

Reflection Wednesday Easter Week 7 St Dunstan 2021

St Dunstan (909 - 988) was a Benedictine monk, reformer and Archbishop of Canterbury, born near Glastonbury and educated at the abbey. He joined the king's household, but was expelled from court, accused of being a magician. Ordained priest at Winchester, he returned to Glastonbury briefly but was soon recalled to court. King Edmund took great interest in Glastonbury and appointed Dunstan as abbot. Dunstan set about restoring monastic life, almost extinguished under Danish invasions. However, he was exiled to Mont Blandin (Ghent) to a reformed monastery. Recalled by King Edgar, he became successively Bishop of Worcester, Bishop of London and Archbishop of Canterbury. He composed the Coronation Rite for King Edgar at Bath. Now the basis of the Coronation Rite today. Both King and Archbishop reformed the Church in England, largely through the monastic orders, now regarded as a 'golden age'. The promulgation of *Regularis Concordia* (970) marked the success of the movement Dunstan had started in Glastonbury years before. He collaborated with the king in making laws, administering justice and reforming the Church. He died, at Canterbury, on 19th May 988. His dying words: *"The merciful and gracious Lord hath made remembrance of his wonderful works; he hath given food to them that fear him."* He was one of the most popular Anglo-Saxon saints, and many legends have grown up around him. St Dunstan is considered to be one of the three makers of England before the Norman Conquest: the others being King Alfred and King Athelstan.

Amid all the activity of an immensely busy life, Dunstan was always first and foremost a man of prayer. A biographer wrote, *"One thing at least of my own knowledge I can declare, although he had spent his years here below under the veil of flesh, yet in spirit, whether awake or asleep, he lived always above this world, for 'his homeland was in heaven'."*

The psalmist writes *"Show forth, O God, show forth your might, your might, O God, which you have shown for us."* Like Paul, Dunstan radiated the might of God.