

Ilarion V. Felea and "Calea Mântuirii" Journal. Elements of Homiletics in a Pastoral-Missionary Context

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Abstract: *In this study I presented the motivation, itinerary, and purpose of the Calea Mântuirii journal from the Eparchy of Arad, the editorial contribution of its editor, priest Ilarion Felea, the challenges, limits, and difficulties of editing and spreading such a newspaper in the Romanian interwar period. I also highlighted the most frequent homiletic themes analyzed by Father Felea in Calea Mântuirii, in correspondence with the themes of the Sunday Gospel and Apostle, but also with the various challenges of the neo-Protestant cults, which distorted the data of the Church's faith.*

Keywords: Ilarion Felea, *Calea Mântuirii* journal, homiletic themes, the faith of the Church, neo-Protestant groups

1. Data about the beginnings of *Calea Mântuirii* journal

Calea Mântuirii came into being through the care of the worthy Bishop Grigorie Comșa of Arad, a missionary bishop, who during the ten years of his archpriestship in Arad led a continuous struggle for the affirmation of the Church's faith in the tumultuous context of atheistic movements and the manifestation of neo-Protestant groups. The massive work in publications and ideas of Bishop Grigorie Comșa bears witness to this, its implications covering the entire ecclesiastical, cultural, pastoral, and missionary issues of the Romanian interwar period until 1935². For Bishop Grigorie Comșa, an

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² See Pr. Filip Albu, *Opera omiletică a Episcopului Grigorie Comșa al Aradului*, Editura Universității "Aurel Vlaicu", Arad, 2010, 408 p. Among the pastoral-missionary works of Bishop Grigorie Comșa we mention: *Datoriile preoțimii în fața problemelor sociale*, Tipografia Cărților Bisericești, București, 1925, 88 p.; *Pentru slujitorii Altarului. Meditații și îndemnuri*, Tiparul Tipografiei Diecezane, Caransebeș, 1925, 48 p.; *Misiuni pentru popor*, col. „Biblioteca Creștinului Ortodox”, nr. 18, Tiparul Tipografiei Diecezane, Arad, 1926, 24 p.; *Pastorația individuală și colectivă*, în „Biblioteca Preotului Ortodox”, nr. 1, Tiparul Tipografiei Diecezane,

essential component of the Church's pastoral and missionary work was the church press, a genuine means of propagating ideas, transmitting reactions and the Church's creed in the context of the various challenges of modernity. Since the second half of the 19th century, the diocese of Arad benefited from *Biserica și Școala* eparchial periodical, but Bishop Grigorie Comșa wanted a publication that was much more pastoral and missionary, which would be in immediate congruence with the weekly liturgical and homiletic program of the Church. Of course, *Calea Mântuirii* appeared in the context of developing and transmitting various neo-Protestant publications in parishes, with a distorted content of the Church's dogmas, practice, and spirituality. *Calea Mântuirii* it becomes a kind of counter-offensive of the Orthodox Christians in the parishes for maintaining the authentic data regarding the faith and life of the Church, in the collective and personal consciousness of the believers. As I said, the one who initiates it is Bishop Grigorie Comșa who entrusted this media mission to Father Ilarion V. Felea, who has been brought to Arad since 1930 as a priest with special pastoral and missionary qualities³.

Therefore, the first editor of the *Calea Mântuirii* publication is the father Ilarion V. Felea. The first issue was printed on February 13, 1935⁴. This number is printed following consultation with Bishop Grigorie Comșa. In *Opera vieții mele. Ziuar personal*, father Felea records the last meeting with Bishop Grigorie Comșa and the discussion regarding the continuation of issuing *Calea Mântuirii* newspaper. He asked him - May 17, 1935 - what to do with *Calea Mântuirii* "sheet", to which the bishop answered: "Give it a go, Father Felea - let's release at least 20 issues". A week later, on

Arad 1929, 50 p.; *În slujba Misionarismului Ortodox. Contribuții la problema misiunii interne a Bisericii prin intensifi carea predicii misionare, îndrumarea tineretului și organizarea carității creștine*, Tiparul Tipografiei Diecezane., Arad 1930, 313 p.; *Credința care lucrează. Chemări către laici și fețe bi sericești*, Tiparul Tipografiei Diecezane., Arad, 1931, 99 p.; *Glasul Pietrelor, Principii călăuzitoare pentru Ortodoxia activă*, Tipografia Eparhială „Cartea Românească”, Chișinău, 1931, 39 p.; *Tineretul României*, Tiparul Tipografiei Diecezane, Arad 1933, 346 p.

