malta (19 June 2020):

South African clinicians take part

in new Doctor to Doctor online discussion

<https://www.orderofmalta.int/2020/06/19/south-african-clinicians-take-part-doctor-to-doctor-online-discussion/>





Blessed Gérard's Children's Home



It is with great pleasure to introduce you to our two youngest children from the children's home: The twin girls were born in December 2018 and have been with us at the children's home since **13 February 2019**. Their mother was unable to take care of them and therefore, they came to us in a rather neglected condition. The most important thing our caregivers can do now is to mother them and love the two little girls as much as possible. With so young children who have had such a difficult experience, such as the loss of a trusted mother, it is especially important that they feel safe and affectionate. Our caregivers are dedicated to this task around the clock and we see with great joy that they are developing into happy little girls.



One of the most fulfilling tasks for all our employees and volunteers is to help when help is most urgently needed.

Giving an abandoned new-born a loving and good start into life is such a task.

The child welfare office of the Department of Social Development brought us a new child on **1 July 2020**.

The little boy had been found by passers-by on the banks of the Tugela River in dense bush.

The baby was exposed, hypothermic and still attached to the placenta.

Paramedics stabilized the new-born on scene before transporting the baby to a nearby hospital and from there he was given into our care.

The children in our Blessed Gérard's Children's Home welcome him like a new little brother.

Our care givers mother him like their own baby.

This little boy shows us in the middle of the corona crisis and in the middle of all the difficulties, which we have to face in these times, that it is worth being there for each other.



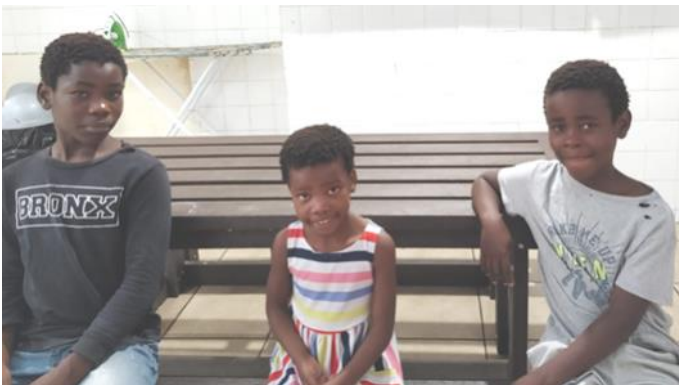
**Caring
without borders**





Our Social Worker Musa Shezi welcomed three boys, 12, 9 and 8 years old, on **27 August 2020**, as newcomers in our Children's Home.

It is an honour and obligation for us to provide a new home for them here and make them feel loved and secure.



Our **Children's Home** welcomed three newcomers on **5 November 2020**.

We are ready and prepared to look after and provide a safe home for them.

Our **Children's Home** welcomed this seven-year-old girl on **19 November 2020**.

We are ready and prepared to look after her and provide a safe and healing home for her.



Sixteen junior children of our Children's Home went onto an educational camp at Pennington Resort on the KZN South Coast next to Scottburgh from 14 - 16 December 2020.



The purpose of the camp was to engage children in recreational activities and important life skills education which is necessary for their personal, social and cognitive development.



The ADVENTURE GROUP (TVG) team were responsible for recreational camp activities while our Child and Youth Care Workers and one Social Worker were responsible for the life skills education.





**Christmas gift giving at our Children's Home
24 December 2020**

One of the bigger girls in our children's home was asked to write a short note what she likes or dislikes about living in a children's home.

Her thoughts are really touching, especially what she said about Christmas in our Children's Home:

„Growing up in the Children's Home is one of the greatest experiences I have ever felt.

It was like growing up in a normal house with your siblings just that the difference was that we had many moms and dads.

Especially I like all our Christmas feasts because, there is no happier feeling than just seeing your family being united and smiling, laughing.

After Holy Mass we have "Open Doors" in Father Gerard's lounge.

Everything is nicely decorated and Father has a lot of juice and biscuits for us.

"Open doors" with Father is the best because everyone is happy being together.

I mean what better feeling is there than sitting together with your brothers and sisters in a big room with biscuits and nice cold juice talking and laughing with your dad and your siblings."



It was like child Jesus looking for a place to stay when the Police came to us on **30 December 2020**, and placed this nine-month-old girl into our care at our Children's Home. We are glad that we can provide all the tender loving care and a protective home for her that she lacked before.



**Caring
without borders**



Annual Report 2019 & 2020

Activity Report

The activities of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard and of Blessed Gérard's Care Centre in the years 2019 and 2020, 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.

Patients tested:
52 (2019) · **13** (2020)



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 coun-

selling and dispensing of the drugs.

Patients on ongoing life-long treatment:
697 (2019) · **691** (2020)
New patients admitted: **26** (2019) · **19** (2020)

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.



Home visits: **3053** (2019) · **174** (2020)



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.

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

6655 (2019) · **4461** (2020)
Outpatient consultations: **4919** (2019) · **3191** (2020)
New outpatients enrolled: **669** (2019) · **822** (2020)
New inpatients admitted (re-admissions not counted):
102 (2019) · **16** (2020)
Inpatients accompanied when they died:
44 (2019) · **13** (2020)

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**.



Home visits by our home care teams:
2102 (2019) · **448** (2020)
Patients transported by ambulance:
398 (2019) · **63** (2020)
Patients looked after at their homes:
395 (2019) · **996** (2020)
Patient assessment visits done: **225** (2019) · **16** (2020)
New home care patients enrolled:
164 (2019) · **32** (2020)

Activity Report – continued

Child Care

Pre-Primary School & Crèche

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



Children educated:
98 (2019)
80 (2020)

Children's Home



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



Children admitted:
4 (2019) · **9** (2020)
Children discharged:
13 (2019) · **12** (2020)
Children living here:
55 (2019) · **53** (2020)
on 31 December 2019 · 2020

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.

