

**„BABEȘ – BOLYAI” UNIVERSITY, CLUJ - NAPOCA
THE FACULTY OF ORTHODOX THEOLOGY
THE „ISIDOR TODORAN” DOCTORAL SCHOOL**

**THE PRIEST AND PROFESSOR LIVIU GALACTION MUNTEANU –
SHEPHERD OF SOULS AND MARTYR OF OUR CHURCH**



PhD THESIS SUMMARY

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Among other teachers who set the foundation of the Orthodox Theology Institute from Cluj at the initiative of Bishop Nicolae Ivan in 1924 – after more than four centuries since the foundation of the local Hungarian Catholic Education, even though the Romanian population detained the numerical majority – was Prof. PhD. Liviu Galaction Munteanu, a special figure in the development of the theological university education. All his life was dedicated to the *word*, through which he served to Christ, the Divine Logos incarnate.

Built within the subject of New Testament, he thought also the Old Testament, developing in this field of Theology a teaching material that in many of its parts is superior to the one published in the `50s.

His scientific work comprises a number of 17 books, 10 studies and 282 articles, a total of approximately 3000 pages. The monumentality of his work is determined not only by the number of pages, but also by the synthesis of his thinking, a valorification of the up-to-date bibliography of that time. His writings emphasize the quality of “a valiant defender of the inspiring aspect of the Scripture” and of „a titled interpreter very well situated in the area of specialized bibliography from the Western Europe theological field”.¹

The motivation which was the basis for this research is related to the reopening of the Orthodox Theology Faculty from Cluj-Napoca after the communist period, the event that enabled the evocation of the founders of this prestigious institution.²

The research theme proposed in the present paper is consecrated to the memory of this worthy confessor of Jesus, Father Professor Univ. PhD. Liviu Galaction Munteanu,

¹Fr. Prof. Univ. PhD. Ioan Chirilă, „Old Testament Studies at the Academy/Theological Institute from Cluj 1924-1952. The Old Testament and the Christianity in the Work of Fr. Prof. PhD. Liviu Galaction Munteanu (1898-1962)”, in the *Directory XVIII (2014-2015) of the Orthodox Theology Faculty of the „Babeş-Bolyai” University*, Renaşterea, Cluj-Napoca, 2016, p. 12.

²Fr. Prof. Univ. PhD. Ioan CHIRILĂ, „*Old Testament Studies...*”, p. 11.

with the intention to follow his holy example of life, according to the urge of Saint Apostle Paul: „Remember your elder, who spoke to you the word of God; look carefully how they ended their lives and follow their faith” (Heb. 13,7).

The thinking depth of the teacher Munteanu is reflected into his work which he left for the posterity, initially published in specialized magazines, such as „Renașterea”, „Viața Ilustrată” etc., and then becoming the material of future studies and books. This work allows us to extract his portrait as a priest, dedicated teacher and example for his colleagues, students and believers that he led. He emphasized from the start the rigorous education of the future Religion teachers and servants of the holy altars. His writings are full of his deep interest for the religious education, which in the interwar period was to remain in the background because of that time circulation of materialistic ideas which minimized the importance of the religious education in schools. Through his written and spoken word, Father Professor Liviu Galaction Munteanu anticipates on a long run the effects of the materialistic culture that was to come to surface once the atheist communist regime was instaurated. Thanks to his dedication to the biblical research in Old and New Testament and in Pastoral Theology he contributed enormously to these fields. It is for sure that Father Professor Liviu G. Munteanu would have elaborated other valuable works for the Romanian Theology if it hadn't been the tyrannical political system that he partly lived under and that destroyed values and led to his premature death.

