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# The Homiletic Activity of Father Prof. Constantin Galeriu (Ph.D.)

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## Abstract

In the gallery of the great professors who served exemplarily the Romanian academic theological education, a special place is held by Father Professor Constantin Galeriu, Ph.D., who identified his personal life with the life of the Church and that of the Faculty of Theology, and who trained, in the clerical spirit, dozens of generations of future priests, to serve God and men, with abnegation and dignity. The homiletic or preaching vocation of Father Constantin Galeriu can be considered only in the light of his pastoral service. The Father did not simply impart teachings from the pulpit, he taught by his own example as a priest and as a human, because his very life was a paragon of virtue and a model for all those who had the privilege of knowing him. He understood, in an eloquent way, that only when one's words are consistent with his deeds one is following the Gospel of our Savior Jesus Christ.

## Keywords

Father Professor Galeriu, the homiletic vocation, biographical elements, sermons, homiletic activity, theological didactic stories.

## I. Preliminary remarks

Never losing sight of the Perfect Model – Christ, Father Galeriu was highly appreciated by the Christians, who came to listen to him from all over Bucharest, and even from other cities and towns across the country. We wish to evoke here the thesis written by the Father for his doctoral degree, a thesis on sacrifice - the sacrifice that leads to Resurrection, that is, the sacrifice of Christ. But this sacrifice conducive to Resurrection, undertaken by our Savior Jesus Christ, is a source of light, of meaningful Christian life, of a meaningful Church life in general. As His Beatitude Patriarch Daniel asserted, we can assert that the “the mission of Father Professor Galeriu was a self-sacrificial one. Here is a man who fully committed himself, out of his immense love for the Church and the Romanian people. He was often sought by the young, by the intellectuals, by the *Orthodox Brotherhood*, by the *Association of Orthodox Christian Students*, by centers of theological and lay culture. He was true to his calling but, at the same time, he devoted himself with joy. In this act of committing himself and devoting himself fully so that the faith of others was strengthened, there was a constantly cultivated joy. Starting as a priest in Ploiești, he was then appointed to serve at the Saint Sylvester Church in Bucharest as a priest and, at the same time, became a professor at the Academic Theological Institution in Bucharest, which, after the 1989 Revolution became the Faculty of Orthodox Theology. So, what we are witnessing is a sacrificial devotion and only few people on this earth have found the same sense of living by dedicating themselves to others. It is not merely a mission fulfilled in obedience to an order. It is a mission fulfilled out of passion, a mission of self-sacrifice”<sup>1</sup>.

True joy comes from the happiness of endeavor successfully carried out, a joy resulting from seeding the Gospel’s word and watching it bear fruit, becoming active in people’s lives. The Father displayed this happiness in his face and in his entire being when he preached, and he succeeded in conveying it to the others. Although at times his sermons

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<sup>1</sup> † P.F. PATRIARH DANIEL, “Un chip luminos al cuvântului. Părintele Galeriu – predicator al Jertfei și Învierii” (“A bright figure of the word. Father Galeriu – preacher of Sacrifice and Resurrection”), in vol. *Dăruire și dăinuire. Raze și chipuri de lumină din istoria și spiritualitatea românilor (Devotion and Endurance. Rays and images of light in the history and spirituality of the Romanian people)*, Trinitas Publishing House, Iași, 2005, p. 183.

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were very long, they were never tiresome, because they were the result of preparation, of a spiritual bond with the Holy Apostles, with the Holy Fathers that he would quote, joining the experience of past generations to personal experience. Therefore, in one word the joy of Father Galeriu was the joy of communion, because true joy is found only in communion<sup>2</sup>.

## II. Homiletic activity

The contents of the Father's preaches, based on the Holy Scriptures, the Holy Fathers, the meditations of the greatest philosophers of the world, and to no lesser extent, his own clerical feelings and experiences, were presented in a refined liturgical language, in harmony with an adequate personal style, and, additionally, with discreet gestures and a facial expression that emphasized the truths he was preaching. As in the case of Saint John Chrysostom, his sermons „contained in a nutshell the entire Christian anthropology presented in a highly original manner, expressed through the force of words and visions that would later provide the topic for many doctoral theses... All his sermons are recorded, but passing from oral expression to the written text is extremely difficult, as it presupposes good cognizance of Father Galeriu's theological thinking. The twenty-two homiletic models published by Anastasia Publishing House were however amended by the Father himself, as they had been delivered under the extreme pressure caused by the imminent closing of the newspaper that had been publishing them every Saturday”<sup>3</sup>.

Although he was a connoisseur of the homiletic rules, a master of the style, language and gesture rules, the Father was an uncommon speaker. When listening to him carefully, “you realized that the homiletic rules seemed to have been defined, only so that they could be purposely eluded... Because the Father, without deviating from the basic principles of rhetoric, set up and applied his own rhetorical laws. This aspect is, in fact, one of the fundamental marks of his homiletic originality”<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> † P.F. PATRIARH DANIEL, “Un chip luminos...”, p. 184.

