

Reflections

Self Awareness

LAST week the Okehampton Times reported the largest rise in crime figures for a decade, both locally and nationally.

This is despite increased monitoring of locations with frequent crime, and more collaborative work with partner agencies. Nevertheless, I felt personally reassured by the statement issued by DCC Netherton on how relatively safe we are in the Okehampton area compared to other places in the country.

One of the first requirements to reduce the crime figures is to help promote the value of life, starting with objective self-awareness. This applies to everyone, not just those people involved in crime, or dealing with its aftermath.

We should all be working towards a holistic life from early childhood, learning self-awareness as we grow — it is key to success and happiness in life.

Self-awareness is the conscious knowledge of oneself: personality, emotions, beliefs, strengths and weaknesses.

A lack of objective self-awareness is one of the main causes of conflict and failure in relationships and in life, leading to an increase in crime and mental health issues. People lacking self-awareness sadly suffer, trapping themselves in misery and blaming their failures on fate.

The notion of self-awareness has been around for a long time.

It captured the attention of the ancient Greek philosopher, Socrates, who said “My friend..... care for your psyche.....know thyself, for once we know ourselves, we may learn how to care



By Father Darline Marianathan, St Boniface Okehampton and Holy Family Church, Chagford for ourselves”.

As members of a civilised society we are duty bound to care for each other and self-awareness is based on that conviction.

Unbiased, objective self-awareness helps us recognise and understand our strengths and limitations, and those of others. People with high levels of self-awareness usually have successful relationships and are often good leaders and great achievers.

Almost every self-help book, professional development course or guide to happy and successful living places heavy emphasis on the need for objective self-awareness.

Long before any of these modern approaches, the bible gave us valuable insights into this vital concept. The Psalmist, in the process of self-awareness, cried “Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me?” (Psalm 42:5,11, 43:5). Advising the Romans, St. Paul wrote “Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgement” (Rom 12:3).

Meditation and acts of contrition are tools that lead towards self-awareness. It's never too late to unearth our rich spiritual treasures and try them. We can tailor them to suit our modern needs so that we all have a holistic life, with less crime and more peace.