

Welcome! We are starting our Open Meeting with Scripture. It is using the framework of our Parish preparation for the Synod and during meetings at the Synod in Rome and since. The Synod was called by Pope Francis and spoken about by Pope Leo.

The word synod from the Greek means 'journeying together.' We hope to travel this journey as the Parish of St Aelred's today.

We start with a Reading from Scripture, brief discussion and listening to each other. We are encouraged to listen carefully to each other in pairs or small groups, listening without interruption and judgement. Then writing the headlines of our discussion to share with the whole Group.

Unity in the Spirit of the Body of Christ. Letter to the Ephesians 4:1-16
(translated by Fr. Nicholas King SJ)

"Therefore, I beg you, I who am the prisoner in the Lord, to walk worthily of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, putting up with one another in love, being eager to keep the unity of the Spirit, in the bond of peace: One Body and One Spirit (just as you were called in one hope of your calling), one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

In each one of us the grace is given according to the measure of Christ's free gift.

Therefore it says: "Going up to the height, he took captivity captive; he gave gifts to human beings."

Now what is "he went up" other than that " he went down" to the lower regions of the earth? The one who "went down" is the same as the one who "went up", far above all the heavens, that he might fill everything.

And he himself gave some as prophets, others as evangelists, others as shepherds and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for a work of service, for the upbuilding of the Body of Christ, until all of us arrive
+ at the unity of faith and the knowledge of the sons and daughters of God

+ at the perfect human being

+ at the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ

+ so that we may no longer be infants, tossed here and there by waves, and carried here and there by every breeze of teaching, by the craftiness of human beings, by readiness to do anything bad as regards deceitful scheming.
+ but that we may be truthful in love and make everything grow into him, who is the Head.
+ Christ, from whom the whole body is joined together and knit together, through every supporting ligament according to the activity that is proper to each individual part;
+ it may bring about the increase of the body for its own upbuilding in love."

In pairs or small groups

- 1) What word or phrase strikes you from the Reading that is a joy in our Parish of St Aelred's. Share it, write it, but no discussion at this stage. Look again at the Reading.
- 2) Share then what resonated for you in the Reading or the silence, about the needs of our Parish of St Aelred's. Again pause for Reflection. Share it, write it.
- 3) Finally, have there been any new insights? What are the common themes or fruits of the conversation. Where is the Spirit leading us? Share it and write it.

For sharing with the whole Group:

Think of our Parish St Aelred.

What do you treasure?

What do you think about the future?

Try to find 3 words or phrases that you agree covers what you have said

A) about what are the joys or what you treasure about the Parish

B) about the future needs of the Parish

C) Any common themes and insights?

Share to the whole group in headlines rather than longer answers.

A Scribe will type out the headlines from the sheets as a record of contributions from the Parish.

Followed by rest of the Open Meeting of the Parish Pastoral Council

Pippa Bonner September 2025