<sup>3</sup> Sorin DUMITRESCU, “Părintele a propovăduit cuvântul credinței cultivate de simțirea înțelegătoare, când mintea ajunge să inunde simțirea” (“The Father preached the word of faith cultivated by the noetic feeling, when the mind comes to overwhelm the feelings”), in *Vestitorul Ortodoxiei*, year XV (2003), no. 318-319, p. 5.

<sup>4</sup> Rev. prof. dr. Vasile GORDON, “Părintele profesor dr. Constantin Galeriu, preot și predicator de excepție” (“Father Professor Constantin Galeriu, Ph.D., an exceptional priest

### III. A few biographical elements

As an erudite and a theology professor, Father Galeriu also carried out an extensive academic research activity, publishing studies, articles, books, comments, reviews, notes and sermons. Even when facing hardships, following his brain stroke, he continued to meditate and write.

That is how the following works appeared, although they had long been ready for publishing. But the Father was very demanding for their final form: *Explicarea la Rugăciunea domnească (Explanation on "Our Father" Prayer)*<sup>5</sup>; *Tâlcuiri la mari praznice de peste an. 22 de modele omiletice (Exegeses for the great feasts throughout the year. 22 homily models)*<sup>6</sup>; *Cartea celor Nouă Fericiri (The Book of the Nine Beatitudes)*<sup>7</sup>.

The volume *Tâlcuiri la mari praznice de peste an. 22 de modele omiletice (Exegeses for the great feasts of the year. 22 homily models)* is a collection of speeches (15 panegyrics and 7 thematic sermons), that present Christian teachings in an impeccable form, stirring in the audience feelings similar to those one experienced when listening to a skilled musician performing famous pieces of music perfectly.

Upon reading again and again the wonderful church sermons, we realize how difficult it is to describe the features that define his homiletic writings. Still, we can distinguish several particular characteristics of these texts: a dominant concern for topics related to present-day issues, approaching matters relevant for the current concerns of the faithful; without drifting away from the teachings of the Holy Fathers, the Father is an original creator, he is not the imitator of beautiful phraseology, created by others, but instead he is, himself, the creator of many of the locutions that he uses.

It must be noted that, although he used all the homily genres, the sermons of Father Galeriu generally belong to the category of dogmatic and moral thematic sermons, as he was concerned with subjects that would meet the needs that Christians were faced with. *Nevinovăția va salva lumea (Innocence will save the world)*, *Candela mică a mării lumini (The little candle of the great light)*, *Despre fericiri (On the Beatitudes)*, *Talita Kumi*

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and preacher"), in *Biserica și Școala. Analize omiletice, catehetice și pastorale*, Editura Christiana, București, 2003, p. 296.

<sup>5</sup> Bucharest, Harisma Publishing House, 2002.

<sup>6</sup> Anastasia Publishing House, Bucharest, 2001, 325 p.

<sup>7</sup> Bucharest, Harisma Publishing House, 2004.

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*sau despre vistieria din pământul milei (Talita Kumi or the treasury in the land of mercy)* are just a few of the titles of the sermons included in this volume.

His homilies on the Pentecost, the Lord's Resurrection and the Lord's Nativity aim to awaken in the readers' hearts the wish to turn towards God's Kingdom:

“The Lord's Ascension to Heaven means filling his human nature more and more with the infinite godliness in the Holy Spirit, to sit at the side of the Father; Christ did not become more remote, on the contrary he grew increasingly close and united with us – there is a coincidence between the Godly throne and our intimate self, due also to the fact that the very Human Body of the Lord sits on the «godly throne». Once this ascent of the human nature in Christ to God's side is completed, the work, the expansion, the extension of our redemption and ascent to His Grace and Truth will follow. The Holy Spirit from which the Son was incarnate then descended – sent by the Father – so that the Son could work in the sons of man. This occurred fifty days after His Resurrection”<sup>8</sup>;

“The status of the human person, our calling, lies not just in what I am, in what I see or hear now, but in what I am called to become in likeness to the Archetype of Christ. «What the eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, these are the things which God has prepared for them that love him» (I Corinthians 2, 9). And the saying is true, that man is continuously changing and becoming. Our calling as a being endowed with spirit, engaged in a dialogue with the Infinity is meant to be fulfilled in God, in the Infinity. And the virtue that sustains this eternally constructive dialogue is faith. So the Apostle justly puts it: «Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard» (Hebrews 2, 1), basing our certainty on the Incarnation of the Son of God”<sup>9</sup>;

<sup>8</sup> Rev. prof. dr. Constantin Galeriu, “Pogorârea Duhului fără hotar”, in *Tâlcuiri la mari praznice de peste an. 22 de modele omiletice (The descent of the Boundless Spirit. Exegeses on the great feasts throughout the year. 22 homiletic models)*, Anastasia Publishing House, Bucharest, 2001, p. 103.

<sup>9</sup> “O Zi Una, Împărăteasă și Doamnă” (“Our Queen and Lady”), in *Tâlcuiri la mari praznice de peste an...*, p. 276.

“Now, on this day of God’s Nativity, the infant in the manger of Bethlehem – God, He that has existed since before the eternity – shows Himself to us, once again, as a Sign, and to all and everyone: to the shepherds, to the caretakers in various settlements, to the politicians, to the leaders of nations, to all, teaching and confirming that: «By the pureness of the heart», innocence shall save the world!”<sup>10</sup>.

