



Excerpt from *Christ Our Pascha*

Melancholy (Sadness) and its Opposite Virtue - Joy in the Holy Spirit

The Holy Fathers, in accordance with the teaching of the apostle Paul, distinguish between salvific sorrow for one's sins and melancholy as a passion: "For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation and brings no regret, but worldly grief produces death"(2 Cor 7:10). Sinful melancholy as a passion reveals itself in one of two ways. Most often it is roused by some other passion, when we desire something but cannot satisfy this yearning. This gives rise to depression, which can lead to despair and even suicide. Melancholy can also arise from excessive anxiety about one's future, from attempting to control one's life by relying only on the self and not on God. St. Basil the Great teaches that melancholy is a sign of the weak in Spirit, since they lose spiritual equilibrium, inflict spiritual suffering on themselves, and risk definitively losing their hope in God. (#766)

The Spirit-Comforter (or Advocate) is the source of the virtue of Christian joy, which liberates from the passion of melancholy. He grants one the joy of experiencing closeness with God. The apostle Paul exhorts: "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything...(Phil 4:4-6)"(#767)