

# Sisters Respond to Local Needs in Glasgow

By Sister Mary Ross, SNDdeN



Sisters Kate Mulligan, Theresa McAllister and Mary Ross

former administrator and teacher, returned from serving twenty-two years in Nigeria. Mrs. Margaret Bland, Mrs. Moira Berrie, and Mrs. Pat Hay, retired psychologist, join the Sisters in this family counseling service for parents. Over ten years ago, the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur (SNDdeN) leased this small shop in Glasgow by using a fund designated **to develop new ministries** for our Sisters in Scotland, with money provided from the sale of stained-glass windows from Dowanhill College. In this two-room Centre, parents and other relatives bring a wide variety of family concerns. Individuals find tea and coffee in a welcoming space and privacy in a room provided for dialogue and counseling.

## Critical Issues

One mother whose husband deserted her when her children were very young, is now struggling with her teenagers. Her son, a school drop-out, has become very defiant, and possibly on drugs. She expresses relief *“to be able to talk without being judged.”* Another mother describes her experience when a friend told her to call the Centre. She recounts: *“I was very cynical and didn’t think I needed help. **Parents etc.** is one of the best doors that I have opened... Sister Theresa made me a cup of tea and then I met with Sister Mary in another room. I said: ‘My husband left me but I’m fine’ and then I burst into tears. My self-esteem and confidence were very low. A listening ear helped me get out my anger, frustrations and disappointment.”* With two sons and an ex-husband, this mother has always faced new problems. **Parents etc.** enabled her to realise what a good parent she is and has been.



is a drop-in centre, free of charge, for parents and other concerned family members seeking advice about children and young people. **Currently, three Sisters staff the Centre: Sisters Kate Mulligan and Mary Ross, SNDdeN,** psychologists, retired from active practice and **Sister Theresa McAllister, SNDdeN,**



Not only the warm welcome, a cup of hot tea, tissues on the table and a willing ‘pair of ears’ but also a little understanding are remedies for reaching the minds and hearts of those in need.

Parents and grand-parents spread the word about this Centre, which provides a hands-on approach to what parents can do that is very helpful. Another mother said: *“I just walked in off the street and I was welcomed warmly. My stressful problem was something outside of myself, without any control. In trying to resolve my child’s problem at school, I was knocking my head against a brick wall until I met with Sr. Kate.”*

Grandmothers come to tell about daughters with drug and alcohol addictions. They seek advice and reassurance as they give full-time care to their grand-children. They experience significant changes in their daily lives and search for advice and counsel.

The Sisters and lay staff know that it is sometimes necessary to access other agencies. Volunteer staff at the Centre supplies necessary information and prepares parents to work with other professionals. These agencies often have long waiting lists. So the speedy support offered by our Centre is a temporary solution.

Each year, a variety of fundraising activities helps to cover essential costs including the property lease, electricity, water, phones and necessary materials. Local people and many Sisters support this ministry in different ways. **Some parents help with a Christmas Fair, and are happy to participate** in this effort to fund this drop-in centre. **Parents etc.** offers a friendly, non-threatening atmosphere and gives assurance of privacy and confidentiality. In providing a listening ear and a non-judgmental approach for people in this city community, the Sisters in Glasgow are strengthening family bonds by this ministry for those facing **“critical issues of our time...and other local issues.”** (2014 General Chapter Calls)