We also note the similitude of the father’s sermons with “theological didactic stories” – the parables: they are concise, delivered right there in the church, together with the Christians, before their eyes and for their ears to hear. Characterized by rich dogmatic contents, his sermons stand out through their originality, the fruit of his associative thinking, so different from the conceptual thinking encountered in most preachers. In the *Afterword* of the volume dedicated to Father Galeriu, Sorin Dumitrescu accurately describes his style:

“The associative thinking does not simply produce new ideas, and the novelty of the expression is incompatible with what we refer today as «originality». However, we can say there is an associative inventiveness, an associative talent, an associative boldness, without referring, at any point, to the concept of «originality» (...) We can assert that the homiletic pattern of Father Galeriu is a two-part pattern, the first part having permanently attached as an «prelude», the original text of the parable, around which both the feast and the allegory that describe it are revolving”<sup>11</sup>.

In order to illustrate the homiletic style of Father Galeriu, it is better to allow the sermon to speak for itself. This is how the Father begins his sermon delivered on the occasion of the *Beheading of Saint John the Baptist*, entitled *John, the angel of the desert*:

“Saint John, the Forerunner and Baptizer of the Lord, ends his life’s journey in prison and martyrdom. He is the last of the prophets, the greatest, announcing Jesus Christ the Savior, not

<sup>10</sup> “Nevinovăția va salva lumea” (“Innocence shall save the world”), in *Tâlcuiri la mari praznice de peste an...*, p. 26.

<sup>11</sup> Sorin DUMITRESCU, “Postfață” (“Postface”) to Rev. prof. dr. Constantin GALERIU, *Tâlcuiri la mari praznice de peste an...*, (*Exegeses on the great feasts throughout the year*), pp. 317-318.

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from afar, but by baptizing Him the waters of the Jordan River, touching with his hand the forehead of the Lord. And, through this divine act, the Prophet sees the skies opening, the Holy Spirit descending over Jesus and he hears the voice of the Father: «This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased» (Matthew 3, 17). And he, standing in front of his Lord, testifies before those present then and before us, present here today: «Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world» (John 1, 29). Worthy indeed he became of bearing the name «friend of the Lamb». As a prophet, as friend of the Lamb, of the Groom, John also suffers for the sins of the world”<sup>12</sup>.

In the *body of the sermon*, after describing the historical and social context of the Savior’s arrival on earth, the Father continues:

“From this day on the paths (of the Savior and of John the Baptist) shall be separated. During the Savior’s trial, Pilates sends Jesus to Herod who, at the time, was in Jerusalem. The king asked him «he questioned with him in many words, as he hoped to see some miracle done by him; but he answered him nothing» (Lk 23, 8-9). God’s silence before sin is a sentence... John’s path from here on is also different. His body was buried by the martyrs next to that of the Prophet Elisha; however, it did not stay in the ground. His sacred remains travelled the globe from East to West, over the centuries, divided and placed under the altars of many churches, imparting holiness everywhere”<sup>13</sup>.

In the *Conclusion* of this speech the father utters the following words:

“What about His Person?! The Church honors him in sacred liturgies and icons. He is venerated, depicted either as the Lord’s baptizer or with angel wings, offering his head on a platter; and especially together with the Holy Virgin Mother of God, flanking the Groom Christ, in the icon entitled Deisis, above the iconostasis in any holy place of worship. In the prayer we say: *Rejoice, you enlightened servant of of Christ. Rejoice, you who enlightened the great martyrs. Rejoice, you who have sealed*

<sup>12</sup> Rev. prof. dr. Constantin GALERIU, “Ioan, îngerul pustiei” (“John, Angel of the Desert”), in *Tâlcuiri la mari praznice de peste an...(Exegeses on the great feasts throughout the year...)*, p. 164.

<sup>13</sup> *Tâlcuiri la mari praznice de peste an...*, pp. 166-167.

*the Testaments. Rejoice, Saint John, you honorable forerunner! Amen*<sup>14</sup>.

Due to his calling as a priest and his quality as a genuine father, his sermons raise the maximum attention amidst the audience to whom he dedicated himself in body and soul, the father preaching not only from the pulpit but also through his acts, through everything he did. His impressive erudition, his spiritualized behavior compelled his parishioners – whether prominent intellectuals or common people – to listen to his Sunday speeches, while the students whose perfect professor and exemplary guide he was, chose him as a role model to be followed in life.

Truly remarkable in original style and inventiveness evinced by each phrase, the sermons of Father Galeriu included in this volume were highly appreciated by the audience. Placing the Holy Scripture above any other source, as an undeniable authority in the matter, the Father put together an exceptional homiletic work in which no sermon is like the other, each word collocation is unique, each sequence of ideas in unexpected and all the more so elevating. For example, when speaking about the Holy Mother of God, the priest says:

“She is for us all at the same time eternally alive and worthy of veneration before the Holy Trinity in today’s age, and an anticipation and hope of the transfiguration of our body, a testimony and joy of the Resurrection, of the world’s renewal. For this reason we honor her by crying out: «Rejoice, you who are so full of grace, who, in your passing do not forsake us»<sup>15</sup>.