35736 (2019) & **50462** (2020)
specialised **food servings** provided to up to **40 children per consultation**,
i.e. 1262 meals per child per year
or 3 - 4 meals per child per day in 2020.

Bursary Fund

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

Bursaries given:
156 (2019)
267 (2020)



Relief & Social Care

Relief Fund



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

We provided relief in
56 (2019)
16 (2020)
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.



We care in any case

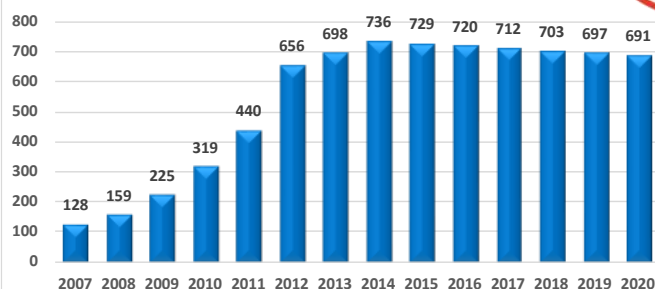


Activity Report – continued

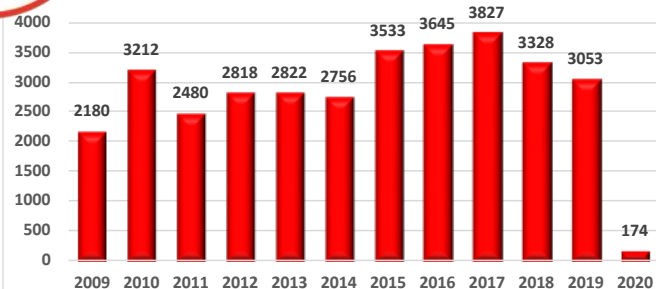
Statistics: Graphs



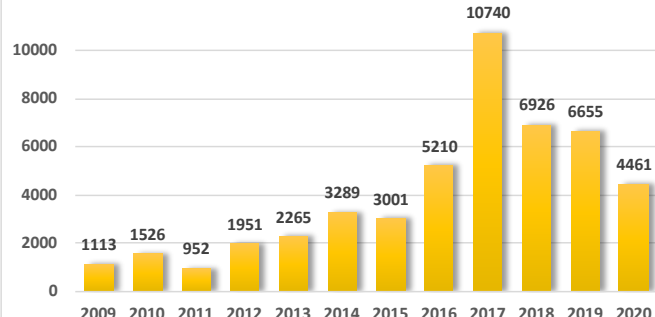
HAART Patients



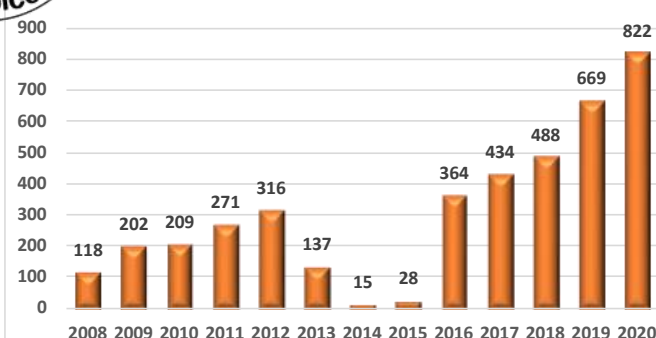
Home Care Visits - Therapeutic Counsellors



