



## Reflections

# Caring for our children

I WAS disturbed by reporting over the last few weeks that police are having to tackle anti-social behaviour by children in the Okehampton area. According to the Crime Survey of England and Wales, there has been a sharp rise in reporting of anti-social behaviour over the past decade.

The number of children involved in such behaviour is on the rise and a recent study confirms that nearly 20 million people have suffered due to

anti-social behaviour. Like various authorities all over the country, our local police have pledged to tackle this problem from their side by increasing patrols and installing mobile CCTV cameras.

It is clearly necessary to tackle these behaviours through laws and rules, however, I also believe that prevention is better than the cure. So, as a society we need to consider addressing the root causes of bad behaviour.

Parental care, proper role

models and a responsible relatedness are vital for every infant to grow up as a good human being. Modern neuroscience has confirmed this, and cautions us that the failure of any of these three essential elements of nurture will result in poor neurological development. This can make it difficult to change for the better, and in some cases impossible.

The philosophy of utilitarianism — that actions are right if they produce happiness and wrong if they cause pain — can

be helpful for success in our economy, but can also inject a level of individualisation in relationships. A sole focus on the pleasures of life can undermine values of selflessness, compassion and forgiveness and lead to an increase in relationship breakdown. This can create challenges for good parenting, valuing relationships and leading exemplary lives.

If we really want to reduce anti-social behaviours, we not only need laws and rules, but also a system that can value

and promote family life. Good parenting and role models will help develop better relationship skills for happy living.

‘Show yourself in all respects to be a model of good works, and in your teaching show integrity, dignity’ (Titus 2:7).

**Darline Joseph  
Marianathan  
St Boniface Okehampton &  
Holy Family Chagford.**