The skills of a good orator are completed by the diligent work done by the father in putting together his speeches and in the attention he paid to their linguistic accuracy.

We wish to mention, in particular, the fact that many speeches signed by Father Constantin Galeriu can be found also in the *church periodicals*, especially in the “Voice of the Church” journal. Thus, out of the 23 sermons published only one can be found in the journal of “The Metropolitan Bishopric of Oltenia”. In chronological order the sermons of interest are: *Gânduri pentru anul Nou*<sup>16</sup> (*Thoughts for the New Year*), *Meditație de Anul*

<sup>14</sup> *Tâlcuiri la mari praznice de peste an...*, p. 168.

<sup>15</sup> “Se înalță sicriul sfințeniei” (“The Reliquary of Holiness is Raised”), in *Tâlcuiri la mari praznice de peste an...*, p. 160.

<sup>16</sup> In *Glasul Bisericii*, year XXIII (1964), no. 1-2, pp. 16-19.

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*Nou (Meditation on New Year's Eve)*<sup>17</sup>, *La Duminica a XXXIII-a după Rusalii (On the 33<sup>rd</sup> Sunday following Pentecost)*<sup>18</sup>, *La Duminica a XXV-a după Rusalii (On the 25<sup>th</sup> Sunday following Pentecost)*<sup>19</sup>, *La Duminica a XVII-a după Rusalii (On the 17<sup>th</sup> Sunday following Pentecost)*<sup>20</sup>, *La Duminica fiului risipitor (On the Sunday of the Prodigal Son)*<sup>21</sup>, *La Duminica a XIX-a după Rusalii (On the 19<sup>th</sup> Sunday following Pentecost)*<sup>22</sup>, *La a doua zi de Crăciun (On the Second Day of Christmas)*<sup>23</sup>, *La a treia zi de Paști (On the third day of Easter)*<sup>24</sup>, *La Duminica a II-a după Paști (On the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday following Easter)*<sup>25</sup>, *La Duminica a XX-a după Rusalii (On the 20<sup>th</sup> Sunday following Pentecost)*<sup>26</sup>, *La Duminica a XXVIII-a după Rusalii (On the 28<sup>th</sup> Sunday following Pentecost)*<sup>27</sup>, *La Duminica a XXXI-a după Rusalii (On the 31<sup>st</sup> Sunday following Pentecost)*<sup>28</sup>, *La Duminica dinaintea Înălțării Sfintei Cruci (On the Sunday preceding the Exaltation of the Holy Cross)*<sup>29</sup>, *La Duminica a III-a din Postul Mare (On the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of the Great Lent)*<sup>30</sup>, *La Sfânta Treime (On the Holy Trinity)*<sup>31</sup>, *La 1 ianuarie 1980 (On January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1980)*<sup>32</sup>, *La a doua zi de Paști (On the Second Day of Easter)*<sup>33</sup>, *La Duminica a XXXIV-a după Rusalii (On the 34<sup>th</sup> Sunday following Pentecost)*<sup>34</sup>, *La Duminica a XVI-a după Rusalii (On the 16<sup>th</sup> Sunday following Pentecost)*<sup>35</sup>, *La Duminica vameșului și a fariseului (On the Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee)*<sup>36</sup>, *Dumnezeu S-a arătat*

<sup>17</sup> In *Glasul Bisericii*, year XXXI (1972), no. 1-2, pp. 30-32.

<sup>18</sup> In *Glasul Bisericii*, year XXXIII (1974), no. 1-2, pp. 15-17.

<sup>19</sup> In *Glasul Bisericii*, year XXXIII (1974), no. 11-12, pp. 1031-1034.

<sup>20</sup> In *Glasul Bisericii*, year XXXIV (1975), no. 1-2, pp. 32-35.

<sup>21</sup> In *Glasul Bisericii*, year XXXIV (1975), no. 3-4, pp. 228-232.

<sup>22</sup> In *Glasul Bisericii*, year XXXIV (1975), no. 9-10, pp. 893-897.

<sup>23</sup> In *Glasul Bisericii*, year XXXIV (1975), no. 11-12, pp. 1212-1215.

<sup>24</sup> In *Glasul Bisericii*, year XXXV (1976), no. 3-4, pp. 302-306.

<sup>25</sup> In *Glasul Bisericii*, year XXXVI (1977), no. 5-6, pp. 483-488.

<sup>26</sup> In *Glasul Bisericii*, year XXXV (1976), no. 9-12, pp. 847-852.

<sup>27</sup> In *Glasul Bisericii*, year XXXVI (1977), no. 10-12, pp. 830-834.

<sup>28</sup> In *Glasul Bisericii*, year XXXI (1978), no. 1-2, pp. 19-24.

<sup>29</sup> In *Glasul Bisericii*, year XXXI (1978), no. 9-10, pp. 988-992.

<sup>30</sup> In *Glasul Bisericii*, year XXXVIII (1979), no. 3-4, pp. 215-220.

<sup>31</sup> In *Glasul Bisericii*, year XXXIX (1980), no. 3-5, pp. 318-321.

