

AS ABBA SILVANUS was sitting with the brethren one day he was rapt in ecstasy and fell with his face to the ground. After a long time he got up and wept. The brethren besought him saying, ‘What is it, Father?’ But he remained silent and wept. When they insisted on his speaking he said, ‘I was taken up to see the judgement and I saw there many of our sort [*i.e., monks*] coming to punishment and many laymen going into the Kingdom.’ The old man was full of compunction and never wanted to leave his cell. If he was obliged to go out, he hid his face in his cowl saying, ‘Why should I seek to see this earthly light, which is of no use?’

The Desert Christian, Benedicta Ward,
Macmillan Publishing, p. 222

THEY SAY CONCERNING Abba Anthony that on one occasion, when he was praying in his cell he heard a voice which said unto him, “Anthony, thou hast not yet arrived [at the state of excellence] of a certain man who is a tailor and who dwelleth in Alexandria.” Then Anthony rose up in the morning, and took a palm stick and departed to him, and when the man saw him, he was disturbed; and the old man said unto him, “Tell me what thou doest, and how thou livest,” and the tailor said unto him, “I do not myself know that I do any good, and I know only that when I rise up in the morning, before I sit down to the labour of my hands, I give thanks unto God, and praise Him, and that I set my evil deeds before mine eyes, saying, ‘All the men who are in this city will go into the kingdom of God, because of their alms and good deeds, except myself, and I shall inherit punishment for my sins;’ and again in the evening, before I sleep, I do the same things.” Now when Abba Anthony heard these things, he said, “Verily, as the man who worketh in gold, and who doeth beautiful work, cleanly, and in peace, even so art thou; through thy beautiful thoughts thou wilt inherit the kingdom of God, whilst I, who have passed the whole of my life in the desert, separated [from men], have never overtaken thee.”

Paradise of the Holy Fathers, tr. Budge, Vol. II, p. 150, #2

IT WAS REVEALED TO Abba Anthony in his desert that there was one who was his equal in the city. He was a doctor by profession and whatever he had beyond his needs he gave to the poor, and every day he sang the Sanctus with the angels.

The Desert Christian, Benedicta Ward,
Macmillan Publishing, p. 6

PEARLS FROM THE HOLY FATHERS

AUGUST 5–11, 2013

HOLY TRANSFIGURATION MONASTERY Brookline, MA www.htmp.org