



# Sunday Reflection

## Ordinary Time

in the Charges of St Margarets, Renfrew  
& St Johns, Johnstone



For Sunday 27 June 2021

# Pentecost 5

All those who are lonely or grieving, rejoicing or full of wondering, draw close to the God of healing and wholeness who meets you here today.

## Reflection for this week's Gospel

**"Who touched me?"** Mark 5:31

### An Illustration to set the scene

When Romania, which was previously under heavy dictatorship, was opened up to more public scrutiny in the 1980s it became apparent that there were orphanages where children were provided with basic shelter, food and clothing, but that they were almost never cuddled.

That deprivation of human touch and warmth, which is beyond the physical need for warmth, seemed to mean that, although they seemed physically healthy their minds and emotions had not been stimulated sufficiently and they didn't know how to interact.

It is a sharp reminder that living creatures need more than food and shelter; they need touch and interaction if they are to flourish.

Similarly, humans need to be able to draw upon the full range of their emotions. To be able to grieve or rejoice or wonder is not something that just happens to us, we have to learn from others and be encouraged to take the time to sit with these deeper feelings and not brush them off.

Children are often full of wonder at the small things that the rest of us take for granted or don't even notice, while those older in years should take time to be with those who still notice, still wonder, still grieve the death of some tiny creature found on a path.

### **Looking at the teaching of the Gospel**

The two women in need in today's Gospel are linked in their need.

The girl, who is nameless, is on the cusp of puberty at twelve years old.

The woman, also without name, has had a menstrual flow for twelve years.

One is the daughter of Jairus, the other is called "daughter" by Jesus.

One is touched by Jesus, the other touches him.

These parallels are important to notice if we want to go deeper than simply hear about Jesus the healer, Jesus the miracle maker.

This is a story of womankind in a world where judgement can be harsh, where women's voices are not generally seen and their actions are not often noticed.

This is a story of God's engagement, through the touch of Jesus, with what the world calls unclean or considers unimportant.

Jesus doesn't shirk from the task. It is also a story of the tenderness of touch and it invites our wonder at Jesus' willingness to be with the dying, to speak with tenderness to the unknown woman.

Perhaps most of all this is not “business as usual” for a miracle-working hero, because he is changed by the encounters. He is rendered impure as they are returned to their normal lives.

That is the cost of intimacy here.

## **How can we reflect on the application to our lives?**

Much of our world is concerned with safety, and probably rightly so, but it can lead us to miss the moment that is in front of us, to lose out on our deeper emotions.

We can diminish our capacity for wonder, compassion and openness.

Doing what was practically necessary for orphanage children was found simply not to be enough, letting the woman go without the blessing that called her “daughter” was not enough.

As people of Jesus, in whom we see the fullness of God’s generosity, we have to go beyond saying a polite word to someone who is worried, smiling a kindly smile to someone who is lonely, saying a small prayer for someone who is dying, or a cheery “call me any time” message to someone grieving.

It’s too little, too late, and it doesn’t really engage with the other person.

In our New Testament reading from the letter of Paul to the Corinthians he tells Christians that costly activity is needed if their faith is to be complete.

They have to share what they have equally; not just give a bit away here and there, but find a proper balance between people.

So we are invited by the example of Jesus to enter into a deeper relationship than keeping a polite distance. In recent years physical touch has sometimes been difficult, even prohibited.

However, finding ways of being present for those who are grieving, dying, sick, unheard and unnamed is necessary for human growth.

Contact, whether physical or virtual, speech, blessing, silence and wonder are all ways in which we can grow in Christ.

## **“Who touched me?” Mark 5:31**

Please share your response to this reflection to [Rector@SECStJohnStMargaret.org.uk](mailto:Rector@SECStJohnStMargaret.org.uk) – did anything speak to you? Did you feel challenged, angered, consoled by something in the words? How did God’ spirit move you as you read it? Have you shared the words with someone else? Is this a worthwhile thing to make available to folk whilst we cannot meet for corporate worship to share in word and sacrament? What are your thoughts?

**[www.SECStJohnStMargaret.org.uk](http://www.SECStJohnStMargaret.org.uk)**