<sup>32</sup> In *Glasul Bisericii*, year XXXIX (1980), no. 1-2, pp. 14-18.

<sup>33</sup> In *Glasul Bisericii*, year XXXIX (1980), no. 3-5, pp. 306-309.

<sup>34</sup> In *Mitropolia Olteniei*, year XXXVII (1985), no. 1-2, pp. 55-60.

<sup>35</sup> In *Glasul Bisericii*, year XLV (1986), no. 5, pp. 18-24.

<sup>36</sup> In *Glasul Bisericii*, year XLVI (1987), no. 1, pp. 33-37.

*în trup (God showed himself in the body)*<sup>37</sup>, and *La Duminica Pogorării Duhului Sfânt (On the Sunday of the Descent of the Holy Spirit)*<sup>38</sup>. As for the homiletic genre employed, 3 of these speeches are pareneses, 9 are exegetical homilies examining verse by verse and 11 are thematic sermons.

In the homilies mentioned above Father Galeriu approaches a wide range of topics and subjects predominantly inspired by the contents of the parables, by choosing subjects to be discussed from the perspective of the parable read during the Liturgy. Among the various topics presented within these speeches we mention the following on *Christian behavior*, on *love*, on *God's Incarnation*, *repentance*, *humbleness* and *prayer*, on *Jesus's name*, on *time*, the *Holy Cross*, as well as on the *Virgin Mary*, *Christian faith*, and *temptations*.

#### IV. Sources used

The ideas presented by Father Constantin Galeriu in his sermons are derived from on two main sources. If the first source is shared by almost all preachers (the Holy Scripture), the extensive quotations from the Holy Fathers' writings are almost always present in each of the father's sermons. Most of the times these sources are intended to be complementary and mutually explanatory, as demonstrates the following example:

“We often say: Oh, God, give me the wisdom of old age, that is, when I am young, let me think like an old man, let me envisage the end even from the beginning. Let me be, as the Apostle says, *children in malice but men in understanding* (I Corinthians 14, 20), or as our fathers explained this: let me always have the heart of a pure child and the mind of a perfect man”<sup>39</sup>.

In some sermons the patristic ideas are paraphrased:

“Saint Makarios the Great referred to the poor sinners damned in hell, according to a revelation, saying that they stand with back to back, without seeing each other's faces. Only when the

<sup>37</sup> In *Glusul Bisericii*, year XLVI (1987), no. 1, pp. 23-25.

<sup>38</sup> In *Glusul Bisericii*, year XLVII (1988), no. 9-10, pp. 465-469.

<sup>39</sup> Rev. prof. dr. Constantin GALERIU, “La Duminica fiului risipitor”, in *Glusul Bisericii*, year XXXIV (1975), no. 3-4, pp. 229.

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Church prays for these damned, can they see each other's face from the side ...<sup>40</sup>.

At other times the quotes are taken over textually: "The godly Maximus the Confessor asserts: God wants the mystery of His incarnation to work in each of us and in us all"<sup>41</sup>. Similarly, we can note the sermon where, among others, the meaning of humbleness is explained from the patristic point of view:

"Through it, through humbleness, as Saint Gregory Palamas so insightfully states, is annihilated, in a way that is overwhelmingly wonderful, the cause of the fall of the first man – pride. For the initiator of evil – says the theologian of grace – wanting no more to be lowly and below the other angels, and wanting to be like the Maker and Creator himself, thirsting for supremacy, he caused the sinful fall, endlessly great"<sup>42</sup>.

The use of patristic arguments in drawing attention to the significance of certain liturgical texts can be perceived from the following example, used by the preacher:

„Says the same godly father Maximus the Confessor: «Christ rekindles His Body as a candle of godly light», and we, on the Night of His Resurrection, upon the priest's call, light the candle from His Light and sing «now all has been filled with light, both heaven and earth and what is underneath»"<sup>43</sup>.

Occasionally quotes from literature are also used. When speaking about the richness of God's gifts, revealed through the parable of the talents, a verse of the great national poet Mihai Eminescu is included: "so much fire, so much gold, and so many holy things/ over the darkness of life/ you have outpoured Father"<sup>44</sup>. Referring to what it means to be

<sup>40</sup> Rev. prof. dr. Constantin GALERIU, "La Duminica a XIX-a după Rusalii" ("On the 19th Sunday following Pentecost"), in *Glusul Bisericii*, year XXXIV (1975), no. 9-10, p. 895.

<sup>41</sup> Rev. prof. dr. Constantin GALERIU, "La a doua zi de Crăciun" ("On the Second Day of Christmas"), in *Glusul Bisericii*, year XXXIV (1975), no. 11-12, p. 1215.

<sup>42</sup> Rev. prof. dr. Constantin GALERIU, "Dumnezeu S-a arătat în trup" ("God Showed Himself in Flesh"), in *Glusul Bisericii*, year XLVI (1987), no. 1, p. 24.

<sup>43</sup> Rev. prof. dr. Constantin GALERIU, "La a treia zi de Paști" ("On the Third Day of Easter"), in *Glusul Bisericii*, year XXXVI (1976), no. 3-4, p. 306.