³ See „Parohii vacante”, *Biserica și Școala*, nr. 15 (1930), p. 12; „Instalare de preot”, *Biserica și Școala*, an, III(1930), nr. 37, p. 2; Arhiva Parohiei Ortodoxe Române Segă I, Arad, „Cronica Parohiei Ortodoxe Române Arad-Șega, întocmită de preotul Ilarion V. Felea”, f. 8; Arhiva Facultății de Teologie Ortodoxă Aarad, Pr. Ilarion V. Felea, *Opera vieții mele – ziuar personal, 1927-1937 (I)*, f. 121. A se vedea și Cristinel Ioja, „Preotul Ilarion V. Felea. Pastorație și misiune în Parohia Arad Șega”, *Studia Teheologica et Historica Aradensia*, an III (2021), nr. 3, p. 104-139; *Ilarion V. Felea (1903-1961). Preotul, Teologul, Mărturisitorul*, Editura Universității „Aurel Vlaicu”, Arad, 2022

⁴ Archive of the Faculty of Orthodox Theology Arad, Pr. Ilarion V. Felea, *Opera vieții mele – ziuar personal, 1927-1937(I)*, f. 185.

May 25, 1935, Bishop Grigorie Comșa passed to the eternal⁵. His death led to the interruption of *Calea Mântuirii* publication. However, its appearance remained a pastoral necessity, although not always realized even by some of those who claimed the pastorate and the mission in the parishes.

Thus, on September 3, 1937, Father Felea took part in the Cultural meeting of the Diocesan Council where it was decided *Calea Mântuirii* "sheet" should re-appear⁶. Bishop Andrei Magieru of Arad realizes the importance of the newspaper and in the context of a growing, mutual appreciation between him and Father Felea, *Calea Mântuirii* is brought back to the attention of the clergy and believers. For example, in the meeting of the "Andrei Șaguna" Clergy Association, Arad section, the need for the reappearance of the publication is also debated. The clergy is committed to spreading *Calea Mântuirii* newspaper among the people and appreciates the work of its editor, i.e. Father Ilarion Felea⁷. Of course, the appearance of *Calea Mântuirii* newspaper has a history of intermittents, due to the difficult historical context generated by the Second World War, but also due to the lack of involvement of some priests and even communities in the reception and constant pastoral-missionary commitment. To *Biserica și Școala*, *Calea Mântuirii* newspaper had an immediate impact on the Orthodox communities by structure, scope, and content. At least this was the motivation behind its editing and distribution. This was Father Felea's opinion as well, which was part of his wider horizon about journalism in the interwar period. "Publishing forms public opinion. - And public opinion is a force that can hardly be fought. Public opinion is public belief. This is how from any side we look at the problem, it appears equally important to us and this is why the church, both in its activity of propaganda and popularization of the religious-moral truths of Christianity, as well as in the fight against opposing ideologies, cannot exist without the printing press. This was her glory in the past and should be in the future as well"⁸. The print, the written word become one of the most formidable pastoral-missionary weapons of the priest, of the Church. "The written word is the best means to penetrate the soul and convince. Today's world believes more in what it sees than in what it hears. Most of the time a speech, a conference, a sermon, however beautiful it may be, has only a momentary, transient effect. The written document forms the strongest and most lasting convictions. The book, magazine, and newspaper, in a word, journalism is the invincible force of culture and modern civilization. It's no

⁵ Archive of the Faculty of Orthodox Theology Arad, Pr. Ilarion V. Felea, *Opera vieții mele – ziar personal, 1927-1937(I)*, f. 192-193.

⁶ Archive of the Faculty of Orthodox Theology Arad, Pr. Ilarion V. Felea, *Opera vieții mele – ziar personal 1937-1944 (II)*, f. 2

⁷ Archive of the Faculty of Orthodox Theology Arad, Pr. Ilarion V. Felea, *Opera vieții mele – ziar personal 1937-1944 (II)*, f. 3-4.

⁸ Pr. Ilarion V. Felea, „P.S. Nicolae Colan ca publicist”, *Revista Teologică*, an XXVI (1936), nr. 7-10, p. 281.

wonder that the world, accustomed to the power of the written word, recognized the press as the fourth power in the state"⁹. He sees the problem of printing, of the written word in immediate correspondence with publishing and canvassing, all as a reaction-response to the virulent incursions into parishes of neo-Protestant cults and not only, through publishing and printing.

