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**HOLY SACRAMENT OF PENANCE
IN THE THOUGHT
OF REV. PROF. DR. ILARION FELEA.
THEOLOGICAL AND LITURGICAL APPROACH**

***Rezumat:** Prezentul studiu abordează problematica Tainei Spovedaniei într-o perspectivă liturgico-practică, așa cum se reflectă aceasta în opera teologică a părintelui profesor dr. Ilarion V. Felea. La începutul studiului am redat câteva elemente autobiografice din jurnalul personal al părintelui profesor, pentru ca în partea a doua să mă refer la aspectele teologice, liturgice și practice ale Tainei Spovedaniei, așa cum se reflectă acestea mai ales în teza de doctorat a sfinției sale, „Pocăința – studiu de documentare teologică și psihologică”. La sfârșit, am așezat un segment de concluzii care reflectă ideile majore ale studiului întreprins.*

***Cuvinte cheie:** autobiografie, pr. prof. dr. Ilarion V. Felea, opera teologică, teologia pocăinței, Taina Pocăinței, duhovnicie, canon, experiență pastorală, tact pastoral.*

***I. Autobiography references
of Professor Father Hilarion V. Felea,
caught in his diary, entitled “The activity of my life”***

At March 12, 1903, in Valea Brad village from Hunedoara province, sees the day light in a clerical family, Hilarion V. Felea, the exceptional priest, PhD in theology, professor at the Theological Faculty from Arad, and afterwards the Christ confessor in the comunist prisons, ending his life in a common tomb from Aiud, at September 12, 1961.

In our study we will introduce only a few issues that we consider significant, however, from the diary of Father Felea, diary which im-

press not only with his originality, but through the belief and the witnessing faith and the exemplary life of that who wrote impressions about his life and his priest ministry. We mention the fact that the diary of the Father Felea, before the entire publication, was developed from the manuscript notebooks (originals), composed by Father Felea himself, by our colleague, young theologian from Arad, Pr. PhD. Cristinel Ioja, in his study *Hilarion V. Felea – priest, theologian, martyr- after his Autobiographic Diary*, study published in the “Teologia” magazine of the Faculty of Orthodox Theology of Arad¹.

From his diary we know that after his highschool studies, the young Hilarion V. Felea sign up Faculty of Philosophy and Letters from Cluj, then follows the courses of the Faculty of Theology “Andrei Saguna” from Sibiu, courses he completed in 1926.

After the finishing of theological studies, Father Felea will be ordained priest in his native village, Valea Brad.

As shown in his diary, as a priest in Valea Bradului, Father Hilarion Felea was the first man of ministry and mission, committing Liturgy almost every day, confessing and giving Communion regularly to his parishioners. In several places he writes about giving the Communion to the dying people. This shows the fact that “spiritual understanding in the parish and the perfection of the parishioners was intimately connected of the sacramental dimension on his parish”². Also, “visiting the sick, prayers on them, consecration, unction, reading the Psalter and other sacraments complete the daily work of pastoral-missionary priest Felea which has at its center the Church liturgy and extend its life among the parishioners”³. An overview on his diary shapes the form of a profound priest and theologian integrated in the liturgical life of the Church, almost every day of the week he was between the services of the Church and the implication in the parish life with services committed in the parishioners’ houses and spiritual meditations held in several occasions. This aspect shows the face of a celebrant theologian, who fully understood the fact that theology

1. Cristinel Ioja, *Ilarion V. Felea – preotul, teologul, martirul – după Jurnalul autobiografic*, in the magazine “Teologia”, nr. 1, 2008, p. 15-61.

2. *Ibidem*, p. 15.

3. *Ibidem*.

can't be divided from the direct experience of the faith, in the liturgical event, in the Church ministry.

Another concern of the Father Felea regarding his quality of priest was keeping the uniformity of the cult.

Beside the priest and mission dimension of Father Felea in Valea Bradului parish, we discover Father Felea as a true Apostle of the nation, urging the faithful to give their children to school, on the one hand, to brighten teaching and book knowing „but to bring them to church regularly and, on the other hand, to build and soul “befriending with the Spirit of God”, emulating the life of Jesus Christ and Theotokos⁴.