<sup>44</sup> Rev. prof. dr. Constantin GALERIU, "La Duminica a XVI-a după Rusalii" ("On the 16th Sunday following Pentecost"), in *Glusul Bisericii*, year XLV (1986), no. 5, p. 20.

forsaken by God, the author resorts to a quote from foreign literature (Elie Wiesel): “to be abandoned by God is worse than being punished by Him”<sup>45</sup>. Among the patristic authors quoted in the sermons under discussion, particular attention is given to Saint Maximus the Confessor, being used predominantly in these homilies.

## V. The orientation of the sermons

Among Father Galeriu’s sermons published in the periodicals mentioned above, only four have a *motto*<sup>46</sup>. *The addressing line* is not present in the published version of these sermons. Some speeches open with the offer to provide etymological explanations. For example, in the *Sermon on the Second Day of Christmas*: “we are bathed in the bright light of the Lord’s Nativity. Our righteous faithful nation has named this celebration «Christmas». The word Christmas [Romanian: Crăciun] comes from Latin, *creatio*-creation...”<sup>47</sup>. In other sermons, the beginning is thoroughly prepared, as can be easily noticed: “Any encounter with someone special, someone out of the ordinary, someone mysterious is in itself a joy, a celebration, an event. But what does the encounter with the Resurrected Jesus mean? The Gospel tells us today precisely about such an encounter between the disciples and Jesus ...”<sup>48</sup>. The same can be noticed from the following example: “It is a Saturday, and the Lord is invited to dinner in the house of one of leading Pharisees. There are many guests. Jesus first heals a sick man then teaches ...”<sup>49</sup>. At other times, the beginning

<sup>45</sup> Rev. prof. dr. Constantin GALERIU, “Dumnezeu S-a arătat în trup”, (“God showed himself in Flesh”), in *Glasul Bisericii*, year XLVI (1987), no. 1, p. 25.

<sup>46</sup> Rev. prof. dr. Constantin GALERIU, “La a doua zi de Crăciun”, in *Glasul Bisericii*, year XXXIV (1975), no. 11-12, p. 1212; “La Duminica a XX-a după Rusalii”, in *Glasul Bisericii*, year XXXV (1976), no. 9-12, p. 847; “La Duminica a III-a din Postul Mare” (“On the 3rd Sunday of the Great Fast”), in *Glasul Bisericii*, year XXXVIII (1979), no. 3-4, p. 215; “La Sfânta Treime” (“On the Holy Trinity”), in *Glasul Bisericii*, year XXXIX (1980), no. 3-5, p. 318.

<sup>47</sup> Rev. prof. dr. Constantin GALERIU, “La a doua zi de Crăciun...” (“On the Second Day of Christmas”), p. 1212.

<sup>48</sup> Rev. prof. dr. Constantin GALERIU, “La Duminica a II-a după Paști” (“On the second Sunday following Easter”), in *Glasul Bisericii*, year XXXVI (1977), no. 5-6, p. 483.

<sup>49</sup> Rev. prof. dr. Constantin GALERIU, “Predica la Duminica a XXVIII-a după Rusalii” (“Sermon on the 28th Sunday following Pentecost”), in *Glasul Bisericii*, year XXXVI (1977), no. 10-12, p. 830.

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is abrupt: „that is how the Gospel begins today: a man had two sons ... Father and sons. When we add the word «mother» we have it all. The Lord does not mention the mother’s name so that we can understand that this is about the Celestial Father and His sons ...”<sup>50</sup>. Another example in which the beginning launches the theme directly is the following: “We confess in one voice with the Apostle: truly great is the mystery of the righteous faith, God showed himself in the Body. Something that is unique, just like the creation and even greater: the Son of God became man, He showed himself incarnate in a form like ours ...”<sup>51</sup>. At other times the beginning is elaborate: “Announcing the wonderful deeds of God, enlightened, and on this Second Day of Easter, he discovers and learns the Gospel: God has been seen by no one... and we reflect on such a blessed word entwined in spirit with the Apostle and we say: oh, deep wisdom, of love and care...”<sup>52</sup>.

In the sermon’s *body* that dwells on the chosen subjects and themes, Father Galeriu uses explanation, argumentation, rhetorical interrogation, story-telling, as main homiletic methods. When speaking about Resurrection, this is how this term is explained: “God’s Resurrection is also named *Pascha*, and the word *Pascha* means *passage*... the term designates the itinerary of the entire ascension and passage of the being from nothingness to existence and its incessant elevation, culminating with the wonderful event of the Resurrection”<sup>53</sup>. This is how the explanation and rhetorical interrogation are put to value in the exegetic sermon on the Sunday of the Prodigal Son:

“The youngest son in the Gospel says to his father: Father, give me my share of the fortune. Another way of seeing and answering; he asks for the share he is entitled to, in other words his gift and his share. And what shall he do with the dowry so taken? Now a destiny, a journey begins and it concerns us all. Every one of us will set off on this path with his *share* in life”<sup>54</sup>.

<sup>50</sup> Rev. prof. dr. Constantin GALERIU, “La Duminica Fiului Risipitor...” (“On the Sunday of the Prodigal Son”), p. 228.

<sup>51</sup> Rev. prof. dr. Constantin GALERIU, “Dumnezeu S-a arătat în trup...” (“God showed himself in Flesh”), p. 23.

