



Overcoming of idleness and gloom - Bishop Alexander (Mileant)

"My soul melteth for heaviness: strengthen thou me according unto thy word" (Psalm 119:28).

Everyone instinctively longs to pleasures, joy and happiness. The feeling of joy pours cheerfulness and optimism into person, as much as lack of joy makes life dull, gloomy and senseless.

Through God's goodness, there are many things in life which can gladden man. From the first moment after coming to the world, man is pleased by some subjects and phenomena: nice food and drink, fresh air, sun shine, beauty of nature, conversation with his nearest and dearest. As man grows, he finds new sources of joy in deeper knowledge of the universe and its harmonious laws, works of art, pieces of music and poetry. Man's ability to differentiate between what is pleasing and what is not has a gigantic significance for his physical and psychic development. However, very soon man finds that physical and aesthetic subjects only cannot satisfy him completely because he also has some merely spiritual needs. These spiritual needs are expressed through inner, subconscious longing for good, moral perfection and fellowship with God. This longing creates his spiritual thirst and hunger. If man pays no attention to the thirst of his soul, then it accumulates with time, strengthens and turns into a blunt inside feeling of emptiness, discontent and gloom.

Man has never had such abundance and diversity of entertainment as in the 20th century. The life is filled with theaters, movies, musical entertainments and electronic games, sports competitions, books, newspapers, magazines and so on. It seems that today's man should be many times as happy as his ancestors. It turns up to be the opposite, though. Today's man often feels very unfortunate, and even more unfortunate than his parents and grandparents. Unprecedented modern epidemic of abuse of tobacco, liquor, drugs, tranquilizers or stimulators is a convincing proof of it. Moreover, it is known that a noticeable percentage of population in large cities suffers from various mental diseases that even the best psychiatrists cannot cure. The large number of psychic disorders can be explained only by the disturbed balance of complex human nature: surfeit with entertainment and fun on the one hand, and acute spiritual emptiness on the other. These sorrowful observations of reality lead to the conclusion that it is a must for a modern man to understand the cause of the resulting spiritual crisis, and that he should, in particular, pay attention to his spiritual needs. Understanding that it is necessary to restore the balance between one's physical needs and the demands of the soul would push toward the start of spiritual life. Spiritual life, as well as any inner process, requires certain discipline and effort. But it is through this effort and discipline that we gain peace and spiritual joy. Not each and every effort is beneficial, of course, but only that shown to us by Our Creator and Savior Himself, the effort described in the Gospel and implemented in the Church. God gave Church everything soul seeks after: grace and truth. That is why we satisfy our most lofty and noble pursuits by partaking in the Church's life. Blessed we are if we have the ability to understand it and change our life accordingly!