

Father Petre Vintilescu – liturgical, academic and research activity

Abstract

An outstanding personality of the Romanian theological education, being an important part of the gallery of the remarkable professors of Theology that The Romanian Orthodox Church had during the 20th century, father professor Petre Vintilescu (1887-1974) inquired into the entire field of the Practical Theology with a lot of competence and scientific rigor, opening new directions of research with some aspects of his activity.

This work aims at a systematic and well documented approach of the great liturgist's life and liturgical, academic and research activity, in the light of testimonies of those who knew him, of his biographical data taken from the church or civil archives, of his major contribution in the field of the Practical Theology, of the presented bibliography and appendix. At the same time, the theme intends to bring closer to us the enlightened image of a remarkable personality of the Romanian Liturgical Theology, who illuminated with a lot of generosity the work of the Church, and who still continues to illuminate and to give inspiration as a guiding lighthouse.

The work of the Romanian Theologian has a great value through its size and profoundness, through its diversity of themes but also through its up-to-dateness element that it reveals. His work can't remain locked into volumes of dusted books forgotten into different libraries, because they still answer to the liturgical or pastoral problems, giving explanations and guidance for the life and mission of the Church.

The main characteristic of his studies is represented by his passion for investigating the historical dimension of the development of the cult. This is the reason why we can strongly say that he is the one who laid the scientific foundation of the Liturgical Theology as an object of study, by starting the historical analysis of the Christian form of worship, becoming one of the founders of this science throughout the Romanian theological space.

Having a Disciple's zeal, Father Petre Vintilescu undertook a genuine liturgical archaeology of The Saint Liturgy, for bringing to light the original significance of the different liturgical acts, but also their mystical and symbolical meanings. He really believed that without an explanation of the historical development of the cult, one can't reach to its understanding and right interpretation, because the results of the historical researchers about the cult have an effect on the liturgical exegesis. The chronological presentation of the history of the Christian cult also gives us information about the height of spirituality of the first Christian community,

it validates the continuity of the spiritual life and it also indicates the moment in which the worship reached its complete external development.

From the point of view of the scientific acrimony, the erudite professor of Liturgical Theology and his work outstand not only for the solidity and seriousness of their documentation, but also for a thorough analysis of the detail, very rare found to someone else. As a technic of persuasion, the author used a lot of scriptural and patristic arguments which strengthened the idea from which he started, aspect that made his studies a foundation stone for the subsequent theological work.

Father professor Petre Vintilescu's liturgical, academic and research work won his followers' admiration who regarded him as a devoted teacher, having a great talent, taking each action of his life with a lot of ardour and seriousness, raising the Liturgical Theology to a place of honour among the other theological objects of study. That is why he was worthily believed to be one of the greatest Orthodox liturgists, and many of his scientific pieces of work still remained unequalled.