<sup>52</sup> Rev. prof. dr. Constantin GALERIU, “La Sfânta Treime...” (“On the Holy Trinity”), p. 318.

<sup>53</sup> Rev. prof. dr. Constantin GALERIU, „La a doua zi de Paști” (“On the second day of Easter”) in *Glăsu Bisericii*, year XXXIX (1980), no. 3-5, p. 308.

<sup>54</sup> Rev. prof. dr. Constantin GALERIU, “La Duminica Fiului Risipitor” (“On the Sunday of the Squandering Son”), p. 228.

In order to emphasize the awakening of the prodigal son, the following digression is introduced:

“A priest was returning from a sick man one late evening; on his way he passed by a churchyard. He heard a human voice; he approached and clinging to the arms of a grave’s cross was a shadow, squatting and crying and saying: oh, father, father, why didn’t I listen to you... It was a young lady weeping at her father’s tomb for the outcome of her disobedience ... even here we are talking about an awakening. What we have lost by sin we can reclaim by repentance, in suffering...”<sup>55</sup>.

Referring to faith, it is depicted as: “the bridge and joining path between myself and my fellow men ... faith in God for us must also mean faith, trust in man, trust shared between myself and my wife, between myself and the one whom I am earning my living with ...”<sup>56</sup>. The difference between Resurrection and revival is emphasized as follows:

“Lazarus returns to life with the old bonds; and he shall resume, for the rest of his life, the itinerary of his former condition, which is also a mortal one. That is why a profound distinction must be made: Lazarus’ revival means return to life while the Lord’s resurrection is not a return, but a passage beyond death. It is Easter...”<sup>57</sup>.

The prayer, in the homiletic vision of Father Galeriu, represents “an ascension according not to place but to nature, to spirit. It is the elevation of the mind and of the heart, of the entire being towards God, He who eternally and infinitely surpasses us, elevates us and renews us with His Grace”<sup>58</sup>. Renouncing oneself is seen “not as a self-sacrifice for others, but the sacrifice of others for oneself ... renouncing oneself means redeeming oneself from self-adoration, egocentrism, this disease plaguing our existence, which is the source and the vehicle of all sins...”<sup>59</sup>.

<sup>55</sup> Rev. prof. dr. Constantin GALERIU, “La Duminica Fiului Risipitor” (“On the Sunday of the Squandering Son”), p. 230.

<sup>56</sup> Rev. prof. dr. Constantin GALERIU, “La Duminica a XVII-a după Rusalii” (“On the 17th Sunday Following Pentecost”), in *Glăsu Bisericii*, year XXXIV (1975), no. 1-2, p. 33.

<sup>57</sup> Rev. prof. dr. Constantin GALERIU, “La a treia zi de Paști” (“On the third day of Easter”), in *Glăsu Bisericii*, year XXXV (1976), no. 3-4, p. 303.

<sup>58</sup> Rev. prof. dr. Constantin GALERIU, “La Duminica vameșului și a fariseului” (“On the day of the Publican and Pharisee”), in *Glăsu Bisericii*, year XLVI (1987), no. 1, p. 33.

<sup>59</sup> Rev. prof. dr. Constantin GALERIU, “La Duminica a III-a din Postul Mare” (“On the 3rd Sunday of the Great Fast”), p. 216.

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Some sermons *conclude* with a call to meditation: “Oh, Christian, what gift do you wish to receive here in the Church, what path do you choose to follow in your prayer and in your life?”<sup>60</sup> Other sermons have a brief ending. For example, when speaking about the Holy Liturgy, as a prefiguration of God’s Kingdom, Father Galeriu concludes: “In the Church the Holy Liturgy in which we always take part is an anticipation, a smaller image, a preparation in faith, hope and love for this kingdom. Let us tread in its light! Amen”<sup>61</sup>. The same can be observed in the following example as well: “The Lord asks: Do you love Me? The disciple answers: Yes, Lord!” and then the Lord tells him: Tend to my sheep... so only by loving can you shepherd, advise and save others. Amen!”<sup>62</sup>. At other times, the end of the sermons entails the uttering of some prayers:

“Let us join our minds in an old prayer of the Church learned from the Holy Fathers ... on the day of the Lord’s Nativity, the priest amidst the Christians was praying and saying: Oh, Lord, Jesus Christ, You who have been born from the Virgin to save us, allow your holy people, standing before you, to receive the gift of being virgin and mother...”<sup>63</sup>.

In other sermons the ending culminates by verses that call to prayer: “in this joint effort we pray together with the psalmist: Oh, Lord, God of powers, look down from the heaven to this vine – our Homeland and Church – that Your Right has planted. Amen!”<sup>64</sup>.

## VI. Concluding remarks

Through a rich and impressive homiletic activity, Father Constantin Galeriu bequeathed a precious inheritance to the Church that he had so gracefully

<sup>60</sup> Rev. prof. dr. Constantin GALERIU, “La Duminica vameşului şi a fariseului” (“On the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee”), p. 37.

<sup>61</sup> Rev. prof. dr. Constantin GALERIU, “La Duminica a XXVIII-a după Rusalii” (“On the 28th Sunday following Pentecost”), p. 834.