Father Felea's reaction to a certain passivity does not take long to appear: "But what burden do the wardens carry? We know that priests also carry their burdens. If they sell wax candles, are they also prohibited from selling spiritual light? We see the apology of passivity in such words. What do you mean? If until now the parish bodies have not done colportage, should they not do it from now on either? But then who will do it? Priests cannot do it because they are not colporteurs. Should the sextons, singers, or other good people not do it because they have never done it before or because the eldest does not want it? Then what to do? We should despair with such reasonings. Sectarrians have a propagandist and a canvasser with pockets full of sheets, pamphlets, and magazines in every member, which they borrow or distribute freely wherever they find the opportunity, and we, with an organization that does honor our Church, sit back and have fun how the ground runs away from under our feet. We confess: canvassing can be postponed, but not avoided. Not canvassing and not publishing and spreading popular religious propaganda and documentation means going on foot or by carriage even today as in '48, while the sectarians use the most modern means of rapid movement weapons of spirituality"¹⁰.

I have offered some of Father Felea's publicist positions on printing, publications, and colportage as they identify with the vision of editing and transmitting *Calea Mântuirii* newspaper in parishes. Without a doubt, under the careful involvement of bishops Grigorie Comșa and Andrei Magieru, the main craftsman of the editing and transmission among the Orthodox people of the *Calea Mântuirii* newspaper remains father Ilarion Felea. Probably, after many insistences that also related to the difficulties of the context, within the Diocesan Assembly of May 7, 1942, it was decided to republish *Calea Mântuirii* sheet under the leadership of an editorial committee, among it being: Ilarion Felea, Florea Codreanu, Pentru Bogdan, Ioan Ungureanu – former general secretary of the Romanian Baptist Union, whom Bishop Andrei Magieru, together with Father Felea, brought back to Orthodoxy. *Calea Mântuirii* was intended to be printed

⁹ Pr. Ilarion V. Felea, „P.S. Nicolae Colan ca publicist”, p. 280

¹⁰ Pr. Ilarion V. Felea, *Teologie și Preoție*, Tipografia Diecezană Arad, 1939 p. 42-43. The 20 issues of *Calea Mântuirii* published in 1935, were distributed only in 30% of the parishes of the diocese, „the carelessness of the priests being the first obstacle” and „the biggest disappointment for its editor”. (p. 43-44).

from Pentecost when Sunday School will also begin¹¹, so the publication is strictly related to the pastoral-missionary work in the parishes. On July 22, 1943, Father Felea was called by Bishop Andrei Magieru to print *Calea Mântuirii* sheet as editor¹².

2. The homiletic dimension of the *Calea Mântuirii* publicist "program".

Calea Mântuirii is a pastoral-missionary program of the Eparchy of Arad, with an immediate impact among the believers in the parishes. The homily, the Sunday sermon, could not be missing from this program. The sermon was related to the Sunday Gospel and, in general, was thematic and exegetical, without completely missing the other homiletic genres. The Sunday homily published in *Calea Mântuirii* had at least two reasons and purposes: a) on the one hand, to inspire the priest in the preparation and delivery of the Sunday sermon and b) to offer the faithful an interpretation through simple words and ideas of the Gospel text that was read in during the Holy Liturgy. Therefore, *Calea Mântuirii* was useful to the whole community, priests, and believers. At the same time, returning to what has already been stated, the thematic or exegetical interpretation of the Gospel in the homiletic column of the *Calea Mântuirii* newspaper, had the purpose of strengthening the knowledge of the Church's faith to the Orthodox believers, to protect them from the distortions of the Gospel text, operated in the propaganda of neo-Protestant cults. Let's not forget that the discussions on some themes of faith, those specific to neo-Protestant contestations, were also the subject of concern among Orthodox believers. The challenges of the neo-Protestant denominations were increasingly intense, their publications often ended up in the hands of the Orthodox. However, *Calea Mântuirii* newspaper was a source of encouragement for any believer to verify their faith, to know it, and for possible apologetic answers.

In addition to the interpretation of the Gospel text, *Calea Mântuirii* also included the interpretation of the Sunday Apostle text for a good period, which offered Christians an integral perspective on the biblical texts. Over time, priests devoted to the word of God transmitted from the church pulpit and professors from the Theological Academy in Arad have taken care of these columns. Among them, we can mention Ilarion Felea, Petru Deheleanu, and Tudor Demian led by the bishops of Arad. The homiletic interpretation of the text of the Gospel or the apostle was not extensive, but very short sometimes, but always with a concrete message regarding the biblical, dogmatic, moral-spiritual, and practical teaching of the Church.

