

Reflection Monday Week 15 St Benedict 2022

St Benedict (480 - 547), born in Nursia, Umbria, studied in Rome. Appalled by the dissolute life of the city he became a hermit at Subiaco. His reputation spread and some asked him to be abbot but the discipline he imposed caused others to try to poison him. Benedict organised various small communities of monks and nuns including the great monastery of Monte Cassino. He drew up a set of rules to guide their communal life. Although not the first monastic rule, the Rule of St Benedict has proved to be wise and balanced and served as the foundation for many other forms of communal living and not only in religious communities. The Rule of St Benedict recognises that people aspire for perfection but often fall short. It aims to be a “rule for beginners” in which even the least perfect and least able can grow in spiritual stature. In a Benedictine monastery one lives with people who, by their strivings to live and grow together, have become more and more *themselves*, as God intended, instead of being crushed into false uniformity by some idealistic and authoritarian regime. The Rule of St Benedict lifts our eyes up to the stars but keeps our feet firmly on the ground; it calls us to perfection but keeps us sane.

Benedict believed deeply in the words of Proverbs that, by handing over our lives completely to God then: *the Lord himself will give us wisdom, provide us with knowledge and discernment. The Lord will be our shield and stand guard over the paths of justice, and keep watch over the way of his devoted ones. That this will lead us to understand what virtue is, what justice is, and what is fair dealing, showing us all the paths that lead to happiness.*

Leading balanced lives!

What happens if you don't eat a balanced diet? You will tip over””

What did the tiger say when looking at the tightrope walkers? “That’s what I call a balanced breakfast!”

What do you call a Czechoslovakian government made of tightropes and skateboards? A system of Czechs and balances!