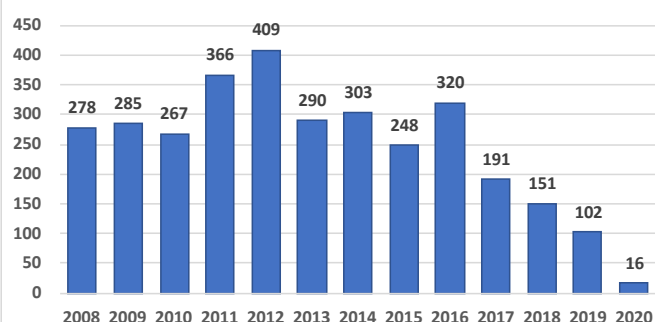
Social Worker Consultations



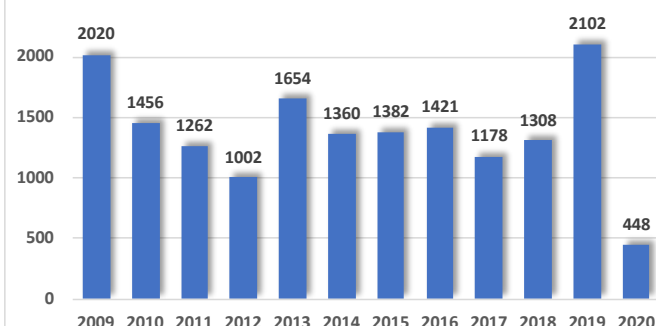
Hospice New Outpatients



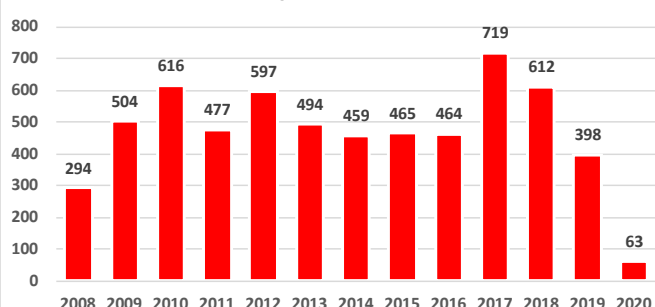
Hospice Inpatients



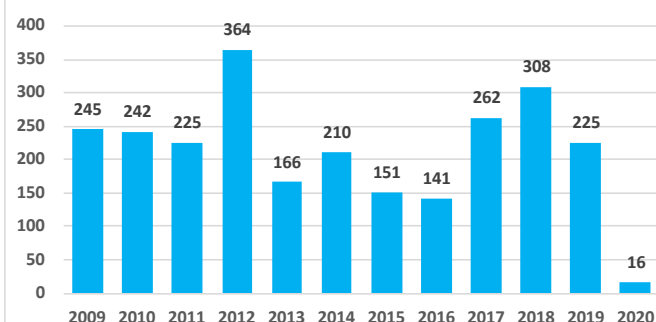
Home Care Visits - Home Care Team



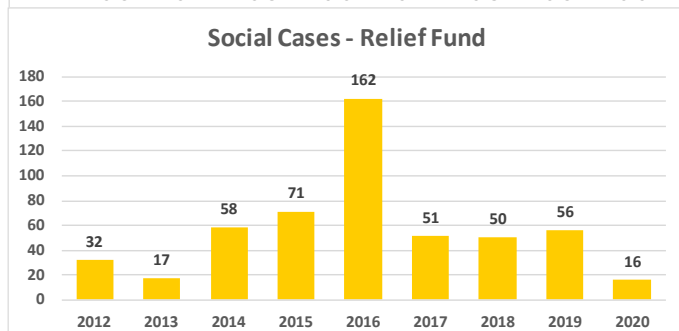
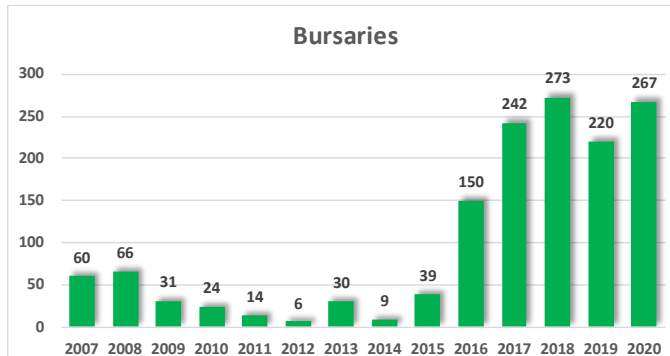
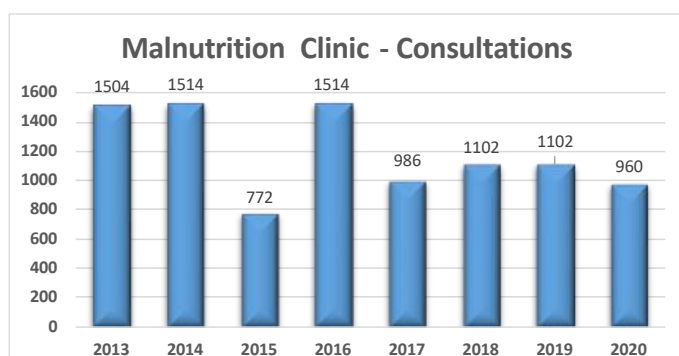
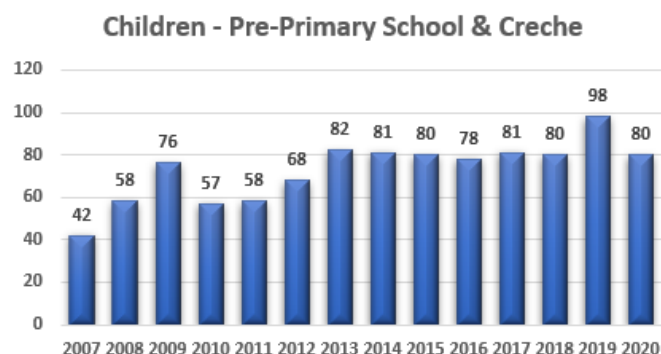
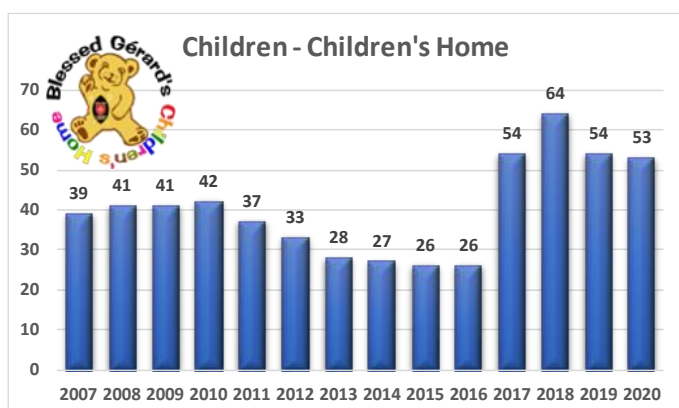
Transported Patients



