



**Sunday 1 July 2018 – Trinity 5**  
**Sermon for 10.00am Eucharist at St Andrew's Parish Church Guernsey**  
**Readings: Epistle: 2 Corinthians 8:7-end Gospel Mark 5:21-end**  
**Focusing on the world's standards v God's standards**  
**Given by Rev Juliette E C Robilliard**

It's starter for 10 time! Hands up everyone if you are or were a pupil at Ladies College or Melrose. Do you remember what was filed in these petrifying, green folders? School Reports! It's the time of year for school reports will soon be winging their way to parents, doubtless, these days via the Internet.

**My Schools Reports:**

Form 2, age 10, Summer Term 1968:

**English:** Her spelling is weak;

**Mathematics:** Juliette has made little progress with this weak subject;

I'll spare you the other subjects but you get the drift and I'll cut straight to the -

**Progress Report:** Juliette's examination results are not really up to standard!

But, for those of you who know me, here's a priceless comment:

**Conduct:** Juliette is a quiet child!

Hold on to the 'quiet' it will resurface elsewhere.

Under my headmistress Ladies College aimed for academic brilliance so, as you can tell, I really struggled. But take heart it seems that I didn't give up and neither did my teachers, as the penny dropped eventually. Speed forward to my last year at Ladies College before going to boarding school in England:

Upper 5<sup>th</sup>, age 16, Summer Term 1974:

**Progress report:** Juliette has worked with quiet determination. She deserves to be successful;

**Conduct:** Juliette is sensible and reliable. She has made a responsible Form Captain.

Gosh! It just shows, perseverance pays.

Changing subject but along similar lines, this is also, the time of year, as today's Collect referring to 'vocation and ministry' indicates, for Ordinations. Two days ago, I celebrated my 4<sup>th</sup> anniversary of ordination to the priesthood. Ministry training does not guarantee ordination. After a rigorous selection process if a candidate is chosen to train they are appraised constantly by their tutors, training incumbent and their bishop requiring nine criteria to be met, only one of which is attaining academic standards. The whole process is not for the faint-hearted but, as I know, it is an immense privilege to be ordained and serve God in ministry as well as an immense responsibility. I am sure those of you who are teachers and parents would echo the sentiment of responsibility.

The reading from Corinthians put me in mind of that selection and appraisal process as Paul provides a progress report on the Corinthians many qualities. They excel in everything: faith, speech, knowledge and eagerness. Of course, the Corinthians didn't start out knowing it all, they had to work at it until they were fully fledged and Paul could give them even more mission work to undertake. Titus in particular became Paul's

partner in ministry and ventured even further afield than Paul: this is a report of encouragement.

Turning to today's Gospel we discover two seemingly unconnected sick females: a woman and a girl. There is, however, a connection between them as the woman has been suffering for 12 years and the girl is 12 years old. But the selection process in operation has worked in favour of one and against the other. Jewish religious law appraised by the leaders of the Synagogue would forbid the woman, who was suffering from constant haemorrhages, to attend the synagogue in her ritually unclean condition and further, require her to drop out of society for fear of contaminating others by association. She was denied worship that would have supported her faith comforting her during those wearisome years. In Jesus, she sees her only hope and slipping under society's radar with quiet determination she seizes the moment to approach him. However, she is found out and confesses her predicament. But perseverance has paid off, she receives far more than her most sanguine expectations for she is healed in body, mind and spirit, once more able to resume her place in society and the synagogue.

The sick girl, by contrast, has all the benefit of her father's status. Jairus, the synagogue leader has no need to resort to subterfuge. He is a pillar of society, he can stride through the crowd doubtless they may even make way for him. He comes to Jesus directly. But, even he recognises that he has a need beyond his ability and position; even beyond the ability of the Jewish law to remedy, a need, just like all of us, that only Jesus can fulfil. Notwithstanding the criticism Jesus has received from the Synagogues, he sees Jairus' distress, hears the man's humble plea for his daughter and heals her. I wonder, in the days and weeks that followed if Jairus saw with clearer vision the prejudice and selectivity of his Jewish faith? This is certainly a salutary reminder for all Christians that Jesus intends faith and worship to be inclusive for all people.

Unlike the world's standards God, through Christ, isn't picky about performance. He sees the need and reaches out to transform the whole person. Further, he chooses all sorts and conditions of people to serve him. Sadly, people can back off attending church because they think that they aren't good enough. They benchmark their spiritual performance against the world's harsh standards rather than a compassionate Christ, who offers salvation to all who recognise their need and seek his forgiveness. Let's face it, we all make blunders not always giving of the best of our abilities. But God, gives us another chance seeing through to the intention of our hearts and will bless any action that is undertaken in Christ's name, however, small the offering.

Today's Collect [this Sunday's prayer] is not merely for the ordained but God's whole Church. He has a place in his mission for all of us. When I was 10 years old, I had no idea where my faith would take me in company with others but I have realised that God's plan is far wider than our own immediate horizons. There is no doubt that when we look after the possible and trust God with the impossible, he achieves miracles. Sometimes, just like school work it takes longer than others for the penny to drop but perseverance pays.

May God bless all of us and our part in his plan, and, as the Post Communion prayer says, "... So that peaceably ordered by your governance, your Church may joyfully serve you in all godly quietness through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

