

## Thoughts on the Fullness of Life, Part One

*By Metropolitan Saba (Isper)*

In man, in every human being, there is an inner longing towards that which is perfect, but often, he is not aware of what that is. Man longs for fulfillment. He has an insatiable desire to get rich from everything. He wants to grow and increase in everything he loves, or in everything he believes is useful or necessary to him. He is never satisfied with anything in this world. You see him always striving, with all his energy and ability, for what is more plentiful and more abundant, but his desire is never quenched or satisfied. He considers the quest to be his salvation, the source of the joy and reassurance for which he longs.

He considers money to be his savior, so he strives, collects, and accumulates, never reaching the point of satisfaction with what he has obtained, but rather his greed increases. He aspires to high positions, searching for proof of existence and self-realization there. This may begin as a service to others and end up being self-serving. He is captivated by the love of power; power is tempting, whether it is in the realm of the family, administration, or church. The love of power infiltrates the most sacred places and situations. A person sees it as self-protection and satisfaction of ego without limits. He sees the desires of life as the meaning of his existence. He kisses her passionately, until she possesses him and enslaves him. He moves through it from one stage to another, until he discovers that he has spent his life chasing dreams that gave him no comfort.

Man fears death. This is his biggest problem. He is familiar with life, but he fears death because he does not know what it is. What man does not know is his enemy. He runs away from it, avoids it, circumvents it, does not want to confront it, or even remember that it is coming. For him, he no longer sees anything other than the present life as the way to search for the truth, or to absorb what he imagines is the truth. The idea of immortality has accompanied man in all times and civilizations, and still does. Despite his discovery that this earthly life is unfulfilling for him, he does not want to replace it with what he does not know.

How can this limited and mortal man have this longing for the limitless and the immortal? How can he dream of immortality when he does not see an immortal being around him, when even modern scientific theories claim the very universe is not eternal? Why does it hurt him when someone else gets what he wants, making

him envious, hateful, and desperate, possessed by an inferiority complex? Why does he want fullness in everything, when there is nothing in front of him and around him except deficiency, defect, and corruption?

He longs for a better life, thinking it is about this thing or something else, but he soon discovers that he was wrong, and disappointment strikes him. Disappointment is characteristic of the modern man. He begins his youth with great enthusiasm, high ideals, and an amazing energy for change, only to discover after a number of years that he was too dreamy, and reality is full of disappointments. Even if he has reached sublimity in human thought, he still hopes he will do what is within his power. Most people will settle for small victories while losing hope of the possibility of changing the world.

Christianity interprets all of this as a yearning for the divine image within us to return to its origin. Human beings are created in God's image (which we need to constantly purify from our attachments to sinful passions). Human beings are also called to grow in His image until they reach the fullness that satisfies the soul. They are inherently drawn to their unlimited, infinite, and eternal Creator. In this pursuit, humans would find the sea insufficient, even if they were to drink it all. As long as they haven't discovered within themselves the original image of their Creator, unblemished by sin and corruption that befell it through their fall from their original paradise, they will keep seeking this origin in every other thing, field or path.

## Thoughts on the Fullness of Life, Part Two

*By Metropolitan Saba (Isper)*

A famous saying of the blessed Augustine is true of man, in every place and time. It has an influential and profound impact on today's man who is tormented and spiritually besieged from all sides. The blessed one says, addressing God: "You created us to turn to you, O Lord, and our hearts will not find rest unless they rest in you." Augustine reflects the words of Christ: "I have come that you may have life, and that it may be more abundantly" (John 10:10). Perhaps the most beautiful meaning that the Greek original of this verse carries is the following: "I came that you may have life, and that you may have the fullness of life."

Many people searched for and found in the person of Christ the meaning the meaning of life in general, and for their own lives in particular. Some of them, such as the great novelist Fyodor Dostoevsky, made this discovery, saying, "If anyone could prove to me that Christ is outside the truth, and if the truth really did exclude Christ, I should prefer to stay with Christ and not with truth." Not all these people are monks and hermits. The history of the Church is full of saints and lovers of God and His gospel from all categories: married and celibate, high and simple in education, men and women, the elderly and children, kings and rulers, free and slaves, rich and poor.

Why don't all human beings believe in this truth? Why don't they search for it, especially all Christians? One contemporary theologian says: "The problem isn't that there are few saints, but that not all Christians are saints!" I wonder if the reason lies in humans' fear of facing what they can't handle or comprehend, so they prefer to stay in the shallows rather than soar? Could it be the pride rooted within them, a product of subconscious fear, the barrier preventing them from liberating themselves from their constraints and embarking on the vastness of life to which they are inherently called? Or is it the economic consumerist grind that absorbs their energy, potential, and all that's beautiful in them, making them chase after requirements the current media falsely portrays as essential, causing further estranging from themselves?

These and other reasons often play a role in depriving humans of discovering true life and realizing their true calling.

But there is no doubt among all who have experienced this divine life that inner pride and self-love are the roots of all evils that manifest themselves in countless forms of vices, defects, and shortcomings, to the point that they blind people from seeing the light of God and the truth. Thus, humans will destroy their great dream of achieving the true meaning and fulness of their life.

Do not be fooled by the glamorous lifestyle of so-called stars, and the screens on which they appear in order to invade your imagination. For in the last days, you will discover a completely different side to them: “The world will fade, and so will its lusts” (1 John 2:17). One thing that remains is the face of your loving Lord, from which the light never fades.

Can you replace the morning sun with a candle?