Home Care Assessments



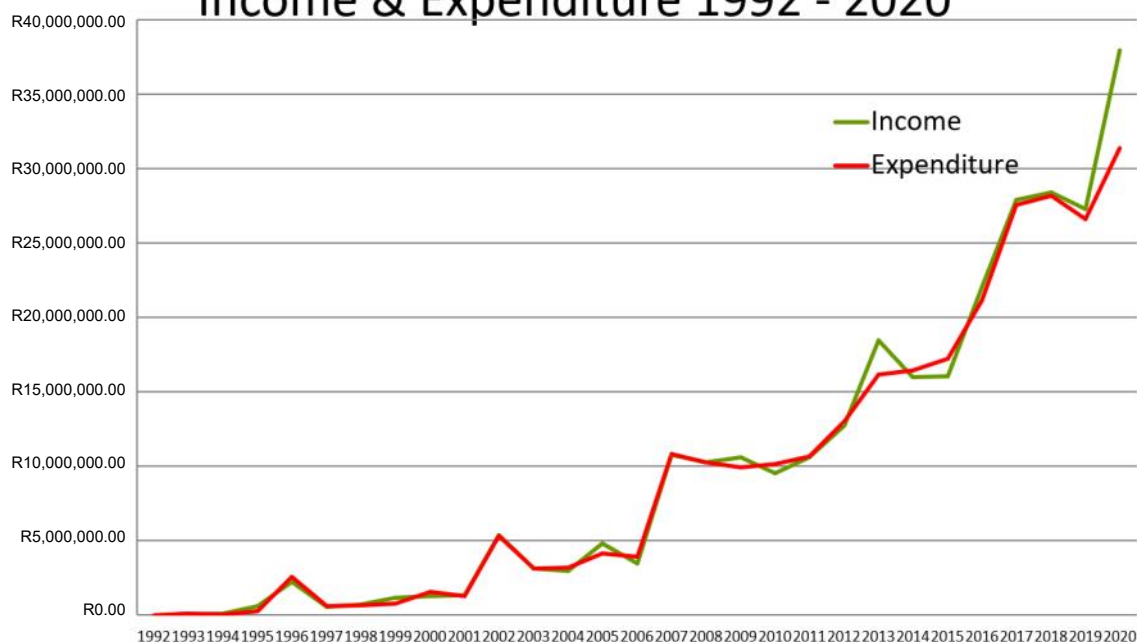
Statistics: Graphs (continued)



The noticeable statistical decrease in several areas of our activities in 2020 is due to necessary **Covid-19 restrictions** to protect our immune deficient patients and children (especially those with comorbidities) and our personnel from possible infection. The AIDS therapeutic counselling, hospice inpatient admissions, hospice homecare visits, assessments and patient transport had to be minimised. We hope and pray that we will be able to resume all our activities responsibly as soon as possible.

Finance Report: Financial growth

Income & Expenditure 1992 - 2020



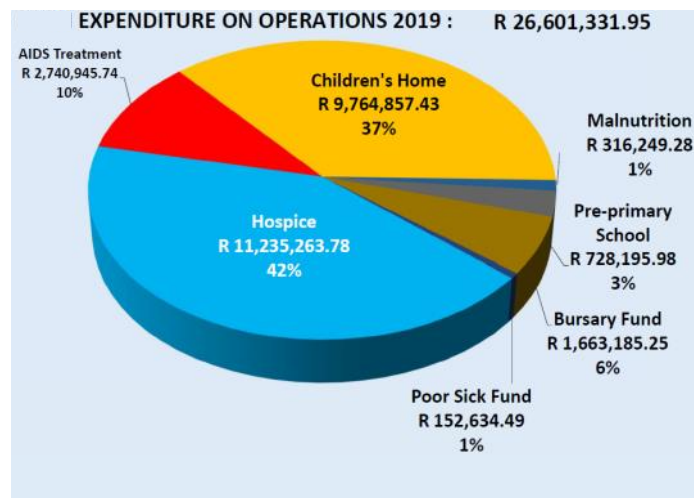
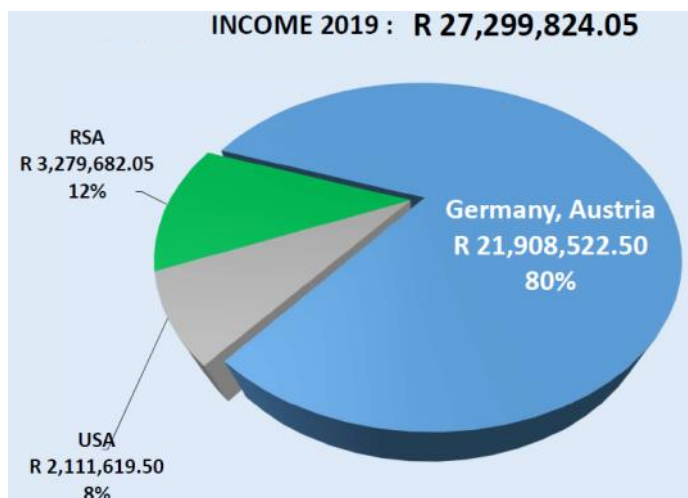
We have raised and spent more than 280 million Rand so far in aid of the needy in Zululand.

Our annual expenditure is rising rapidly from year to year.

