

Typology in Sacred Scripture



Biblical Typology Seminar Outline

Session 1: Introduction to Typology With Examples

Session 2: Types and Prefiguring - Genesis, Baptism, Exodus, Moses, & More

Session 3: Typology of Isaac, Job, and in the Prophets

Session 4: Typology of Mary, Joseph, Jesus and Kings

Biblical Typology

Session 1

Introduction to Typology With Examples

Some Foundational Concepts



Before we begin our study of typology, it will be helpful to address some basic concepts related to the interpretation of sacred Scripture:

1. A brief overview of the basic “Rules of Interpretation” as given to us by the Church.
2. A discussion of the four “Senses of Scripture”, along with a few examples.

Rules of Interpretation-1

“Be especially attentive to the content and unity of the whole of Scripture.” [CCC, 112]



- ✝ Despite the wide variety of the many books that make up Sacred Scripture, the Bible possesses a distinct and very real unity because it is inspired by the Holy Spirit.
- ✝ Through Scripture, then, God reveals His plan to us, a plan in which Jesus Christ is the heart.

“The Bible’s ‘content and unity’ refers specifically to the literary sense of Scripture, the divine economy, the ‘plot’ that unifies all the individual books as well as the two Testaments.” [Scott Hahn, *Letter and Spirit*, p. 164]

Unity of Scripture



Pope John Paul II &
Hans Urs von Balthasar

✝ For von Balthasar, the failure of Israel to respond to the New Covenant is reflected in the Church's failure to recognize herself fully in the Old

“There is no greater unity in the world, according to God's plan, than that between the Old and New Covenant, except the unity of Jesus Christ Himself who embraces the unity of the covenants in His own unity” [Hans Urs von Balthasar].

Unity of Scripture



- † The Church needs more than the OT texts themselves; she needs the heart of Israel
- † The Church's praise of God has its roots in the minds and hearts of Jews at prayer, from those who, inspired by the Holy Spirit, first formed the words, so the Church can embrace them in its living tradition

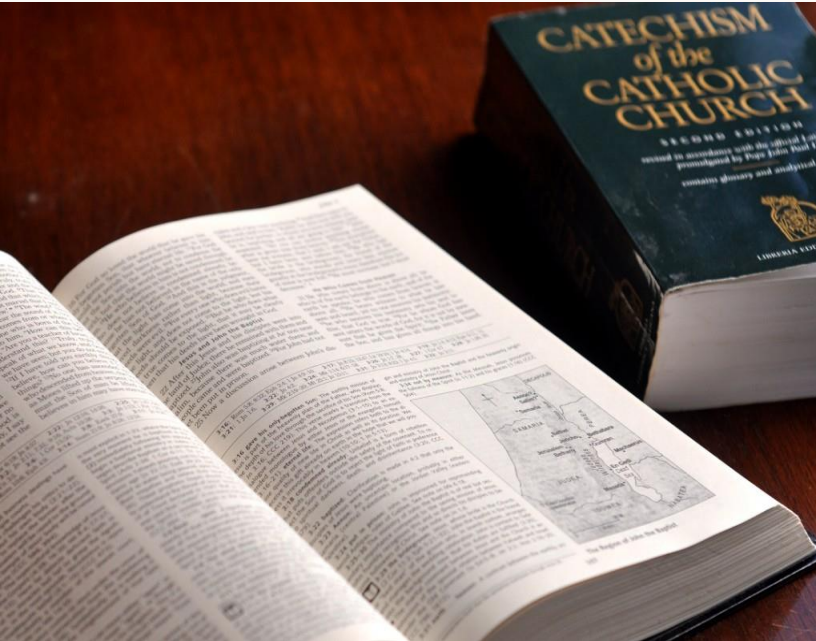
Rules of Interpretation-2



“Read the Scripture with the living Tradition of the whole Church.” [CCC 113]

- ✚ The Holy Spirit grants to the Church the spiritual interpretation of Sacred Scripture.
- ✚ In her Tradition the Church carries the living memorial of God's Word
- ✚ Sacred Scripture, then, is written not so much in Church documents and records, but is written in the Church's heart.