After three years of fruitful ministry in Valea Bradului, in the 1st of June 1930, he is called priest at Arad-Sagu, being installed in this parish on 31 of August. A new period begins for Father Felea. Here, in Arad, his Holiness will experience the maturing and the peak of confession, but even the bitter moments of the communist regime centered on the atheism and materialism which he never liked. The priest mission in Arad will be harder, especially concerned the relation between the Church and the culture, school and intellectuality. His liturgical activity intensifies, serving almost every day both in the Church and for the multiple needs in the parishioners life. Also, his working will be completed with his cultural and school activity, and with the implication in the activities of the orthodox society, as Oastea Domnului.

His work of confessing Christ through sermon, will be completed through the participation at several meetings, conferences, exams, activities of catechesis, or festivities in the schools and colleges of Arad; Father Hilarion contributing with all this in a substantial way at the forming of a religious conscience of the youth and children, especially giving them regularly the Holy Communion.

Conferences Father Hilarion assists and in which he perfected his talker qualities, are other aspect of his priest mission, through he remained in the conscience of his contemporary. Those conferences were meant to confess Christ beyond the walls of the Church, in the society, giving them a clear vision of the Christian faith of the appli-

4. Pr. prof. dr. Ilarion V. Felea, *Opera vieții mele – ziuar personal*, Ed. Universității “Aurel Vlaicu”, Arad, 2012, p. 68

cation and its meaning in the world, as separation from the various ideologies which had begun to destroy the soul of the European man in general and even the Christians from that time.

Father Felea will provide a special attention of so-called Sunday schools, as well as philanthropy, and helping the poor.

Father Felea talks to the singers from the choir, regarding their good behavior and their proper performance of religious songs, act which demonstrate the importance he shows to the choir and the importance of the behavior of those who sing in that choir⁵.

It also notes the special care in order to retain his faithful in the right belief orthodoxy.

He visits with the parishioners the monasteries of the diocese. Thus, he establishes a strong link with the Bodrog monastery, initiating pilgrimages with hundreds of faithful, on foot, through the woods, participating at the services committed here. Father Hilarion serves even at the monastery Arad-Gai (being called here temporary confessor of this monastery, at October 1st 1955), holding to the nuns several spiritual meditations. He visits also the monastery of Prislop "having superiors Mother Zamfira and Hieromonk Arsenie Boca". Father Felea confesses that the services he participated here had "filled his heart" of "piety and holy joy"⁶. This attraction of Father Felea to spiritual life from the monastery shows the profile of a theologian priest, powerful anchored in the spiritual tradition of the Church.

Priestly ministry, inspired from his own ministry at the Holy Altar, is characterized by Father Felea: "I know the priest life and I am convicted that as beautiful and honest it is, as it is difficult. There are days when you have nothing to do, and days when you have so much to do, that you fully pay the peace of the free days. But a priest always has what to do. It is time that it cannot usefully employ. I used my free time with the study of theology ... I made this vote (freely): to use all my free time to the Church and to my ministry. I never regret this decision. Although the official authority –clerical never paid me for this until now, however, other ways have gained much satisfaction in life,

5. *Ibidem*, p. 68. Examples could continue, being multiples.

6. *Ibidem*, p. 366.

that my sacrifice and devotion to the priesthood and Orthodoxy, I was rewarded. God rewarded me and my conscience”⁷.

In this period we can observe the preoccupation of Father Felea for the finishing of the higher and doctoral studies. This is because; father understands the priesthood as a freshness, strength and authenticity, only through a sustained reporting to theology, theology he studies with fervor, expressing with fidelity and devotement. Theology in her is understudied, funded and animated of Father Felea in his priest ministry, being in deep relation with the spirituality and the liturgical life of the Church. Thus, between 21 and 25 of October 1935 he sign up at the doctoral theology exam in Bucharest⁸.

In July 31-32, 1936 he is called at Oradea by the bishop Nicolae Popoviciu to receive the department of Apologetics and Dogmatic from the Theology Academy of there⁹.

In July 4, 1937 he is admitted at the exam of admitting to support the theology doctorate¹⁰.

In September 24, 1937, he receives the calling of locum-tenens at the disciplines Dogmatic and Sectology at the Theological Academy of Cluj, from the bishop Nicolae Colan¹¹.

At September 12, 1938, it communicate from the Episcopal Bishop Andrei Magieru that starting to October 1st will be appointed professor at the Theological Academy in place of Father Teodor Botiș – past retirement. It will assign the disciplines of Dogmatic, Moral, Homiletics, Ascetic and Mystics¹².