¹¹ Archive of the Faculty of Orthodox Theology Arad, Pr. Ilarion V. Felea, *Opera vieții mele – ziar personal 1937-1944(II)*, f. 160.

¹² Archive of the Faculty of Orthodox Theology Arad, Pr. Ilarion V. Felea, *Opera vieții mele – ziar personal 1937-1944 (II)*, f. 281. Between June 19 and October 8, 1944 he entrusts responsibility for *Calea Mântuirii* to Gheorghe Lițiu and for *Biserica și Școala* to priests Demian Tudor and Petru Bogdan (f. 294).

3. Ilarion Felea and the homiletic program of the *Calea Mântuirii* publication

Father Ilarion Felea makes extensive and notable contributions regarding the homiletic program presented in *Calea Mântuirii*. He was aware of its spiritual, pastoral-missionary benefits. That is why we find many homiletic contributions of Father Felea in *Calea Mântuirii*, on various topics, most of the time in correspondence with the text of the Gospel. We encounter biblical, dogmatic, pastoral, missionary, and apologetic themes, but there is no shortage of themes that combat the deviations of neo-Protestant cults. Therefore, in the following, I will reproduce some of the themes and their main ideas addressed in a homiletic note, chosen between the years 1944-1947 by Father Felea in *Calea Mântuirii*.

Father Felea develops in homiletic note themes such as: living the Christian life in Christ, a spiritual Christian life¹³, and how to spend Sunday with emphasis on spiritual issues¹⁴. He also reacts against war, which is opposed by love, and peace¹⁵. He is firmly against war, destruction, and enmity between people, and offers the perspective of the Gospel of love¹⁶. In contrast to a Kingdom generated by the ideologies of war, in fact of destruction, he proposes the biblical search for the Kingdom of God that begins in the heart¹⁷.

In Father Felea's homiletic program, the word of God is central and is likened to a *fire*. "Where the fire goes out, life goes out too. Where the fire of the Gospel no longer burns, the people sleep. Where there is no more spiritual warfare, there is the dominion of darkness and the peace of death; there is no more salvation there"¹⁸. The Word of God is identified with the cornerstone¹⁹. Another homiletic theme is the theme of the *Shepherd*²⁰. In correspondence with the theme of the Shepherd, he also interprets the

¹³ Pr. Ilarion V. Felea, "Trăirea în Hristos", *Calea Mântuirii*, an IV (1944), nr. 1, p. 1-2.

¹⁴ Pr. Ilarion V. Felea, "Cum să petrecem duminica", *Calea Mântuirii*, an IV(1944), nr. 2, p. 13-14, 13.

¹⁵ Pr. Ilarion V. Felea, „Învățătura iubirii”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an V (1945), nr. 2-3, p. 9-10

¹⁶ Pr. Ilarion V. Felea, „Graiul celor 50 de milioane”, *Calea Mântuirii*, , an V(1945), nr. 26, p. 206-207; „Pacea lui Dumnezeu”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an VI (1946), nr. 1, p. 4-5.

¹⁷ Pr. Ilarion V. Felea, „Doamne vie Împărăția Ta!”, *Calea Mântuirii*, , an III (1943), nr. 38, p. 301-302, 302.

¹⁸ Pr. Ilarion V. Felea, „Cuvântul lui Dumnezeu. Pilda despre foc”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an VI (1946), nr. 2, p. 9-10.

¹⁹ Pr. Ilarion V. Felea, „Cuvântul lui Dumnezeu. Pilda despre casa zidită pe stâncă”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an VI (1946), nr. 3, p. 17-18. „Cuvântul lui Dumnezeu” *Calea Mântuirii*, an IV (1944), nr. 18, p. 149-150; See also „Despre mântuire. Pilda despre piatra din capul unghiului”, *Calea Mântuirii* an VI (1946), nr. 4, p. 25-26.

²⁰ „Despre mântuire. Pilda despre oile fără păstor”, *Calea Mântuirii* an VI (1946), nr. 5, p. 33-34. See also „Despre mântuire. Pilda despre oaia cea rătăcită”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an VI (1946), nr. 6, p. 41-42.

parable of the Samaritan. The image of the Shepherd and the image of the Good Samaritan²¹.