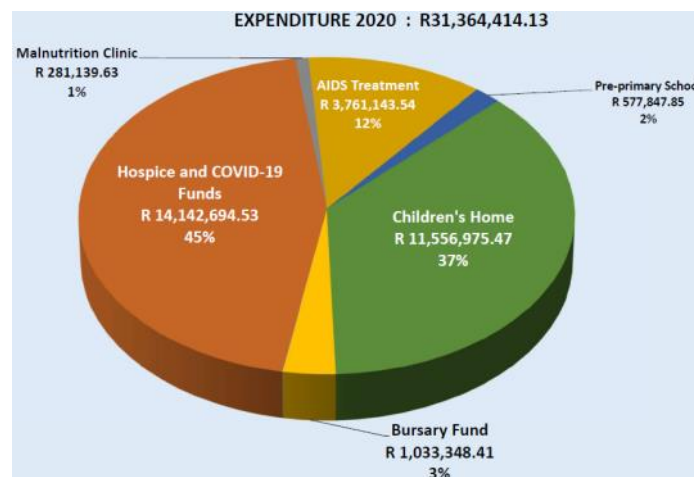
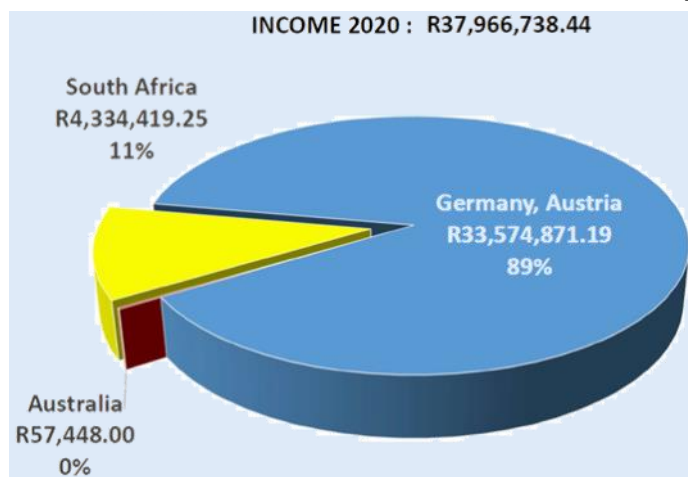
Therefore your donations are sorely needed.

Finance Report

Income and Expenditure in 2019



Income and Expenditure in 2020



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.

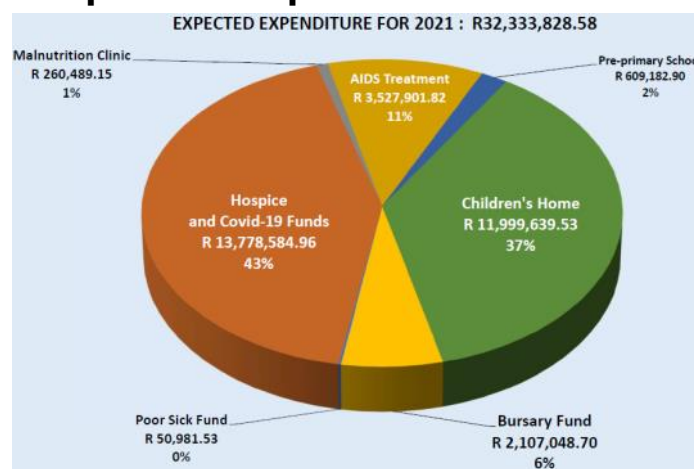
We included the monetary value of the benefits in kind (medicines and laboratory for our AIDS treatment programme) from the Department of Health of kwaZulu-Natal as income and expenditure in the financial report again.

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

Financial Audit:

The external Financial Audit of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard and of Blessed Gérard's Care Centre for 2019 had **spotless results** again because of the expertise of the bookkeeping company "Burrows & Associates" (especially Mrs. Angelee Botha) which has kept our books for years impeccably. The audit reports for 2020 had not yet been completed by the time this newsletter was printed.

Expected Expenditure in 2021



Personnel

Member statistics (31 December 2020)

1594	active members
+ 716	financial supporter members
+ 355	spiritual supporter members
= 2665	members.

Employees

On **31 December 2019** we had 89 employees.

Nine new staff members were welcomed:

Nontobeko Gumede, Bonisiwe Mkhwanazi, Hlobisile Msomi, Zamafulze Linda, Thandeka Mdletshe, Nonhlanhla Mbunda, Phakamile Ntuli, Musa Shezi and **Dr. Dumezwani Ntshangase.**



Eight employees left us in 2019:

Fikile Sokhulu (R.I.P.), Nontobeko Gumede, Hlobisile Msomi, Nomathemba Ngubane, Dr. Khayelihle Nzimande, Zamafulze Linda, Thandeka Mdletshe and Nonhlanhla Mbunda.

A special thanks to **Dr. Nzimande** who had been our doctor for nearly eleven years.



On **31 December 2020** we had 94 employees.

Six new staff members were welcomed:

Lungile Masondo, Ntombiyakhe Mhlungu, Duduzile Sithole, Lindeni Mwandla, Phiwa Gumede and Bongani Maphumulo.



Three employees left us in 2020:

Duduzile Sithole, Lindeni Mwandla and Thokozile Biyela.

A special vote of thanks to **Thokozile Biyela** who had been a domestic assistant for sixteen years.

Public Relations

Press: (Also see pages 4 and 7!)

23 October 2020: The North Coast Courier

10 The North Coast Courier, October 23, 2020

Continuing the work of Blessed Gérard

James Anderson

Father Gérard Lagleder arrived as a missionary from Germany 33 years ago, and his consistent work has created the largest inpatient hospice in the country in Mandeni.

Sent on mission to Mahlabathini in 1987 the now 65-year-old Catholic priest has lived in South Africa ever since.

Following 3 years in Mahlabathini and 2 in Mangote, he established the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard in Mandeni in 1992.

Father Gérard did not name the organisation after himself, but rather for Blessed Gérard, a Catholic saint from the 12th century who was rector of the hospice in Jerusalem. "I wanted to work in the footsteps of Blessed Gérard, so I took his name and so did the care centre. People often think I named it after myself but that is not the case," he laughed.

The organisation provides hospice care and crèche facilities at no charge for anyone who needs them.

"We are open to everyone and are non-denominational in the care we hand out,"

said Father Gérard.

The inpatient hospice has space for 40 patients to receive palliative care.

The hospice primarily focuses on helping AIDS patients and provides free services from the testing stage to home care.

There are now 691 patients who receive care for life from the Brotherhood, which includes the distribution of highly active anti-retroviral treatments (HAARTs).

