**Forward- Thinkers: Sir Ken Robinson and St. Benedict**

“Children are alive right now! Our job as educators is to elevate the whole person, now. Education should feed the spirit. Yes, it’s about preparation for the future, but it’s more about the individuals and the community of learners,” Sir Ken Robinson exclaimed, at the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) Conference in Baltimore last week.

St. Benedict was a revolutionary. Like Sir Ken Robinson, he was forward-thinking and focused on the whole person (monk) and their relationship with the community (monastery). The Rule of Saint Benedict was written in a time when Europe lay in political, economic, communal, and social disarray. When unsustainable patterns of military force, wealth separation, fear, and competition were wearing on individuals, threatening communities, and destroying societal well-being, St. Benedict decided to create his own resistance.

St. Benedict gathered communities that supported and challenged each individual. He created an environment where each individual was known and loved for their unique strengths, talents, and limitations. In that way, he was able to empower each person to find passions that could “feed their spirits” and “elevate the whole person.” This was Saint Benedict’s way of serving a world in need of our gifts. Yes, it was about “preparation for the future, but it’s more about the individuals and the community.”

When speaking on education, Sir Ken Robinson states, “The role of a creative leader is not to have all the ideas; it's to create a culture where everyone can have ideas and feel that they're valued.” St. Benedict stressed the value of each voice within his communities, empowering each monk and student to share their perspective and dream ways to improve life and relationship with God and others.

In a time where people were doing everything they could to boost their reputations and increase their wealth and status, St. Benedict emphasized the importance of the individual spirit, understanding that everyone is alive right now, as a whole person and that each person will find balance and meaning in a community where they are known and loved.