



Excerpt from *Christ Our Pascha*

**Acedia ( Despondency) and it's Opposite Virtue - Long-Suffering**

The Holy Fathers described despondency (in Greek, akedia) as exhaustion and fatigue of the soul. A melancholic person underestimates the power of the Lord, but a despondent person underestimates God's mercy. Melancholy drives a person to rely only on his or her own strength, while acedia completely deprives him or her of hope. The Holy fathers called acedia the "noonday demon" (see Ps 90). It extinguishes one's vigor for spiritual development. Acedia gives rise to feelings of desolation and aversion for life, and a sense of its emptiness, as well as to a loss of confidence in one's salvation. It leads to a person's psychological and physical exhaustion; one succumbs to laziness and becomes discouraged and incapable of spiritual combat. (#771)

The virtue of cheerfulness of spirit or sobriety of mind gives a person the means to renew one's spiritual strength and continue spiritual combat with the help of God's grace. "Therefore prepare your minds for action; discipline yourselves; set all your help on the grace that Jesus Christ will bring you when he is revealed" (1 Pt 1:13). Saint Isaac the Syrian teaches: "if we observe the law of vigilance and practice discernment with knowledge, from which the fruit of life is reaped, then the struggle with the assaults of the passions will in no way draw near our mind." (#773)