Rules of Interpretation-3



“Be attentive to the analogy of faith.” [CCC 114]

✚ By the “analogy of faith” the Church means the coherence of the truths of faith among themselves and within the whole plan of Revelation.

“To understand the word of God, then, we need to appreciate and experience the essential meaning and value of the liturgical action. A faith-filled understanding of sacred Scripture must always refer back to the liturgy...” - Pope Benedict XVI

The Senses of Scripture



Now let's examine the *Senses of Scripture* through which God's Word is revealed to us. From its earliest days Church Tradition has addressed two major senses of Scripture:

1. **Literal Sense**
2. **Spiritual Sense**, which is subdivided into the following three senses:
 - † **Allegorical Sense**
 - † **Moral Sense**
 - † **Anagogical Sense**

The Senses of Scripture

Literal

The meaning conveyed by the words of Scripture and discovered by exegesis, following the rules of sound interpretation: *"All other senses of Sacred Scripture are based on the literal."*

Allegorical

Acquiring a more profound understanding of events and people by recognizing their significance in Christ.

Moral

An understanding of events in Scripture that lead us to act justly. As St. Paul says, they were written "for our instruction."

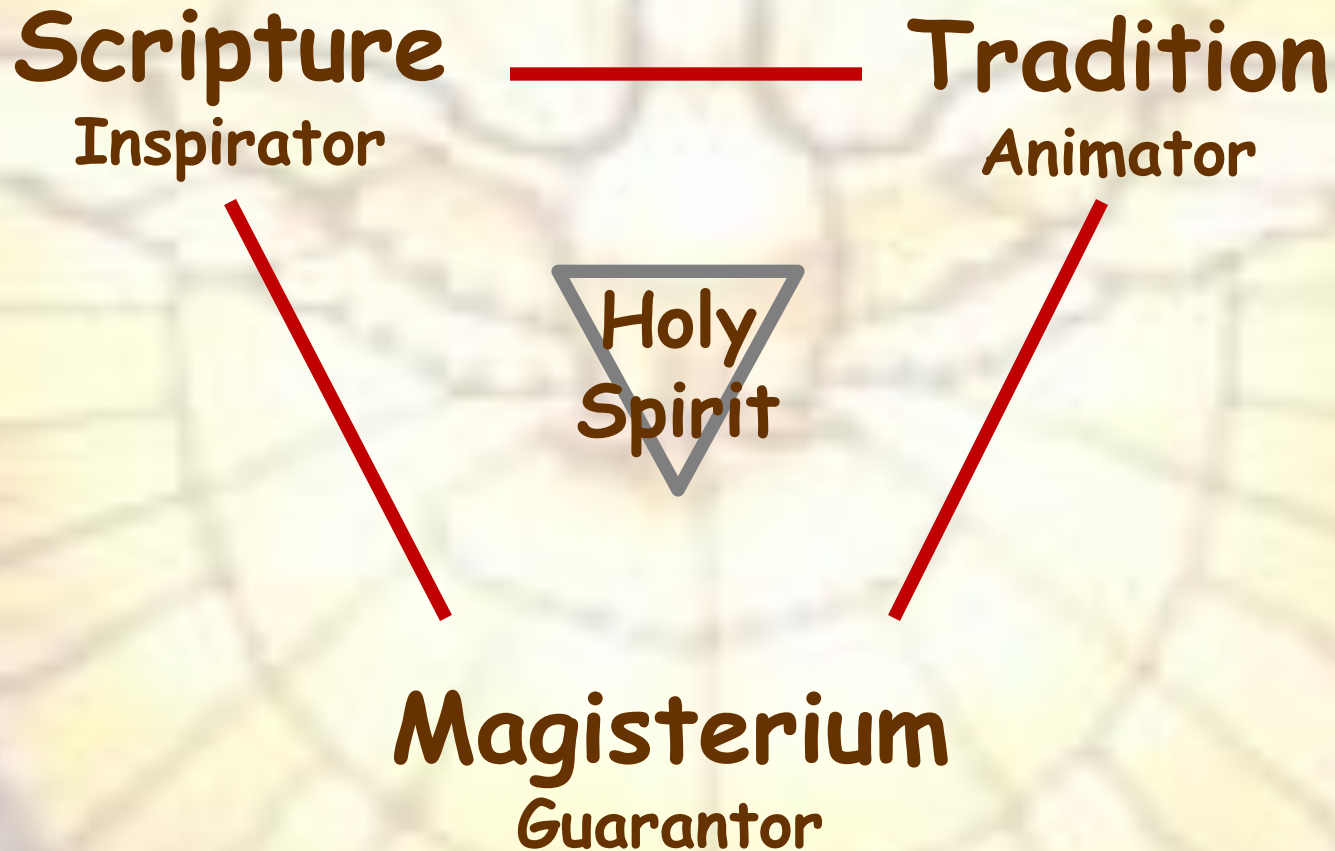
Anagogical

Understanding realities and events in terms of their eternal significance, leading us toward our true home. (Gr: anagoge, "climb or ascent")