He assumed a few academic positions, being a dean and rector at the Theological Academy/Institute in Cluj between 1937-1943 și 1946-1952.³ „The evaluations and perspectives of the theological education needed urgently a paradigm meant to form not only the life of the theologians during their studies but also the service and dedication life after their completion”. This context explains the importance of the published writings which debated the theme of holiness which forms „the final goal of the earthly endeavours understood in connection to God, to the human nature and the world”. The

³Fr. Prof. PhD. Alexandru Moraru, *The Theological University Education in Cluj (1924-1952)*, Cluj-Napoca, 1996, p. 186.

general idea of this theme leads always to the same conclusion, that is „that outside the Church of Jesus there is no saving”.⁴

As it is well-known, once with the instauration of the totalitarianism in our country, the mission of the Church was limited to the maximum, the activity of the priest being confined only to the religious service in the church and to the spiritual support offered at home. For four decades, between the State and the Church took place a „silent war”, and the personality of Father Professor Liviu G. Munteanu was crucial in counteracting the Marxist-Leninist ideology in the diocese of Cluj, as he was considered an opponent of this doctrine.

After excluding Religion from schools, the only solution for the faith education of the young people was the catechesis. The catechesis program, deliniated in 1958 following the conference with the archpriests, was to be implemented on all over the territory of the Diocese of Cluj and, according to the fears of the ones from the Security, on all the Patriarchate.⁵ The religious instruction of the young people was a wish which only fulfilled after the complete fall of the socialist state regime, the youth being educated in the spirit of the communist ideology.

The Security wanted to stop all the initiatives related to the children’s and youth catechesis, being considered a „dangerous” thing for the socialist system, and the intention of Father Liviu G. Munteanu was considered by the communist party leaders as hostile and „equated with crime and conspiracy against social order”, being arrested and thrown in prison. His actions present him as a true priest who was aware of the responsibility of the mission which he had to fulfill in front of the totalitarian communist regime.

Ending his life in the prison of Aiud on eight of March 1961 for preaching the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ Who he served faithfully all his life, not only from the Theological Academy chair from Cluj, but also as a priest from the pulpit, through sermons, and in the middle of the believers that he led, Father Liviu Galaction Munteanu numbers himself among the martyrs who died on the altar of our ancestral faith, so it can

⁴Fr. Prof. Univ. PhD. Stelian Tofană, „The Biblical Writer and Martyr: Liviu Galaction Munteanu – A Contribution to the Development of the Romanian Biblical Theology”, în *Directory XVIII (2014-2015) of the Orthodox Theology Faculty of the Babeş-Bolyai University*, Renaşterea, Cluj-Napoca, 2016, p. 30.

⁵ ACNSAS, Information Fund, Brief 2704, Vol. 1, f. 58.

be said that he is the most important martyr for the religious education of the young generation. In this context, it is explained the title I gave to this research paper.

In the current paper I tried to make a detailed analysis of the proposed theme from the perspective of *Pastoral Theology*, in order to emphasize its full topicality. It is important to mention that until now this theme has only made the object of a few short studies.

In the following pages I will present, in summary, the chapter structure of the paper which starts with an „Argument” which determined the choice of the theme, followed by an „Introduction” that contains a few aspects concerning the importance of this theme within the *Pastoral Theology* field, the objectives, the methods, the current stage of the research over the activity and work of Father Professor Liviu G. Munteanu. This paper comprises six chapters, with subchapters and subdivisions, considering the complexity of each subject. Each chapter has short conclusions. The final conclusion contains the results of the research, followed by annexes and bibliography.

The first chapter is consacrated to the biography of Father Munteanu, where I presented in the beginning his family tree. It contains significant information about his childhood, adolescence, studies, activity and positions he detained in different moments of his life. I built this presentation on the information offered by a few recent studies published in the *Directory* of the Orthodox Theology Faculty from Cluj-Napoca. These studies contain exact information on the subject. All these helped me to understand the complexity of his personality and also the reasons which motivated him to study theology and dedicate his life to teaching and research. In a subchapter I presented the activity in Bistrița and then as a Vicar in Cluj. After a few months in this position, he was arrested, condemned and thrown in prison by the communist regime, where he ended his life. The main information source for this subchapter was the tracking file of Father Liviu Galaction Munteanu from CNSAS Archives.

The first chapter also contains the publishing activity and his writings comprised in books, studies and articles published in different specialised magazines. His vast work shows the thinking capacity to synthesize and to use the bibliography of the field which could be found in the Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant territory. An important part of his activity is the administrative one which I dedicated the last subchapter.