<sup>62</sup> Rev. prof. dr. Constantin GALERIU, “La Duminica a XIX-a după Rusalii” (“On the 19th Sunday following Pentecost”), p. 897.

<sup>63</sup> Rev. prof. dr. Constantin GALERIU, “La a doua zi de Crăciun” (“On the second day of Christmas”), p. 1215.

<sup>64</sup> Rev. prof. dr. Constantin GALERIU, “La 1 ianuarie 1980”, in *Glăsurile Bisericii*, year XX-XIX (1980), no. 1-2, p. 18.

served. When reading these sermons, in terms of style and features, the first aspect we wish to highlight is the consistent use of patristic sources that are almost never omitted from his sermons. Another characteristic feature of his homiletic style is the original manner in which he debates the way Christians can overcome certain weaknesses that they are challenged by:

“When you see your body so squalid sometimes, so exhausted or affected by some disease and disgust and despair with its black thoughts overcome you, all of a sudden in your Christian soul a pure thought shines through the darkness and tells you: in such a body as yours the Lord himself was incarnate ...”<sup>65</sup>.

When referring to the love of the fellow man, the following reasoning is offered, delivered on a personal, original note: “If I, bearing his name, love Christ, then shall I not love those who love Christ? It is as simple as that”<sup>66</sup>. Similarly, the meaning of the Christian name is conveyed in an original manner, characteristic of Father Galeriu’s style: “the name signifies and bears with it the qualities, the strength and the grace with which we are called upon to serve God and our fellow men”<sup>67</sup>. A last but not least aspect characteristic of the sermons is represented by the manner in which digressions are inserted in the contents of the sermons:

“What is, in fact, sin, fire, if not the lack of a creative and renewing meaning? In other words it is the reversal of the creation’s intent according to the Creator’s Image, in the pursuit of pleasures as a purpose in itself – the fruitless acts of darkness. It is stagnation, freezing of the work of creation. It is mentioned somewhere that a sinful man finds himself in hell and asks: what time is it? Satan replies: Eternity”<sup>68</sup>.

The depth of thought, the diligent approach to themes and the richness of the scriptural texts and of the patristic texts, presented in a personal, distinctive manner, make the preaches of Father Constantin Galeriu a source of meaningful ideas, meant to decipher the mysteries of faith and make the believers experience and manifest the religious feeling.

<sup>65</sup> Rev. prof. dr. Constantin GALERIU, “Dumnezeu S-a arătat în trup” (“God Showed Himself in the Body”), p. 24.

<sup>66</sup> Rev. prof. dr. Constantin GALERIU, “La Duminica a XIX-a după Rusalii” (“On the 19th Sunday following Pentecost”), p. 896.

<sup>67</sup> Rev. prof. dr. Constantin GALERIU, “La 1 ianuarie 1980”, p. 14.

<sup>68</sup> Rev. prof. dr. Constantin GALERIU, “Meditație de Anul Nou” (“Meditation on the New Year”), in *Glăsu Bisericii*, year XXXI (1972), no. 1-2, p. 31.

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Towards the end of this brief evocation of Father Galeriu, we quote here a fragment from a very apt characterization belonging to Father Prof. Nicolae Necula:

“With his truly priestly face, dressed at all times in his vestments (we never saw him, not could picture him in everyday casual clothes), with his figure resembling a Tolstoy character, his large, well-tended and unmistakable beard, with his intelligent and unsettling expression, yet always warm and loving, his trimmed hair and clothes, his manly baritone voice, comparable to the thundering voice of prophets, the stylistic richness of his literary language reminding of the beauty of Saint John Chrysostom’s uttering, with his rare oratorical talent, his thorough training, anchored in the two inexhaustible sources of inspiration – the Holy Scripture and the Holy Fathers, Father Galeriu always was a man of beautiful words. So few others have been able to equal him. He easily attracted students and Christians, and his audience increased with each passing day. Words came to him so easily and naturally, as if they were the flowing water of a spring. He never sought out intricate and bombastic phrases, just to stand out, but rather everything came to him naturally. That is why his speech was always full of conviction and compelling and every time he spoke of God he would be so enthusiastic that it would transfigure him completely. His words were never superficial or dull, but ardent and dynamic”<sup>69</sup>.

The bright image of Father Galeriu shall remain imprinted in our consciousness, therefore, with some remarkable characteristics: *a priest with a true calling, a spiritual man, proficient in the Holy Scripture and the work of the Holy Fathers, a genuine theologian, a traditional Orthodox by nature, but also opened to lay culture, as much educated as he was modest, lenient towards others but strict on himself, ready to comfort the pains and nourish the hopes of others, a hard working servant on earth and now a fervent worshipper in the heaven, together with all those standing before the Holy Trinity.*

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<sup>69</sup> Rev. Prof. Nicolae NECULA, “Părintele profesor universitar dr. Constantin Galeriu a trecut la cele veșnice” (“Father Professor Constantin Galeriu has passed away”), in *Vestiitorul Ortodoxiei (Herald of Orthodoxy)*, year XV (2003), no. 318-319, p. 2.