In Father Felea's homiletic program, we find themes regarding the Church and the Holy Mysteries. The sanctification of human life is achieved in the Church through the Holy Mysteries²². The Baptism²³, the Eucharist²⁴, and the Mystery of Confession are presented from a dogmatic, spiritual, and cultic perspective²⁵. He speaks about the repentance of the Christian²⁶, then about the Mystery of Ordination²⁷, The Sacrament of

²¹ Pr. Ilarion V. Felea, „Pilda despre Samaritanul milostiv”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an VI (1946), nr. 7, p. 49-50. These parables centered on Christ can be homiletically correlated with the parables related to salvation. See also „Despre mântuire. Pilda despre luminătorul trupului”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an VI (1946), nr. 8, p. 57-58; „Despre mântuire. Pilda despre casa cea goală”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an VI (1946), nr. 9, p. 65-66.

²²Pr. Ilarion V. Felea, „Sfintele Taine”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an III (1943), nr. 44, p. 349-350. See also Pr. Ilarion V. Felea, „Darurile Sfintelor Taine”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an III (1943), nr. 45, p. 358-357; „Însemnătatea, folosul și roadele Sfintelor Taine”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an IV (1944), nr. 37, p. 197-198.

²³ Pr. Ilarion V. Felea, „Taina Sfântului Botez”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an III (1943), nr. 46, p. 365-366. See also Pr. Ilarion V. Felea, „Cerințele pentru Botez”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an III (1943), nr. 47, p. 373-374; „Rânduiala Botezului”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an III (1943), nr. 48, p. 381-382; „Felurile Botezului”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an III (1943), nr. 49, p. 389-390; „Botezul copiilor”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an III (1943), nr. 50, p. 397-398; „Și copiii se nasc cu păcat”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an III (1943), nr. 51, p. 405-406.

²⁴ Pr. Ilarion V. Felea, „Pâinea vieții veșnice”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an VI (1946), nr. 51, p. 405-406; „Taina Sfintei Cuminicături”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an IV (1944), nr. 13, p. 101-102; „Taina Sfintei Cuminicături”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an IV (1944), nr. 14, 109-110.

²⁵ Pr. Ilarion V. Felea, „Taina Pocăinței”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an IV (1944), nr. 7, p. 53-54; see also Pr. Ilarion V. Felea, „Așezarea Tainei Pocăinței”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an IV (1944), nr. 8, p. 61-62; „Spovedania”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an IV (1944), nr. 9, p. 69-70; „Rânduiala Spovedaniei”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an IV (1944), nr. 11, p. 85-86; „Canonul și dezlegarea”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an IV (1944), nr. 12, p. 94-93; „Smochinul neroditor”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an VII (1947), nr. 3, p. 9-10; „Oaia cea pierdută”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an VII (1947), nr. 4, p. 17-18; „Lacrimile de pocăință”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an VII (1947), nr. 6, p. 33-34; „Fiul cel pierdut”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an VII (1947), nr. 7, p. 41-42.

²⁶ Pr. Ilarion V. Felea, „Ușile Pocăinței”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an VII (1947), nr. 14, p. 97. See also Pr. Ilarion V. Felea, „Căința și hotărârea de îndreptare”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an IV (1944), nr. 10, p. 77-78.

²⁷ Pr. Ilarion V. Felea, „Taina Preoției”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an IV (1944), nr. 19, p. 156-157. See also Pr. Ilarion V. Felea, „Cine poate să fie preot”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an IV (1944), nr. 20, p. 161-162; „Sfințirea preoților”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an IV (1944), nr. 21, p. 169-170; „Treptele Preoției”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an IV (1944), nr. 22, p. 177-178.; „Puterea preotului”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an IV (1944), nr. 24, p. 193-194; „Ascultarea de preoții Bisericii”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an IV (1944), nr. 25, p. 201-202.

Marriage with an emphasis on pure family living²⁸, and Holy Unction²⁹. The Church is called our Mother³⁰. In Father Felea's vision, the Church has a continuity with the Old and New Testaments,³¹ and from an eschatological perspective³², The Church is infallible³³. In the Church we foretaste the Kingdom of God: "In the holy Church, we meet heaven on earth and even though we are on earth we feel like we are in heaven. In the prayers, services, chants, and sermons in the holy Church, we taste the graces of God, we feel something of the joys of heaven, of the eternal happiness of the saints"³⁴. The Church is seen and unseen, she includes heaven and earth, the living and the dead³⁵.