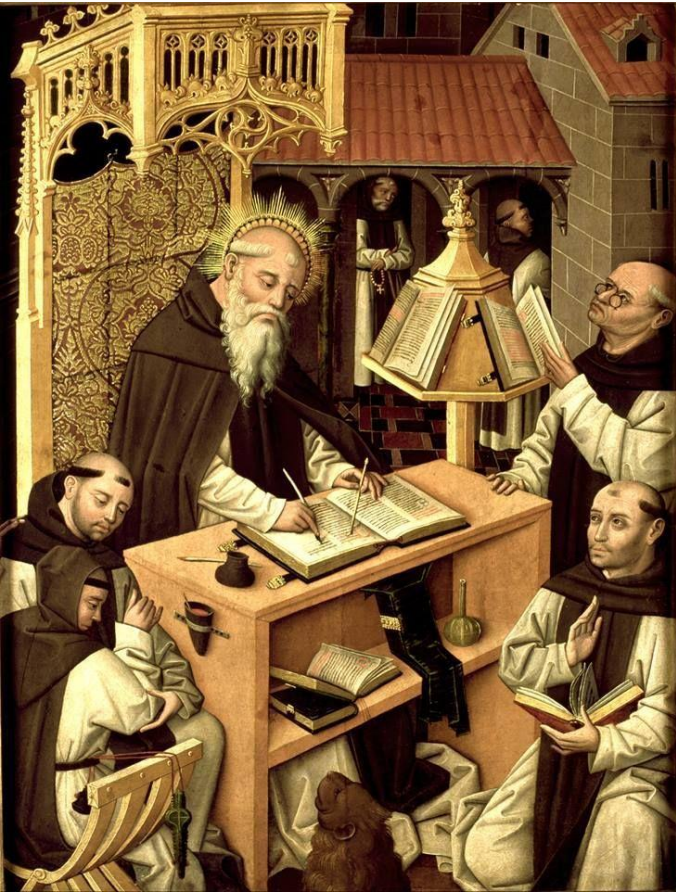
Spiritual

Catechism 116-119

All Through the Holy Spirit



The Senses of Scripture



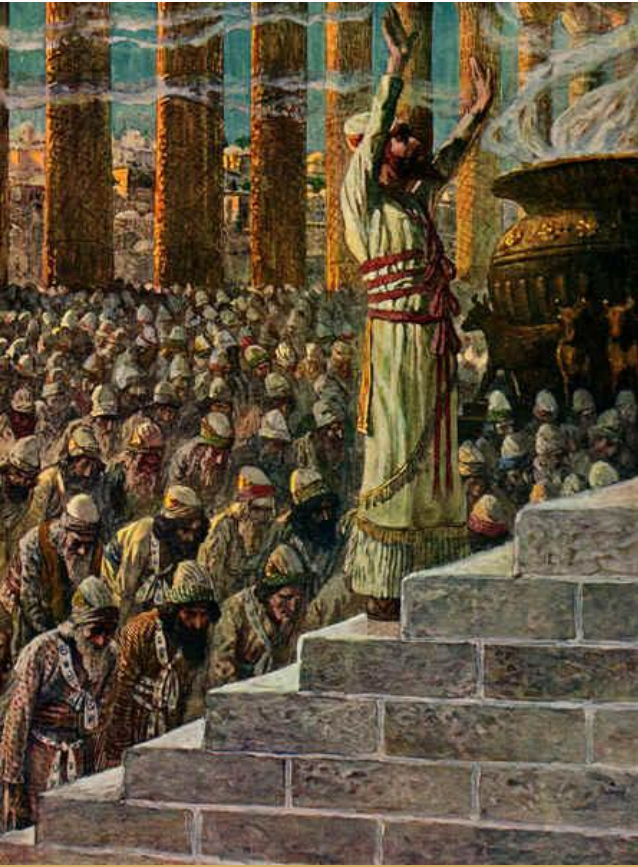
“The profound concordance of the four senses guarantees all its richness to the living reading of Scripture in the Church.” [CCC 115]

This medieval couplet nicely summarizes the meaning of each:

The Letter speaks of
deeds; Allegory to faith;
The Moral how to act;
Anagogy our destiny.

Let's examine one example to which we can apply all four senses: The Temple

Literal Sense: Temple



- † The Literal Sense provides the meaning conveyed by the words of Scripture - the event, person, or thing described in the text
- † As described in Scripture, the Temple was the actual building that once stood in Jerusalem. There the priests offered sacrifice, the people worshipped, and God dwelt in the Holy of Holies.

“The foundations of the LORD's house were laid in the month of Ziv in the fourth year, and it was finished, in all particulars, exactly according to plan, in the month of Bul, the eighth month, in the eleventh year. Thus Solomon built it in seven years” [1 Kgs 6:37-38]

Allegorical Sense: Temple



- † Allegorically, the Temple is a type of Jesus, who said he was the true temple, destroyed and raised up in three days
- † Just as the Jerusalem temple was the place of sacrifice for the Jews, so does Jesus body house the everlasting sacrifice on Calvary for all humanity.

"Jesus answered and said to them, "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up." The Jews said, "This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and you will raise it up in three days?" But he was speaking about the temple of his body " [Jn 2:19-21].

Moral Sense: Temple



- † The moral sense of the Temple is found in the Christian, whose body St. Paul calls a "Temple of the Holy Spirit"
- † Just as the Temple contained the awesome presence of God, so do the bodies of Christians hold the presence of the Holy Spirit by virtue of their Baptism.

"Do you not know that your body is a Temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been purchased at a price. Therefore, glorify God in your body" [1 Cor 6:19-20].

Anagogical Sense: Temple



- † In the anagogical sense, the Jerusalem temple finds its eschatological meaning in the heavenly sanctuary, where God will dwell among us in our eternal home, the New Jerusalem
- † John described this in the Book of Revelation

"I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God almighty and the Lamb. The city had no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gave it light, and its lamp was the Lamb" [Rev 21:22-23].

Moral Sense (Another Example)



- † The Gospels are filled with Jesus' teachings on how we are to act and live
- † Much of His teachings in the Sermon on the Mount can best be interpreted using the moral sense
- † When Jesus says, "turn the other cheek" [Mt 5:39], we understand it metaphorically, as transcending its narrow literal meaning and instructing us in the broader, deeper sense to avoid retaliation when evil is done to us

"I say to you, Do not resist one who is evil. But if any one strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also" [Mt 5:39].