In practice, this means that consistent monitoring, treatment of opportunistic infections and psychosocial counselling are available for those who need it most.

The mission also runs a crèche which looks after orphans and vulnerable children with ongoing support given into adulthood.

The crèche provides a home, as well as an education for healthy and sick children alike who are in need of help.

This includes a malnutrition clinic for infants, and a bursary fund to aid children in receiving a quality education.

With Covid-19 leaving many residents desperate, the organisation has also distributed hundreds of food parcels throughout the community.



Father Gérard Lagleder at the on-site church in Mandeni.



One of the food parcels that was delivered during the coronavirus pandemic by the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard in Mandeni.

This does come at a cost however, and fundraising is a crucial tool for the brotherhood which is run completely on donated funds.

Father Gérard normally travels twice a year to his native Germany to hold fundraising events but that has been curtailed by the ban on international travel this year.

A large portion of the running costs are normally raised during these trips, and without them the organisation is becoming desperate.

"It is much more difficult to fund-raise electronically, so we are appealing to anyone who can help us to continue the work of this mission."

The Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard is associated with the Roman Catholic Church and the relief organisation of the Order of Malta in South Africa.

You can donate to the mission via the following pages: bsg.org.za/en/you-may-help/donations.html, facebook.com/BBG.ORG.ZA or paypal.me/SMOMRSA.

Internet:

Our homepage is www.bsg.org.za

You will also find us on **Social Media:**

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

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/priffic80x/brotherhood/>

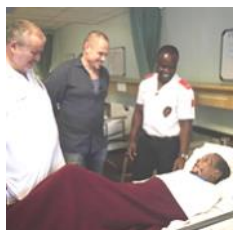
Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/lagleder/?hl=en>

Blogger: <http://patergerhard.blogspot.com/>

issuu: <https://issuu.com/fqt/>

Our Chronicle

Special events in 2019



23 - 24 January 2019:

A **TV crew from Austria** (ORF) visited us with our benefactor Gery Keszler and produced a very nice short TV report on our work for AIDS patients.

4 April 2019:

Our **government** had delivery problems again and therefore **could not promise us** for the time being **that we would always get the antiretroviral drugs**, that our AIDS patients need to survive, on time and in full. We had to guarantee the provision of treatment to our patients again and had to buy a good amount of the medicines ourselves.

20 April 2019:

Father Gérard **baptised fifteen children of Blessed Gérard's Children's Home** at the Easter Vigil Service.



19 - 20 October 2019:

Father Gérard was invited to Budapest/Hungary to give a presentation on our work. The Order's ambassador to Hungary, Imre von Ugiron, arranged a meeting with the state secretary of the prime minister which will result in **support of our work by the Hungarian Government**.



17 November 2019:

The children of our Children's Home marked the **World Day of the Poor** by spoiling our Hospice patients - and all of them are really poor - with gifts, dancing and singing.

30 November 2019:

Benefit Concert at St. Stephen's Cathedral in Vienna/Austria.



Special event in 2020

The **Covid-19 Pandemic** hit us hard since March for the rest of the year. It confronted us with **extraordinary challenges** over and above our usual routine services:

We faithfully took care of the high-risk group of our **immune deficient and geriatric hospice patients** and the **children** of our children's home where some are **particularly at risk from previous illnesses**.

We continued to ensure that the 691 patients we treat for life in our **AIDS treatment** program, despite the restricted freedom of movement due to Covid-19, reliably received their life-sustaining, highly effective antiretroviral drugs and took them daily.



We also took care of our needy **home care and AIDS patients** at home. Many of these patients and their families had lost their sources of income and were starving. We have distributed 757 food parcels (each feeding a family of four for a month) to 154 families in 2020

Our Clinic for **malnourished infants** continued to prevent starvation, **examined** the children, advised and **counselled** their caregivers, and provided an average of **6636 baby food meals** per four-weeks-cycle.

Pledge to donate

Kindly indicate ☒ how you would like to support the needy cared for and looked after by 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 32 456 7962
bbg@bbg.org.za

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

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. [PBO No 130002777]

We can issue South African tax payers with a section 18A tax certificates for their donations upon request, which they can use for tax deduction from the SARS. If you 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!**).

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 are prepared 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.

You may make a **donation online** using <https://www.paypal.me/SMOMRSA> or <https://www.facebook.com/BBG.ORG.ZA>



Blessed Gérard's Relief Fund



A short report from one of our social workers about the K. Family fire disaster

On **4 September 2019** around 2 pm the house encountered a fire disaster and five of their round huts were burnt.

They tried to save some of their belongings but it was in vain.

Mrs K. was home alone, her son was at school, her daughters were out and her grandchild, one year and four months old, was at the clinic.

They live near a huge forest and the fire came from there.

She has no idea what started the fire.

Mrs K. is the breadwinner of the family of five earning 500 Rand (30 Dollars) a month with cleaning jobs in her area.

We took them into the hospice just because they had absolutely no place to stay.

They stayed in ward 6 for a few nights.

Then the municipality assisted in putting up a small tent for the family but they also said that they can't give any further assistance.

Now they are residing with their neighbours.

We assisted them with full clothing, blankets and kitchen utensils and food parcels for three months to address the most urgent needs.



Our Social Worker, Nana Masikane, reports: "We received a report about Mr. Lungani Fakude whose house was burnt down by fire on the 25 August 2020 at night. I made a home visit on the **26 August 2020** which revealed the following:

Mr. Fakude lives at Masomonco in Mandeni. He lives with his sister, Miss Dumsile Fakude, who is 31 years old, and his nephew, Sikhona Biyela, who is 10 years old. Both Mr. Fakude and his sister are unemployed. The only source of income is the child support grant of \$26.30 per month that Miss Fakude receives for her son. Miss Fakude and her son sleep in the main building, which is comprised of two bedrooms, a kitchen and a lounge. Mr. Fakude had a rondavel house and all his belongings were in that house. He has now moved to the main building with his sister.

