

ENERGY & INITIATIVE - Benet Biscop

Today we are urged in the Gospel to have our loins girt and our lamps lit, ready for the Master's return. Was this not in the seventh century the spirit of Benet Biscop, patron of our English Benedictine Congregation? He was clearly a man of great culture, of drive, energy and initiative, undertaking several times the gruelling journey to Rome & back. And is this not just this energy & initiative what our EBC in all its fragile parts needs again today?

Yesterday I was talking to a young man who lives and works in Poland. He told me that there the town buses are free. This must be either enlightened social practice or alternatively a leftover from the Communist regime. I was fortunate enough to make two or three visits to countries behind the then Iron Curtain, and I remember being told there that there was no unemployment, everyone had a job provided by the State and all received their pay from the State. But there was little production, all goods were forever in short supply, shop shelves were empty, and there was overall a certain sense of listlessness and hopelessness in the air.

Now we are in Covid lockdown once again, it is grey and dull and dark this January, and I sense such listlessness and depression upon us, even upon us in the community, who have all we could need and still retain the comfort of our daily round of prayer and purpose. Perhaps it is because the confining decisions of our life are also, as then in the Communist bloc, taken for us by the State.

This is the point where we really need to retain and refuel our energy and our initiative, just like Benet Biscop in the bleak north of the seventh century. We need to respond again daily to this call of the Gospel summoning us from our own listlessness and discouragement so that we can not only raise one another up, but also retake the initiative to bring energy, courage and the hope of the Gospel to all the many who look to us for support in these undoubtedly darker days. Let us raise our eyes, and their hearts, to the hope beyond Covid.

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