

## Reflection Thursday Week 2 – 2024

We are not very different to the people who came to Jesus in his day. We also want to touch Jesus or be touched by him. We seek his reassurance and want to feel his presence in and around us. This is why friendships are so important. Our friends bring a physical sense that we are valued and that our lives have meaning and purpose. Founded on love it is what brings two people together in marriage.

Aelred of Rievaulx describes the qualities of friendship as loyalty, discretion, right-intention and patience. *“In friendship there is nothing more praiseworthy than loyalty, which seems to be its nurse and its guardian. It proves itself a true companion in all things, adverse and prosperous, joyful and sad, pleasant and bitter, beholding with the same eye the humble and the lofty, the poor and the rich, the strong and the weak, the healthy and the infirm... A truly loyal friend sees nothing in his/her friend but their heart.”*

This ability looks beyond the superficial elements of someone’s personality towards the deeper levels of a spiritual relationship. Aelred believed that there was nothing more wounding to friendship than the betrayal of one’s secret counsels. Without *confidentiality* we cannot take the risk of the self-disclosure and revelation, key elements of true friendship.

Aelred believes that this kind of spiritual friendship will only be experienced with a few people, perhaps only one. It is therefore a special gift experienced by the grace of God *“outpoured on all and, by all, that it is outpoured upon God so that and God shall be all in all.”* Since the Incarnation, all those who are living the Christ-life are no longer called servants but ***friends!*** **We are true friends of Jesus!**