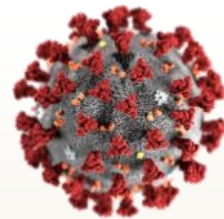
Mr. Fakude reported that he used a candle due to an electricity outage because of load shedding on Monday. He went to the shop for a short period. When he came back, his house was on fire. All his belongings, including his bed, fridge, blankets and clothes, even his identity document, were inside the house and burnt.

We assisted them with food, cooking utensils, clothing and blankets."





How we help people in need because of Covid-19



The first patient infected with the Sars-Cov-2 virus was registered in South Africa on **5 March 2020**. The government then quickly imposed a strict lockdown. Shops and schools were closed and there was a strict curfew. A big challenge for our Blessed Gérard's Children's Home with 55 children who have to be at home around the clock. The care givers and all children, big and small, have been taught the new hygiene standards. We are proud of our children, because not only

did they immediately take part in the new rules of behavior and hygiene they also helped with many new tasks such as sewing masks for all children or pack food parcels for the needy. The schools have recently reopened after weeks of closing but we are concerned about this, as the numbers of infections are still rising in South Africa. The members of our Brotherhood will do whatever they can to keep our children and our patients safe.



South Africa like almost all countries in the world has been facing the problems of Covid-19 pandemic since **March 2020**. The highly contagious virus poses particular problems for the poor. As Father Gérard mentioned in an Interview with Radio Vatican: "The big problem is that we have a large part of the population in informal settlements and in townships where there is no social distancing, if you are living in a hut where there are 15 people in one room, you can't respect social distancing," Furthermore, he said, in informal settlements and in slum-like townships, people have no means of washing their hands or following the rules for good hygiene: "If you have to walk hundreds of meters to the river to fetch water, then you can't wash your hands and you have no means to disinfect yourself with chemical disinfectant: this is a major problem." The government now has imposed a lockdown for three weeks and we had to react very quickly to ensure that our patients are cared for during this time. We have close to 700 patients on Aids treatment in a very large treatment program. In preparation for the lockdown, explains Fr. Gérard, patients were given their medication for two months in advance "so they don't have to come here. And they are safe so far." A similar strategy was chosen for the Malnutrition Clinic where baby food was distributed to those in need for the whole of the lockdown period. The same was done for the Order's Home Care Program, leaving health care workers free to attend to emergencies and strengthen the ranks of the in-patient hospice personnel. Fr. Gérard was especially keen to express his gratitude and admiration for his staff: "I am so happy about our personnel! They have been told that if they stay at home they can help prevent infection spreading," but he says, they are all true to their mission as health-care workers and are faithfully coming to look after their patients and the children."



South Africa is still suffering greatly from the pandemic and its consequences.

On **15 August 2020** the Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs has extended the national state of disaster by another month. Despite all these difficulties we faithfully take care of the high-risk group of our immune deficient and geriatric hospice patients and the children of our children's home where some are particularly at risk from previous illnesses. We also took care of our needy home care and AIDS patients at home. Many of these patients and their families were starving after a four-month lockdown. From 6 May to 14 July 2020, we did our best to help distribute hundreds of food parcels. A grocery package costs R300.00 | 21.00 \$ | 15.00 £.

Unfortunately, after **14 July 2020**, we had to stop distributing food parcels due to the enormous spread of Covid-19 in our area. We were well aware of the plight of the people, but due to a lack of staff due to illness – sixteen of our 91 employees were themselves sick with Covid-19, one of them even died – and due to the disproportionately high risk of self-harm, our management had decided to interrupt food distributions. In this time



we could unfortunately only hand out groceries at the Care Centre itself, but not deliver them to the outside.

Food parcel distribution resumed on **21 September 2020** and carried on ever since.



“Child-headed Families” are families whose parents and grandparents have died, where there are no uncles or aunts to step in and where the older siblings therefore have no other choice than to take on the responsibility to look after the entire family.

Many of these child headed families were caused by AIDS.

Unfortunately the readiness of good people to adopt or foster “AIDS-orphans” is absolutely exhausted, since most families struggle themselves to generate the means to survive.

Because siblings cannot receive social child care grants for their brothers and sisters they depend on agri- and horticulture, on keeping a few chicken or goats, on selling their produce at the roadside and on occasional jobs to earn the meagre income to feed the family.

Sadly enough many of such young ladies see no other chance to create an income, but through prostitution.

Child headed families have been hit extremely hard by the Covid-19 lockdowns, as many of these lost their jobs and their roadside stalls are no longer frequented. Starvation is the result.

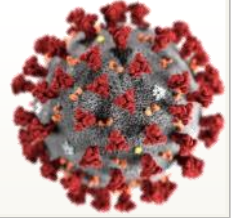
We help to bridge the gap through our extensive **food parcel distribution programme** and, if needed, by donations of clothing, blankets and sometimes also household goods.





How we help people in need because of Covid-19

Our food aid programme



CORONA: WE HELP!

Many needy sick people and their families have lost their sources of income and are starving.
We look after them and have already distributed more than a thousand food parcels
and there is still a need for many more.
A grocery package costs R300.00 (\$21.00 | £15.00).

These photos need no words. They are self-explanatory.