²⁸ Pr. Ilarion V. Felea, „Taina Cununiei”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an IV (1944), nr. 26, p. 209-210. See also Pr. Ilarion V. Felea, „Ce trebuie să știe cei ce se căsătoresc”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an IV (1944), nr. 27, p. 217-218; „Cine se poate căsători”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an IV (1944), nr. 28, p. 225-226; „Rânduiala logodnei”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an IV (1944), nr. 29, p. 233-234; „Rânduiala Cununiei”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an IV (1944), nr. 30, p. 241-242; „Căsătorii fericite și nefericite”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an IV (1944), nr. 31, p. 249-250; „Divorțul”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an IV (1944), nr. 32, p. 157-158; „Concubinajul”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an IV (1944), nr. 33, p. 165-166; „Familia creștină”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an IV (1944), nr. 34, p. 173-174. We observe practical themes, with a touch in human life.

²⁹ Pr. Ilarion V. Felea, „Taina Sfântului Maslu”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an IV (1944), nr. 35, p. 181-182. See also Pr. Ilarion V. Felea, „Rânduiala Sfântului Maslu”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an IV (1944), nr. 36, p. 189-190.

³⁰ Pr. Ilarion V. Felea, „Mama noastră, Biserica”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an IV (1944), nr. 23, p. 185-186.

³¹ Pr. Ilarion V. Felea, „Casa Domnului”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an VII (1947), nr. 48, p. 349-350.

³² Pr. Ilarion V. Felea, „Împărăția lui Dumnezeu”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an VII (1947), nr. 49, p. 357-358. See also Pr. Ilarion V. Felea, „Temelia Bisericii”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an VII (1947), nr. 50, p. 365-366.

³³ Pr. Ilarion V. Felea, „Spre țara făgăduinței”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an VI (1946), nr. 24, p. 189-190. See also Pr. Ilarion V. Felea, „Păstorul și staulul oilor”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an VI (1946), nr. 40, p. 317-318.

³⁴ Pr. Ilarion V. Felea, „Puii de sub aripi”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an VI (1946), nr. 41, p. 325-326; See also Pr. Ilarion V. Felea, „O Turmă și un Păstor”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an VI (1946), nr. 42, p. 333-334.

³⁵ Pr. Ilarion V. Felea, „Biserica”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an III (1943), nr. 39, p. 309-310. See about the attributes of the Church: Pr. Ilarion V. Felea, „Biserica creștină e una”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an III (1943), nr. 40, p. 317-318; „Biserica creștină e sfântă”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an III (1943), nr. 41, p. 325-326; „Biserica creștină e sobornicească”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an III (1943), nr. 42, p. 333-334; „Biserica creștină e apostolească”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an III (1943), nr. 43, p. 341-342.

Eschatological themes are part of the homiletic program of Father Felea. In 1943 he developed in a homiletic note the elements of Christian eschatology, with the Kingdom of God at the center³⁶.

In 1945 he published a series of eschatological reflections on the parables of Christ the Redeemer³⁷, these being preceded by those published in 1944³⁸. In 1947 he resumes eschatological themes in "Signs of the Second Coming"³⁹, "Watch and Be Ready"⁴⁰, "With girded loins and burning lamps"⁴¹, "With filled lamps"⁴², and "The Grain of wheat"⁴³.

³⁶ Pr. Ilarion V. Felea, „Ce este Împărăția lui Dumnezeu”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an III (1943), nr. 31, p. 245-246; See also Pr. Ilarion V. Felea, „Membrii Împărăției lui Dumnezeu”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an III (1943), nr. 32, p. 253-254; „Legile Împărăției lui Dumnezeu”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an III (1943), nr. 33, p. 261-262; „Slujitorii Împărăției lui Dumnezeu”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an III (1943), nr. 34, p. 269-270; „Armele Împărăției lui Dumnezeu”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an III (1943), nr. 35, p. 277-278. See „Lupta pentru Împărăției lui Dumnezeu”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an III (1943), nr. 36, p. 285-286)

