

Eata - in times of change

Eata (?-686)

A call to relinquish control

Eata was one of the first twelve local boys who Aidan and his companions schooled and disciplined. He was sent to be the first Abbot of Melrose. When Colman departed from Lindisfarne after the Synod of Whitby, Eata came as abbot in his stead with Cuthbert as Prior. Later he supported Cuthbert's decision to undertake the life of a hermit on Inner Farne.

When Cuthbert was required to return and serve as a Bishop the two friends agreed to swap places so that Cuthbert would be bishop, but based on Lindisfarne. For Eata that meant moving to Hexham as Bishop, with frequent dealings with Wilfrid. He lived through days of exciting opportunity, then disruption and dismay after Whitby, followed by challenging conflicts, and the traumatic sadness of many, many deaths with the arrival of the plague.

This liturgy may be used:

- on 26 October, Eata's feast day;
- on pilgrimage to Hexham or Melrose;
- in facing the unknown or unfamiliar;
- in accompanying someone facing terminal illness;
- in times of uncertainty, reorganisation or relocations
- in times of waiting for events to unfold or decisions to be announced;
- when adjusting to new circumstances or responsibilities.

*If we are hardworking, but self-satisfied,
only a poor harvest will reward us.
Come harvest time, each one's work
will yield what it may yield.
Lord, I am here,
pausing in the middle of the work
that is yet to do.
I look at my work, my life,
and try to shake off weariness.

*Teach me again, dear Lord,
to number my days.
Call out in me a willingness
to love and serve.
I do not know, and I
am not required to know
when I am going to die.
In fact, I have nothing to do with it.

*Many a life has been injured
by the constant expectation of death.
It is life we have to do with,
not death.

The best preparation for the night
is to work diligently while the day lasts.

*When days seem dark,
and I feel lonely and discouraged,
then give me glimpses of Your glory
to sustain me.

***Call out in me again
a willingness to love and serve.***

*Now think of me, and I shall know
I am because You are.
Only You make the universe worth being
or any life worth living.

*All my days I will grow safe,
deep in Your shadow;
strong in hope, we know your
ways are true.

*You, O Christ, are our perfect brother
perfect in love, in courage,
in tenderness.
Call out in me
that willingness to love and serve.

*Come harvest-time, each one's work
will yield what it may yield.

*But to be turned with the soil,
disrupted, replanted,
to bed down, and then
grow with God's seasons,
seems to require the softening
of the ground with many tears.

*I have learned to abandon my own plans
without complaint, though often
my ready smile lay close about
the wells of weeping.

*We stretch out our hand and throw,
and many, many seeds we sow.

*In truth, we do not know
where they will go,
Which will take root
or when the unlikeliest ground
will return
glimpses of gold.

*Sowing at times in tears

persisting through the years,
sometimes pulled away
to go and harvest another field ...

**Come harvest-time, each one's work
will yield what it may yield.**

**Let us embody Your ready kindness
in our day,
for things will not be
as they were before.**