In March 14-15, 1939, in the context of participation at Bucharest at the funerals of the patriarch Miron Cristea – dead at Cannes (France) in 6 March 1939, Father Felea receives from the dean of the Theological Faculty of Bucharest, the approval of the doctorate thesis *Repentance*, for printing in the “Theological” series in Sibiu, being in audience at the archbishop Nicolae Balan¹³.

7. *Ibidem*, p. 162

8. *Ibidem*, p.144

9. *Ibidem*, p.153

10. *Ibidem*, p.160

11. *Ibidem*, p.181

12. *Ibidem*, p.187

13. *Ibidem*, p. 190

In April 14, 1939, with the audience he has at the bishop Andrei Magieru, on the approving of his doctorate thesis, he is announced by this of his appointment as the forth priest at the Cathedral of Arad¹⁴. In April 21, 1939, he is called to choose between a administrative function in the Parish Council, or the Department from the Theological Academy of Arad. Father Felea chooses the Department from the Theological Academy, and is offered the redaction of the magazine *Biserica si Scoala*¹⁵ too.

At October 30, 1939 he supports his doctorate exam in theology, obtaining the grade “cum laude”, presenting his thesis under the title: *Repentance. Study of theologically and psychological documentation*. With the occasion of receiving the title of doctor in theology, Father Felea writes in his diary: “I don’t make any promise, I pray God to help me to complete my promises from my ordination”¹⁶.

The collaboration with the Bishop Andrei Magieru from Arad becomes very tied and fruitful. Thus, after the appointment he gives to Father Felea at the theological Academy of Arad and as parish priest at the Cathedral of Arad, at 26 May 1940 he takes part as an active member at the works of Parish Organization from the Dioceses of Arad, in the same day being chose ordinary honorary counselor at the cultural section from the Dioceses¹⁷.

At April 16, 1940, he receives from the Ministry the appointment of holder professor at the Theological Academy of Arad, after the exam he had on the disciplines Dogmatic and Apologetics¹⁸.

At November 6th, 1940, he completes the manuscript of the collection of drafts and sermons, *Duhul Adevarului*¹⁹, which will be prized by the Romanian Academy at 31 May 1943²⁰.

At January 27, 1944 he will be titled definitively at the Department of Theological Academy of Arad, in plenary session²¹.

14. *Ibidem*

15. *Ibidem*, p. 198

16. *Ibidem*, p. 206

17. *Ibidem*, p. 186

18. *Ibidem*, p. 237

19. *Ibidem*, p. 241

20. *Ibidem*, p. 245

21. *Ibidem*, p. 250

In December 30, 1944, he receives the distinction of honorary dean, from the Most-holy Bishop Andrei Magieru²².

An aspect of his life and activity as priest, especially in Arad, is his critical reaction to the communist regime and his distant sympathy to the legionary movement, without being a legionary. This is shown by his confess in his diary: "I never made politics and I'm not a legionary, but I speak as a priest"²³. According to the assessments made by Pr. PhD. Cristinel Ioja: "The affinity of Father Felea to the legionary movement is not from a political orientation, but from a identification in his lines of a Christians values, through politics himself can became more viable and true, closer to the spiritual needs of the people. Also, he wants, as a priest, to participate at the political, social and cultural changing, which takes place in the society where Christians live. From this point of view Father Felea assumes the legionary movement, both with his references to the Christians values, and from the time orientations, which, among young, tended to a massive sympathy with this movement. Of course, these actions, the most justifiable it will cost too expensive to our father during the dictatorship. Father Felea loves involvement not only in terms of size worship, pastoral and theological mission of the Church, but also in the role of Christians in the city. He thus assumes the historical context in which confesses Christ in order to make it closer to the values of the Gospel and of the Church. In this sense, politics becomes a matter of concern for any Christian country lover and dweller in society"²⁴.

The attitude of Father Felea to the time politics, to the bolshevism and atheist communism, is simply showed in the bookmark he made in his autobiographic diary in 19 March 1928: "What from practice don't have good results (e.g. atheism, materialism etc.) can't theoretically be true"²⁵. It begins to emerge from this period an increasingly clear position of Father Felea to atheism and materialism of the communist dream found in an offensive worrying time²⁶. Father Felea reveals to the end of his life as a struggle against the Bolsheviks.

