

## Reflection Tuesday week 1 St Aelred of Rievaulx 2021

**St Aelred of Rievaulx** was born in Hexham around 1109. He was sent into the service of King David of Scotland and became Master of the Royal Household. After considerable personal struggle he decided to enter the new Cistercian monastery of Rievaulx in Yorkshire in 1133. A year later he took charge of a new foundation in Lincolnshire but four years later he returned to Rievaulx as Abbot where he remained until his death in 1167. Aelred is remembered both for his energy and his gentleness. His showed in his writings and sermons a deep love of the scriptures and a very personal love of Christ 'as friend and Saviour'. He was sensitive and understanding towards his fellow monks and Rievaulx grew to an extraordinary size. He did not enjoy robust health and the last ten years of his life were marked by a long, painful illness. As Abbot he had to visit monasteries in England, Scotland and France despite causing him considerable suffering. Aelred was a singularly attractive figure, a man of great spiritual power but also of warm friendliness and humanity. He has been called the St Bernard of the North. Hebrews spells out that Jesus was *made perfect, through suffering, and be the leader who would take us to our salvation*. Aelred obviously modelled his life on that of Jesus and led many to salvation in Christ. Quite rightly Mark tells us that, through the healing of the man possessed by an unclean spirit, it showed Jesus' authority. It also shows that along with great spiritual power Jesus had a warm friendliness and a desire to help others become fully human. Let us open ourselves more fully to the spiritual power of Jesus in this eucharist, be filled with his warm friendliness and use this power of Jesus in us to bring healing to others wherever we go.

**The rain was pouring down outside** O'Connor's Pub. Standing in front of a big puddle outside was an old Irishman, drenched, holding a stick, with a piece of string dangling in the water.

A passer-by stopped and asked him, "*What are you doing?*" "*Fishing*" replied the old man. Feeling sorry for the old man, the gent says, "*Come in out of the rain and have a drink with me.*" In the warm ambience of the pub, as they sip their whiskies, the gentleman, feeling rather superior, could not resist asking, "*So how many have you caught today?*" "**You're the 8th**", replied the old man.