2 Ιουλίου 2009

If the light in you is darkness, how great is that darkness. Matthew 6:23

The Fathers say that it is a great danger to spiritual life. Once you fall into it, it is very difficult to climb out. It frequently comes up in confession, and as a spiritual advisor, it is one of the most difficult spiritual states to cure. The Fathers called it “acedia.” (Pronounced “ah see dee ah”) Today, we call this passion “despair.” Truly, when the only light in you is despair, how great is that darkness.

Despair attacks the will and this is how this passion gains its power. With the will weakened, it is difficult to be healed. After all, to pray requires will; to fast requires will; to read or study requires will. It is a bad situation when “the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak”, but when both the spirit and the flesh are weak, it is a dire situation. Despair begins to strengthen as it feeds upon itself. When despair is strongest, hope is lost. We feel separated from God and begin to wonder if God even exists. We are dead and lying in the darkness of the grave. Life without hope is hell on earth, and a foretaste of eternal life apart from God. It is with great insight that Dante wrote about the sign that hangs over the entrance to hell: Abandon all hope, ye who enter here.” (περισσότερα…)