

THE GATE

Sr. Clare McCaffrey, Daughter of Wisdom, GBI Delegation

“By 2018, we will have **intensified our commitment** to Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation and **for the defence of women and children**. By **working together in networks** among ourselves, with other organisations, other Congregations, **we will have strengthened the voice of Liberating Wisdom**” (*Daughters of Wisdom, Acts of the General Chapter – 2012*).

Being aware of the call of the Congregation to **support the vulnerable, especially women and children**, the Delegation of Great Britain and Ireland supports The Gate as one of its priorities. The Gate reaches out to women involved in the sex industry in Southampton, offering women routes out of prostitution, working alongside them, offering them support and empowerment to achieve their potential.

The Gate was named with John’s Gospel in mind, ‘**I am the gate**, anyone who enters through me will be safe’ (John 10). A team of Gate volunteers meets on a Monday night to pray, and go on outreach to the women involved in working on-street in Southampton.

Prayer drives

Due to the chaos of many of the women’s lives, they are often hungry and in great need of the basics. The team takes toiletries and refreshments. They talk with women, checking on their safety, showing care and, where possible, offering to pray for them. For some a prayer is happily received and timely. The volunteers share The Gate’s contact details so women can ask for further help during the daytime. Women are glad to know that The Gate is looking out for them. The Police are aware of the team out on Monday evenings and will tell them if a particular woman needs help.

Also on a Monday night, depending on the number of volunteers, a group may go out for a “prayer drive” touring the area, praying for the people struggling with addictions; and praying outside the “Gentlemen’s’ Clubs” and massage parlours. A very positive development has been the growth of the prayer groups, people who want to support the women and the volunteers with regular prayer. One such group meets in the Sacred Space at City Life Church, every Monday night from 8-9pm praying for the women, volunteers and work of the project.

Partnership

The Gate’s work has grown especially over the last 2 years, with research showing that many women now work behind closed doors due to easy access to mobiles and the internet. With this change to the sex industry The Gate is in partnership with ‘Beyond the Streets’ in a project called “Amber” which offers chaplaincy visits to massage parlours and hopefully

soon into strip clubs. Volunteer female chaplains will be trained over the next few months. It is wonderful how people ask about the work of The Gate and want to support it. Our Sisters, people in the Parish, and people from other Churches in Romsey want to help. Gifts such as nice toiletries are welcome and so appreciated.

Two fundraising events have been held at the Wisdom Centre, Romsey. At the second one the tickets were sold out, and people came to learn about the work of The Gate. It's a great joy for me that our Sisters are so supportive to the work and that this will be the Delegation's project for the next year.