22. *Ibidem*, p. 171

23. Cristinel Ioja, *art. quoted*, in the vol. quoted, p. 35.

24. Pr. Prof. Dr. Ilarion V. Felea, *op. cit.*, p. 81.

25. Cristinel Ioja, *art. quoted*, in the vol. quoted, p. 34

26. *Ibidem*, p. 56

This strong stance against the policy of the parent Felea materialistic weather will cause a number of shortcomings, starting to His Holiness a true “way of the Cross”.

In 1945 Father Hilarion Felea is arrested the first time, while being deprived of liberty six months and sent to the camp at Caracal because he had shown sympathy to the legionary movement. Easter 1945 will happen in this concentration camp. At the time of Lent, as recorded in the autobiographical diary, he commits first religious services in the camp where there were about 100 priests. The services will intensify increasingly in the camp. Here’s what Father Felea says regarding his ministry in the Resurrection: “I served in the council as a representative of Transylvania in full vestments, the dean Al. Caracal Smith, assisted by priests (with epitrachelion) (...) I celebrated Liturgy and proskomidi and I give Communion to about 20 believers. Vespers (second resurrection-o.n.) I read the Gospel in Latin of the Missal Romanum”²⁷.

At the end of the day Easter records, parent notes with sorrow: “Day of great emotion, with insurances of release and ... disillusions. However, some releases”²⁸. The services will continue in the camp. It is impressive testimony that Father Hilarion makes July 22, in the camp: “Nineteen years of marriage, no bread. Less of C.Gane”²⁹. On July 29, Father notes in his diary “we received the visit of bishop Andrei of Arad”³⁰. On August 6, the camp at Caracal, father turns 18 years of priesthood. He notes in the diary, short: “18 years of priesthood – Matins and Divine Liturgy...”³¹. All these touching revelations of the teacher of theology, priest and confessor Hilarion V. Felea, shapes the same profile of theologian celebrant, who embodies in his life, serving God by the Holy Altar in custody, as in freedom, life in Christ. It is not just a profession sterile theology the treaties which they draw, but straightforward, the model private life and their service and dedication to the Holy Altar.

27. Pr. prof. dr. Ilarion V. Felea, *op. cit.*, p. 253

28. *Ibidem*.

29. *Ibidem*

30. *Ibidem*.

31. *Ibidem*, p. 254

On August 19, 1945, Father notes in the diary: "Release ... floating between dream and life..."³². Confirming Father Felea innocence, shortly after his release from prison, on September 4, Bishop Andrew Magieru of Arad ordained "protopresvyter"³³ and on December 25, 1947, after 21 years of service, including 10 years as Professor of Theology, will be ordained stavrophore at the Cathedral of Arad³⁴.

In the same year 1947, at 28 June, he is called rector of the Theological Academy of Arad, starting with 1st of July, in the administrative session and the plenary session of the Parish Council³⁵. He had this function until 1948, when the Theological Academy of Arad is disbanded.

At the beginning of 1949, a new raid took place, followed by the arrest by the Security and the deprivation of liberty. A new series of inquiries took place, all of them followed by correctional punishes³⁶.

After the arrest of 6th July, he is removed from the theological teaching by the decision of the Ministry of Cults, adding the fact that Father Felea can be involved in the clerical body. About the reason with the removing from the teaching, Father Felea shows that this is with the identification of some passages in his book *Duhul adevărului*, an exceptional study, prized at that time by the Romanian Academy. Father notes in his diary: "Reason which could exclude and expose all the bishops and all the teachers of orthodox theology"³⁷.

In March 28th, 1953, at the age of 50's, he finishes all the four volumes of meditations about the spiritual religious life: *Spre Tabor*, (1) *Pregătirea*, (2) *Curățirea*, (3) *Luminarea*, (4) *Desăvârșirea*. Father

32. *Ibidem*.

33. *Ibidem*. At the end of his autobiography, Father Felea notes: "Those three house searches and arrests" (7.III-20.VIII. 1945 1949-6.I.1950 6.I. 3-4.IX.1952) have preceded distinctions: red belt - 5.IX. 1939 Honorary protopresvyter - 30.XII. 1944; stavrophore - 25.XII.1947; Knight of the Star of Romania - Romanian Academy prize 9.V.1942 "Eufimia și Ioan Andrei" - 9.VI.1943, collection of sermons "Duhul Adevărului" (*Ibidem*, p. 166-167).