The second chapter, which is the main part of the research paper, emphasizes the pastoral vocation reflected in his work, that contains a variety of themes. The first section of this chapter is dedicated to the definition of the concept “shepherd” and to the description of his face in the Holy Scripture and the writings of the Holy Fathers. It also comprises the forms of pastoral activity. A large part of the chapter is dedicated to the analysis of the “Sermon on the Mountain” which pertains to the New Testament field and it is also “a pastoral presentation of the speech held by Our Savior”. This is followed by the presentation of His earthly activity which reflects the care for souls. This is reflected in a few examples found in Father Professor Liviu Galaction Munteanu’s work.

This pastoral model was used by the Holy Apostles. The next section is dedicated to them. Together with the first model previously presented, it represents a pastoral paradigm for the Church. This model was put into practice in a personal approach by the erudite Father from Cluj as I presented in the same chapter, where I insisted on the importance of the “model” by presenting a few paradigms: biblical, patristic and contemporary ones. In the same chapter an important part is detained by the contextual pastoral activity, which recommends Father Professor Liviu G. Munteanu as an original theologian in this field of theology, together with the other disciplines. Also, I presented the main pastoral means and instruments that he used during his activity.

The third chapter presents the main research directions. They are an analysis of the theological themes that are contained in his published writings. One of the important themes is the biblical isagoge, of the New and Old Testament. It is comprised in very important studies for the biblical theology. A section of the chapter is dedicated to the description of the evangelical face of our Savior. It is based on the analysis of a few articles that show clearly his teaching concerning the hristology. These writings contain an entire teology referred to the divine-human person of our Savior. It constitutes a rich documentary material for specialized studies, but also for the believers who were his writing public. In the same time, I considered other aspects of the theology such as: pneumatology, Mariology, anthropology. And in another large study I presented the soteriology in the Epistle to the Galatians.

There is also important to mention that the research coordinates that I brought into discussion at this point pertain to other theological disciplines, especially the biblical

ones. Still, my analysis inclines to the field of *Pastoral Theology*. This fact is proven by the character of the issues discussed and the working method implied in the research.

The fourth chapter is dedicated to the presentation of the contribution that Father Liviu G. Munteanu had to the field of Pastoral Theology. The pastoral coordinates identified during my research I gathered them in one bundle in order to emphasize his contribution to this field. The work that he left us constitutes from the perspective of Pastoral Theology a rich study material, out of which it can be extracted a series of ideas useful for the pastoral mission of nowadays priests.

His work is a treasury for the field of theology and the believers. It also reflects the care of the scientist-martyr Liviu G. Munteanu for the educational formation of the students enrolled at the Institute/Academy in the heart of Transilvania. In the same time, he was concerned with assuring a high level education taking into account the historical times when this institution was at the start of its activity. Still, it had excellent results from the start of its existence. His writings are characterized by originality. Their author proved brilliant as a writer.

In the fifth chapter I tried to deliniate the complex personality of this holy priest using a series of testimonies that I mentioned during the research. Some of them come from the members of his family, other from the Security itself. The last ones, even if they have as a goal to follow and indict him, show clearly the bright personality of Father Liviu Galaction Munteanu.

The sixth chapter completes the medallion dedicated to the personality of Father Professor Liviu G. Munteanu, in which I presented the topicality of his pastoral model. He constantly emphasizes the holy life that the priest should have in the middle of the believers that he takes care of. He must follow the example of our Savior. The priest must daily „identify himself in his practice with the ideal life that was lived by our Savior, determining in the large circles of the believers the following of Jesus. [...] We need skillful preachers of our Savior's doctrine, but more than that we need Christian personalities, well-determined people to live the preached word".⁶

⁶ Prof. L. G. Munteanu, „On the Way of Christian Fulfillment” in *Renașterea* XVI (1938), p. 6.

The pastoral model offered by Father Professor Liviu G. Munteanu can be used by any priest nowadays because it offers solutions to many of the problems that arise among the believers.