**The Rt Revd Dr John Thomson, Bishop of Selby, reflects on Mark 5.21‐43 for the Fifth Sunday after Trinity, 30th June.**

Well, everybody's Euro-mad at the moment. And I'm trying to keep my hopes up today for the Scotland-Switzerland match. But it's pretty hard after the German licking, since my Scottish ancestors are a bit worried about what might turn up. Often, we find ourselves drawn to support those who seem to other people to be the underdogs, the people that other people think have no chance, and I'm afraid Scotland has often been put in that boat, but many of us keep flying the flag.

Today's reading from Mark chapter five is about Jesus privileging the person seen as the underdog. Both Jairus’s daughter as a child, a female child in that age, when children, and particularly female children, were not given a lot of value. And then, of course, this remarkable story about the woman who was bleeding and who touched Jesus.

Someone who would have been regarded as unclean, but also old and past her reproduction date, and therefore having no value in society, and in touching Jesus, making him ritually unclean. So, in every way she, even more than the child, was somebody who was the underdog in her society. And yet Jesus says, these are the people that matter to me.

These are the people that matter to God. And so, for us, as we journey on it in our challenge to live Christ’s story today, it's about getting our eyesight in line with God's eyesight; seeing that God's focus and most concern is with those other people, who we possibly write-off, who we regard as hopeless, who feel that they are, as it were, of no value.

And as I leave you from this diocese and move north to Carlisle Diocese, my prayer for you is that as you live Christ’s story, you will live that service of those who seem to others to have no value and who seem to have nothing much to offer. These are the people God has most concern about, and they are the ones that we ourselves must likewise also privilege.

That's why it's been so wonderful to live in the Selby area. Selby Town has some of the poorest communities and I'm always encouraged that the Edge Community has kept going. There are challenges and we're praying for them as they reorientate their journey with God in that service. But thank God for people like the Edge Community, for our Mustard Seed communities, showing us that if we are in any way to share the gospel, it has to be by being there with those who, in circumstances of life, find themselves to feel hopeless, and where other people are tempted to write them off.

So may God help us as we continue to live Christ’s story - this story, reinventing a vision of love for those who are otherwise seen as hopeless and loveless. Amen.

So let us pray. Almighty and everlasting God, by whose spirit the whole body of the church is governed and sanctified, hear our prayer which we offer for all your faithful people, that in their vocation and ministry they may serve you in holiness and truth, to the glory of your name, through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who is alive and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.