34. *Ibidem*, p. 263.

35. *Ibidem*, p. 276

36. *Ibidem*.

37. *Ibidem*, p. 313.

Felea writes about these books in his diary: “With God willing follow their grinding and their ... publication. This is the peak and the end of my work and my life”³⁸.

In November 24th, 1956, he visits, in the context of a larger itinerary to the county churches and monasteries, Father Dumitru Stăniloae, home at Casa Moșilor. With Father Dumitru Stăniloae he will cultivate special affinities considering the spiritual and philokalic visions on theology. In November 30th, 1956 he finishes in a first wording the *Din viețile Sfinților* or *Religia Sfinților*³⁹. This is the last note about any book and project from his Personal Diary.

The attitude of Father Felea the politics of that time, to the bolshevism and the atheist communism, will determinate his final as a martyr in Aiud prison, in September 18, 1961, being buried in a mass grave.

All these autobiography disclosures show a theological and missionary destiny, as well as the profile of a fearless confessor of the orthodox faith, even with the hardness of the time. We discover the perfect face of a celebrant theologian, who’s feeding his knowing and the theological exposure from the joy of the real meeting with Christ at the Holy Altar. A theologian who’s theology was depth in life and parish rhythm, liturgical and sacramental. Reading the autobiographic Diary of Father Felea, or together in Church, or individually in the parishioners for different needs, is full of liturgical events.

***II. Holy Sacrament of Penance
in the Thought of Rev. Prof. Dr. Ilarion Felea.
Theological and liturgical approach***

Father Prof. Ilarion Felea insisted particularly on theology, but also on practical issues related to the Sacrament of Confession, developing the teaching about this sacrament in his doctoral thesis.

He says that Sacrament of Penance or Confession is that “grace penitent reintegrating into the body of the Church and as a son, recon-

38. *Ibidem*, p. 370.

39. *Ibidem*.

ciled with the Father-God"⁴⁰. Penance is the sacrament through which the Christian fallen from his dignity as children of the Church, reintegrates the ecclesial body, interest forgiveness and thus restored.

His doctoral thesis entitled *Penance-theological and psychological finding study* referred to the Sacrament of Penance in the New Testament, and in patristic literature of the first three centuries of Christianity, and continued until the eighth century.

Sacrament of Confession is treated then as it appears reflected in the decisions of the local and the Ecumenical Councils and in ritual books of the Orthodox Church. A special chapter is reserved for psychology penance, and the work is giving us psychological documentation about penance. Finally, repentance is treated in liturgical and pastoral experience of father confessor. Because of limitations of space that is required for a study like the present, but also with reference strictly to the topic that I announced in the title, for treatment, we will refer only to the chapters on repentance, as it reflects in ritual books of our Church, as well as the conclusions chapter which deals with repentance, in liturgical and pastoral expression of father confessor.

*a. Theology of Reconciliation reflected
in the ecclesiastical hymnography*

As for the theology of the Sacrament of Penance reflected in our church services, Father shows that "its ritual prayers and songs, by the mystical and dogmatic content, comments without fail of Christian doctrine in general, and especially repentance"⁴¹. Thus "the Octoechos, book of the eight voices, that makes up the service of the Resurrection of the Lord includes a whole series of hymns in which the lost souls sing their misery and also the hope of salvation ... It is observed that most songs of repentance are summarized in Vespers and particularly on Sunday evening Vesper. Interprets the ordinance is easy if we think about the meaning and scope of Vespers, symbolizing man's fall, his harassment of heaven, the state of sin, cry for help and the hope of

40. Idem, *Religia iubirii*, Ed. Diecezana, Arad, 1946, p. 462.

41. Idem, *Pocăința. Studiu de documentare teologică și psihologică*, Ed. Scara, București, 2000, p. 127.

salvation through divine grace"⁴². By excellence, but Triodion, is the liturgical book that develops the great theme of repentance. "The ordinance of the church services on Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee until Easter Saturday is a hymnological transposition of the Christian salvation Economy and a continuous call for repentance and preparation. Triodion time is the time of repentance"⁴³.