**Caring
without borders**





Solemnity of St. John the Baptist

30 June 2019



(From left to right) Father Sylvester Tusaninkosi Ngema, Father Gérard, Dr. Paul Zakhele Thabethe, Sr. Nokuthula Marigold Thabethe and Yvonne Joye Renaud at the festive Holy Mass in honour of the Patron Saint of the Order of Malta, St. John the Baptist, at Blessed Gérard's Church in Mandeni.



We had a celebratory lunch after the service in the dining room of Blessed Gérard's Care Centre enjoyed by management members, staff, volunteers, our children from our Children's Home and guests.

Our children entertained everybody after lunch with their lively singing and dancing.



Farewell and Thank You, Yvonne Joye Renaud!

... until we meet again!

Yvonne Joye Renaud passed away
on 1 December 2020



and she was a
board member of
the **Blessed
Gérard's
Care Centre**.

Yvonne was one
of our most loyal
members, always
willing and ready
to serve wherever
her help was re-
quired.

She had a re-
freshing sense of
humour and was
a good soul, also
in our Care Cen-
tre, where she
spent the last
years of her life
as a geriatric pa-
tient.

We are deeply indebted to her and we are glad to have
her as a dear intercessor in heaven.



Thank you, Yvonne! May God reward you eternally!

Yvonne was a **Dame of
Magistral Grace of the
Order of Malta** and hold-
er of the Silver Medal "pro
merito melitensi".

Yvonne was one of the
first (No. 8) members of
the **Brotherhood of
Blessed Gérard** since
14 December 1992
and its first **Dedicated
Member** after the founder
members.

She started and ran our
former **home economics
school** and our former
senior citizens' club.

She was a **board mem-
ber** of the **Brotherhood
of Blessed Gérard**
and has held various positions there
(Director of Charity and Administrator of Goods)



Feast of Blessed Gérard

and Admission of Maresi Rehder as a Dedicated Member

on 13 October 2019

The Council of the Dedicated Members of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard had decided in its meeting on 26 March 2019 to invite Maresi Rehder to become a Dedicated Member and she accepted this invitation. The Dedicated Members devote themselves with all their heart, with all their soul and with all their strength (cf. Dtn 6.5) to Jesus Christ and his body, the Church (cf. 1 Cor 12.27), by striving to be the yeast (cf. Gal 5.9) of God's love in their entire life as members of their family, community, at their work and in their leisure time. Over and above this, their special task is to initiate, facilitate, guide, support and bear responsibility for the activities of the BBG. For the Dedicated Membership only baptised and confirmed members of the Roman Catholic Church qualify, who are known for their outstanding character, loyalty to the Church and good Christian life.



Mrs. Rehder made this Private Promise as a Dedicated Member:

Lord Jesus Christ!
Through your Grace, you have called me to serve you in the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard. Invoking the intercession of our patron saints Mary, the Blessed Virgin and Mother of God, St. John the Baptist and the founder of the Order of St. John, Blessed Gérard, I ask you:

Give me the courage, to live the faith in you as a convincing example and to meet my neighbour in charity, especially the needy, aged, disabled, sick and injured.

Give me the needed strength, to live selflessly as an upright Christian in the spirit of your Gospel according to this resolution, to the honour of God, for the peace in the world and the welfare of our society.

- I hereby promise to protect the faith and to serve the poor of our Lord Jesus Christ by devoting myself to the apostolate of the Catholic Church in Works of Charity as a Dedicated member of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard.
- I devote myself with all my heart, with all my soul and with all my strength to Jesus Christ and his body, the Church.
- I will strive to be the yeast of God's love in my entire life.

May God help me, guide me and strengthen me to fulfil what he has called me to.
Amen.





New active members were admitted to the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard and presented with the membership medal.



Father Gérard gave them a special blessing for their service.



The celebration of the Holy Eucharist (which means celebration of gratitude) continued thanking God for calling all those wonderful people to become members of our Brotherhood and thus protect our faith and serve the needy.

The celebration continued with a festive function at Blessed Gérard's Community Centre.



The General Manager of Blessed Gérard's Care Centre, Mr. Sven Anderson, presented employment jubilarians with their certificate.

The President's Award of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard for the most outstanding meritorious staff member was bestowed on Carolyn Nunn and the President's Award of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard for the most outstanding meritorious volunteer was conferred on Penelope Mdhletshe.

A festive lunch and a singing and dancing entertainment by the children of our Children's Home concluded the celebration.

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

"Our brotherhood will be everlasting because the misery of the world is the ground, within which this plant is rooted - and because, God willing, there always will be people, who want to work towards decreasing these sufferings and increasing the resilience against this misery."



Blessed Gérard, pray for us!

The prayer of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard

Lord Jesus Christ, through your grace you have called me to serve you as a member of the Brotherhood of Blessed Gérard.

I thank you for counting me worthy of this task.

I ask you humbly, with the intercession of Our Lady, St. John the Baptist, Blessed Gérard and all the Saints

that the spirituality of our Brotherhood may pervade my life and my actions to be always dedicated to your service to whoever needs my help.

Trusting in your help I always want to protect the faith and have an open heart for my neighbour, especially the Poor, the Sad, the Lonely, the Handicapped and the Sick.

Grant me the strength needed to live according to this resolution as an upright Christian selflessly in the Spirit of Your Gospel, for the honour of God, for the peace of the world and the benefit of our community.

Amen.



You are cordially invited
to join us
at the celebration of the

**25th anniversary of the
blessing and opening
of Blessed Gérard's
Care Centre
and Blessed Gérard's
Church**

3 - 5 September 2021
at
Blessed Gérard's Care Centre,
61 Anderson Road,
Mandeni 4490, South Africa.

We sincerely hope that the Covid-19 pandemic
will not force us to cancel the celebration.



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 or WhatsApp message 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.