³⁷ Pr. Ilarion V. Felea, „Împărăția lui Dumnezeu. Pilda despre ușa cea strâmtă și calea cea îngustă”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an V (1945), nr. 4, p. 21-22; „Împărăția lui Dumnezeu. Pilda despre cina cea mare”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an V (1945), nr. 5, p. 29-30; „Împărăția lui Dumnezeu. Pilda despre haina cea nouă și despre vinul cel nou”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an V (1945), nr. 6, p. 37-38; „Împărăția lui Dumnezeu. Pilda despre nunta fiului de împărat”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an V (1945), nr. 7, p. 45-46; „Împărăția lui Dumnezeu. Pilda despre neghină”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an V (1945), nr. 8, p. 53-54; „Împărăția lui Dumnezeu. Pilda despre năvod”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an V (1945), nr. 9, p. 61-62; „Împărăția lui Dumnezeu. Pilda despre lucrătorii viei”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an V (1945), nr. 10, p. 69-70; „Împărăția lui Dumnezeu. Pilda despre cei doi fii trimiși la vie”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an V (1945), nr. 11, p. 77-78; „Împărăția lui Dumnezeu. Pilda smochinului neroditor”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an V (1945), nr. 12, p. 85-86.

³⁸ Pr. Ilarion V. Felea, „Pildele Mântuitorului”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an IV (1944), nr. 43, p. 337-338; See also Pr. Ilarion V. Felea, „Împărăția lui Dumnezeu. Pildele despre comoara ascunsă și mărgăritarul prețios”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an IV (1944), nr. 44, p. 345-346; „Împărăția lui Dumnezeu. Pilda despre casa, cetatea și împărăția dezbinată”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an IV (1944), nr. 45, p. 353-354; „Împărăția lui Dumnezeu. Pilda Sămănătorului”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an IV (1944), nr. 46, p. 361-362; „Împărăția lui Dumnezeu. Pilda despre sămânță”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an IV (1944), nr. 47, p. 369-370; „Împărăția lui Dumnezeu. Pilda despre grăuntele de muștar”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an IV (1944), nr. 48, p. 377-378; „Împărăția lui Dumnezeu. Pilda despre aluat”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an IV (1944), nr. 49, p. 385-386; „Împărăția lui Dumnezeu. Pilda despre aluatul fariseilor”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an IV (1944), nr. 50, p. 393-394.

³⁹ Pr. Ilarion V. Felea, „Semnele venirii a doua”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an VII (1947), nr. 9, p. 57-58.

⁴⁰ Pr. Ilarion V. Felea, „Priveghiați și fiți gata”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an VII (1947), nr. 11, p. 73-74.

⁴¹ Pr. Ilarion V. Felea, „Cu mijloacele încinse și cu făcliile aprinse”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an VII (1947), nr. 12, p. 81-82.

An important component of the homiletic program of Father Felea from *Calea Mântuirii* is the attitude-response to the various distortions of the faith of the neo-Protestant cults. He writes against neo-Protestant groups that twist the Bible⁴⁴, showing how heresies are born, what is the method of their birth⁴⁵, through doubt, and challenging the authority of the Church⁴⁶. Father Felea shows that Christianity cannot be reduced only to Scripture, it also means Church, worship, creed, service, and Tradition. But even if it were only Scripture and it is against the heresies that twist it⁴⁷. Heretics stick only to the letter of the Bible - as sometimes the Jews to the letter of the Law - they do not need the sanctification of life through the Mysteries.⁴⁸

He emphasizes the relationship between Scripture and Tradition that the heretics violate through sola Scriptura: "Where do we have the entire teaching of the Savior and that of his holy Apostles? Where is written the teaching about the kingdom of God proclaimed "for forty days" after the resurrection (Acts 1, 3)? Where are the written explanations given on the road to Emmaus about what was written "in the law of Moses, in the prophets and in the psalms" about Jesus Christ (Luke 24, 44)? Where are the teachings preached to all nations from the foundation of the Church until the beginning of writing the books of the New Testament?"⁴⁹. The first written Christian Tradition is the New Testament⁵⁰. Tradition is the life of the Church⁵¹. To dispel any confusion, he distinguishes between divine Tradition and human traditions. "We recognize that there are also human traditions, but the Church has always distinguished between human traditions and divine Tradition. Ever since the books of the New Testament were written, there have been books written by heretics, according to human traditions or traditions

⁴² Pr. Ilarion V. Felea, „Cu candelile pline”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an VII (1947), nr. 13, p. 89.

⁴³ Pr. Ilarion V. Felea, „Grăuntele de grâu”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an VII (1947), nr. 19, p. 133-134.

⁴⁴ Pr. Ilarion V. Felea, „Greșelile ereticilor”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an VII (1947), nr. 27, p. 197-198.