Finally, Father makes the assessment that "the ultimate goal of repentance songs from the ritual books and especially from the Triodion is Penance of the Euchologion I mean the Mystery fulfillment after all the dogmatic, liturgical and canonical decisions established by the Church"⁴⁴.

b. Liturgical order of the sacrament of Penance

The liturgical order of the sacrament of Penance is the "faithful expression of the Christian faith on the Mystery of Penance"⁴⁵. This must be made by the Euchologion typicon. At the time of committing this order, is shown kneeling staying because it stimulates feelings of repentance⁴⁶. However, about the position of that witness, during the confession, Father accepts and even recommend and to stay standing (the penitent and the confessor), as this whole discussion and counsel to be made face to face⁴⁷.

c. Steps of Confession

In the chapter entitled "Penance in liturgical and pastoral experience of father confessor", the liturgical-pastoral guidance of Father Felea is very interesting and useful. Among them, we mention the most important. The first category refers to the preparation for Confession, to its committing and finding the most appropriate ways in order to reach the goal. The first important action of the priest is to prepare the

42. *Ibidem*, p. 128-129.

43. *Ibidem*, p. 129.

44. *Ibidem*, p. 131.

45. *Ibidem*, p. 133.

46. *Ibidem*, p. 187.

47. *Ibidem*.

penitent for the Confession. This can be achieved in many forms, by putting penitents “in a position to examine their consciences according to the dogmas of faith and Christian morality commandments”⁴⁸. As resources to achieve the preparation for Sacrament it would be pen and paper, or spoken word from the pulpit in such a direction (penitential sermon), or a spoken word in particular, each one meant to raise the soul of who came to confession⁴⁹.

Regarding Confession, father hints that it is better to make interrogative method, by questions and answers, questions that will be adapted depending on the circumstances, as occurs even in the Euchologion. The paper of Father, takes over, for guidance, a possible confession questionnaire. In this questionnaire there are references in general to the dogmatic and moral teachings that includes the Symbol of faith, The 10 Commandments of God, 9 commandments church sins against the Holy Spirit, outrageous sins, the death sins ... and acts of bodily and spiritual charity. This material – as the father says – it includes all Christian dogma and morality...”⁵⁰.

*d. The Confession of the children,
young people and the elders*

Particular attention should be paid to young people Confession, especially those preparing for the sacrament of marriage, since the family is the basis of society and the durability and persistence of a nation. In this sense, the father asks rhetorically: “What could be the contribution of the confessors in the work of restoration Romanian people’s health?”⁵¹

The Confession of the young people who are preparing for the Sacrament of Matrimony must constitute a serious spiritual examination aiming spiritual health and physical health, which “is closely associated with the virtues, ordinances, deeds and sins confessed by the young people and canonical impediments and legal aspects of

48. *Ibidem*, p. 185.

49. *Ibidem*, p. 185-186.

50. *Ibidem*, p. 188.

51. *Ibidem*, 189.

marriage”⁵². Young people must be aware of the mission that will return that to be parents and the obligation to have a husband (wife) of the same faith. They also must be guided toward a life of prayer⁵³. Another problem is that children confession “is usually in groups or classes”⁵⁴. Father Felea feels it is better “to be tempted (investigated, admonished-~~nn~~) individually and unconditionally in the church”⁵⁵. This, of course, with the intention of creating an authentic habit of confession because “the child’s individual confession has a high educational purpose: to accustom consciousness research”⁵⁶.

A special case is also sick people confession, which must be done briefly and very careful, in order to help them tell their unconfessed sins⁵⁷.

e. The confessor’s spirituality

Another issue discussed by Father Felea about the confession is the confessor’s spirituality. The spirituality of the confessor,

52. *Ibidem*, p. 191.

53. *Ibidem*, p. 192-193.

54. *Ibidem*, p. 193.

55. *Ibidem*.

56. *Ibidem*, p. 194. This view of Father Felea should be considered today when usually during fasts, children are brought to church for confession in large numbers. In view of the fact that these Confessions are among the few occasions where young people (from preschool to high-school) have the opportunity of a meeting with a minister of spiritual altar in a special sacrament so as confession, and specifically have the opportunity to reveal the great unrest and problems in their soul it (confession) should be committed mandatory in particular. Given that there are families (and sadly many) in which concern for the spiritual formation of children on a Christian foundation basically is completely missing, these meetings with the priest confessor, occasioned either by the teacher of religion, or of some positive friends at the school, it could be the only points for a spiritual recovery for these young people. A constructive meeting in this regard would emancipate the soul of many young people, who ,being deprived of elementary home education or falling prey to negative entourages ,are enslaved by passions hard to imagine, that can not be resolved in another way than on the authentic restoration with God and the Church by way of confession.

57. *Ibidem* p. 94.

“says the father, is, the most difficult and neglected ... in theological education”⁵⁸.

Defining the spiritual father, Professor Felea shows: “His first supreme Call is to be witty and, in the second row, to share the spirit that’s in him to his disciples and to his spiritual children”⁵⁹

Spirituality, by definition, is detachment from everything earthly and bodily and experience the atmosphere of the Holy Spirit⁶⁰. Just because it is a high service, Confession and spirituality requires much preparation, because “the unprepared confessor can not confess, preach or serve the Divine Liturgy, without condemnation”⁶¹. Fasting and prayer are the means by which the confessor is preparing for confession⁶². He is due “to submit to spiritual practices that he requires from his spiritual children”⁶³. This is not to put any measures that he can not wear.

As a requirement for the confessor is the knowledge of human psychology. He “must know the secrets and the sufferings the human soul, the causes of diseases and the remedies to heal them”⁶⁴. As a good psychologist, the confessor must, “to beware of two excesses: superficial and hasty confession and too scrupulous and too meticulous confession”⁶⁵. It is also necessary “that the questions ... to be adressed friendly with spirit of gentleness and kindness, with great caution and discretion”⁶⁶.

Healing the soul of believers can be done by the confessor in the Sacrament of Penance only by the help of God and by personal effort, “exercises, discussions, meditations and spiritual readings, by prayer and fasting and religious services”⁶⁷.

58. *Ibidem*, p. 204.

59. *Ibidem*.

60. *Ibidem*.

61. *Ibidem*, p. 205.

62. *Ibidem*, p. 204.

63. *Ibidem*, p. 205.

64. *Ibidem*.

65. *Ibidem*.

66. *Ibidem*.

67. *Ibidem*, p. 205-206.

f. The canon given after the Confession

Regarding the canon given after the confession, Father Felea adopts a moderate position, saying that “in the application of canons, the confessor can not forget that he is not only judge and doctor, but also loving and disinterested parent”⁶⁸. Therefore penitential canons are imposed so “considering the mistake the persons’ strength”⁶⁹.

As for stopping the receiving Holy Communion, Father Felea shows that it “no longer welcome appearance as in the patristic age; this may even have contrary effects than it was intended. However, penitents should know that the greatest sins can not be admitted to Holy Communion ...”⁷⁰. Here actually begins the confessor’s discerning.

III. Conclusions

1. At the beginning of this study we presented some biographical information on parent teacher Ilarion V. Felea as they appear in his personal diary called *My life’s work – a daily schedule*. All the revelations of the autobiographical diary reveals a large theological and missionary destiny and the profile of a fearless confessor of the Orthodox faith, despite the adversities of the time. We also found the perfect image of a celebrant theologian, who had fed his theological knowledge and exposure from the real joy of meeting Christ in the Holy Altar. A theologian whose theology was liturgical and sacramental thorough, in life and in the rhythm of parish.

2. Father Prof. Ilarion Felea insisted particularly on theology, but also on practical issues related to the Sacrament of Confession, developing the teaching about this sacrament in his doctoral thesis. His doctoral thesis entitled *Penance-theological and psychological finding study referred to the Sacrament of Penance in the New Testament, and in patristic literature of the first three centuries of Christianity, and continued until the eighth century*. Sacrament of Confession is treated then as it appears reflected in the decisions of the local and

68. *Ibidem*, p. 220.

69. *Ibidem*, p. 219.

70. *Ibidem*, p. 220.

the Ecumenical Councils and in ritual books of the Orthodox Church. A special chapter is reserved for psychology penance, and the work is giving us psychological documentation about penance. Finally, repentance is treated in liturgical and pastoral experience of father confessor. Because of limitations of space that is required for a study like the present, but also with reference strictly to the topic that I announced in the title, for treatment, we will refer only to the chapters on repentance, as it reflects in ritual books of our Church, as well as the conclusions chapter which deals with repentance, in liturgical and pastoral expression of father confessor.

3. As a final conclusion of our study, we clearly can say that in the complex personality of Father Iilarion we met both the theologian confessor and servant priest at the Holy Altar. His theological work, where are plenty of elements from the Liturgical Theology, is the blessed result between the theological issues that he deals with and the joy of living these truths professed by the Department in his personal life.