⁴⁵ Pr. Ilarion V. Felea, „Cum se nasc eresurile”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an VII (1947), nr. 28, p. 207-208.

⁴⁶ Pr. Ilarion V. Felea, „Răspândirea eresurilor”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an VII (1947), nr. 29. p. 213-214

⁴⁷ Pr. Ilarion V. Felea, „Răspândirea eresurilor”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an VII (1947), nr. 29. p. 214

⁴⁸ Pr. Ilarion V. Felea, „Litera omoară, duhul face viu”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an VII (1947), nr. 30. p. 221-222

⁴⁹ Pr. Ilarion V. Felea, „Sfânta Scriptură și Sfânta Tradiție”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an VII (1947), nr. 31. p. 229-230, 230.

⁵⁰ Pr. Ilarion V. Felea, „Ce este Sfânta Tradiție?”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an VII (1947), nr. 32. p. 237-238, 237.

⁵¹ Pr. Ilarion V. Felea, „Ce este Sfânta Tradiție?”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an VII (1947), nr. 32. p. 238.

and given as if they were from the Apostles (...) Here it is one of the great merits of the Church who sifted the true books from the heretical ones and protected the Holy Tradition from human traditions"⁵². He also shows that "the Church does not admit any Tradition that is contrary to the Bible. What the Bible includes and teaches, Tradition also includes and clarifies"⁵³, and the role of Tradition in the interpretation of Scripture is central to the understanding of Scripture. "Keep the Traditions! means keep everything that the holy Church believes, keeps and teaches, all the treasure of light of Christianity, all that is heard, seen, learned and received (Phil. 4, 9) from the Apostles, saints and martyrs of the Church"⁵⁴.

Another theme he develops is that of the cross. He makes the difference between the cross and the idol⁵⁵. He also brings arguments about Sunday observance against Adventists⁵⁶. He comments on texts from Scripture that show that Jesus Christ abolished the Sabbath⁵⁷. Tradition before the Scripture establishes Sunday as a day of celebration. The apostles celebrate Sunday as the day on which the Lord rose, the Holy Spirit descended, it is the day on which the first apostolic communities celebrate the Eucharist⁵⁸.

These are the major homiletic themes that Father Ilarion Felea expresses for the understanding of the faithful people in the pages of *Calea Mântuirii* newspaper. They are in correspondence with the themes of the Gospel and the Sunday Apostle, but also with the various challenges of the world to which the theologian Ilarion Felea was looking for an answer from the Church. During the Romanian interwar period, *Calea Mântuirii* is a simple but concrete platform for the defense of the faith, for the

⁵² Pr. Ilarion V. Felea, „Predania omenească și Predania dumnezeiască”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an VII (1947), nr. 33, p. 245-246, 246.

⁵³ Pr. Ilarion V. Felea, „Predania omenească și Predania dumnezeiască”, p. 246. See also Pr. Ilarion V. Felea, „Evangheliștii și Sfânta Tradiție”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an VII (1947), nr. 34, p. 253-254.

⁵⁴ Pr. Ilarion V. Felea, „Țineți Predaniile!”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an VII (1947), nr. 37, p. 269-270, 270. See Pr. Ilarion V. Felea, „Iisus Hristos despre Sfânta Cruce”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an VII (1947), nr. 39, p. 285-286.

⁵⁵ Pr. Ilarion V. Felea, „Predania omenească și Predania dumnezeiască”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an VII (1947), nr. 33; „La umbra crucii”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an VII (1947), nr. 15, p. 105-106

⁵⁶ Pr. Ilarion V. Felea, „Legea sau harul?”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an VII (1947), nr. 42, p. 309-310. See also Pr. Ilarion V. Felea, „Sâmbăta este pentru Vechiul Testament”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an VII (1947), nr. 43, p. 317-318.

⁵⁷ Pr. Ilarion V. Felea, „Mântuitorul desființează sâmbăta”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an VII (1947), nr. 44, p. 325-326.

⁵⁸ Pr. Ilarion V. Felea, „Apostolii sărbătoresc Duminica”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an VII (1947), nr. 45-46, p. 333-334. See also Pr. Ilarion V. Felea, „Duminica este a creștinilor”, *Calea Mântuirii*, an VII (1947), nr. 47, p. 341-342.

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strengthening of the parish communities in the faith and the meanings of the Christian life, in a way of continuous formation of priests in the homiletic, pastoral and missionary demands of the Church.