Anagogical Sense (Example)



- ✚ The anagogical sense is most apparent in Jesus' parables relating to the Kingdom.
- ✚ Through these parables Jesus relates truths about the last things of death, judgment, hell and heaven.
- ✚ For example, Jesus describes the separation of the "sheep" and the "goats" and the judgment that follows [Mt 25:31-46].
- ✚ In the parable of the prodigal son [Lk 15:11-32] Jesus reveals the mystery of the Father's merciful and forgiving love in light of repentance.

What is "Typology"?



According to the Catechism:

"The Church, as early as apostolic times, and then constantly in her Tradition, has illuminated the unity of the divine plan in the two Testaments through typology, which discerns in God's works of the Old Covenant prefigurations of what he accomplished in the fullness of time in the person of his incarnate Son" [CCC 128].

Typology: Symbol



- † Like the prophets, early Christians discerned patterns in the history of salvation
- † God's touches were recognizable watermarks or trademarks
- † These foreshadowings were "types" [in Greek, τύπος] after the mark or image on an emperor's coin or on a wax seal

- † The mark, was not the ruler himself, but symbolized his authority, a sign pointing to something greater
- † In the Scriptures, a type is itself a historical reality, but it too represents (prefigures) something greater

Daniélou Explains Typology



Jean Daniélou, S. J. (1905-1974), a modern theologian who wrote extensively on typology offers the following:

"In the liturgical and catechetical traditions of the early Church the Law is a text charged with mysteries, *sacramenta*, which figuratively reveal to us the whole plan of the Gospel and the future Kingdom."

"All the outstanding persons and leading events of Scripture are both stages and rough outlines to prepare and prefigure the mystery which is one day to be fulfilled in Christ."

"A type is an event which offers likeness to something in the future, but yet does not really fulfill this something"

Jean Daniélou, among the founders of the *Nouvelle Théologie* & *ressourcement* movements in 20th-century Catholic theology.

Promise and Fulfillment



Adoration of the Lamb: Ghent Altarpiece

✚ This fundamental “promise-fulfillment” format can be better understood by means of “typological” exegesis

✚ The principal characteristic of Scripture is the revelation of greater and greater promises – and not just revelation of them but also their fulfillment.

✚ The structure and development of the Bible, then, is that of promise and fulfillment.

Typological Scripture Study



“Typology” originates with St. Paul himself, when he referred to Adam as a “type” of Christ [Rom 5:14].

- † In typology a person or event in the Old Testament foreshadows a greater person or event in the New Testament.
- † Reading the Bible through the lens of typology provides deeper and more spiritual insights into Scripture and its meaning for us today.
- † We will examine a wide range of “types” as we proceed with our study.

Typology



"The New Covenant is hidden in the Old and the Old Covenant is made manifest in the New" [St. Augustine].

- ✚ Human authors use words, symbolizing realities, that point to things greater than the words
- ✚ In salvation history, God uses temporal realities - kings and kingdoms, laws and events - to symbolize far greater realities, truths that are spiritual and eternal
- ✚ Typology, then, is the literal sense in which the New Covenant reads the Old Covenant

Typology: Pointing Forward



- ✝ In Sacred Scripture past events or people are figures of those to come, figures of something different, always of something greater.
- ✝ Typology is not nostalgia, not a return to what went before.
- ✝ Typology points to the future. As revealed in the Gospel, it signifies a *new* creation.

Typology: Signs of Truth



The Lord of History

- † God uses both word and event to signify things
- † The words of Scripture are signs of things that happened in history
- † But these very events of sacred history were fashioned by God as material signs
- † They are temporal events and realities that disclose eternal truths.

Typology: Key Divine Acts



- † For the biblical writers Creation, Exodus, and the establishment of the Kingdom are arguably the three most significant divine acts in history.
- † These events are the three mountain peaks of typology through the prophets and the New Testament.

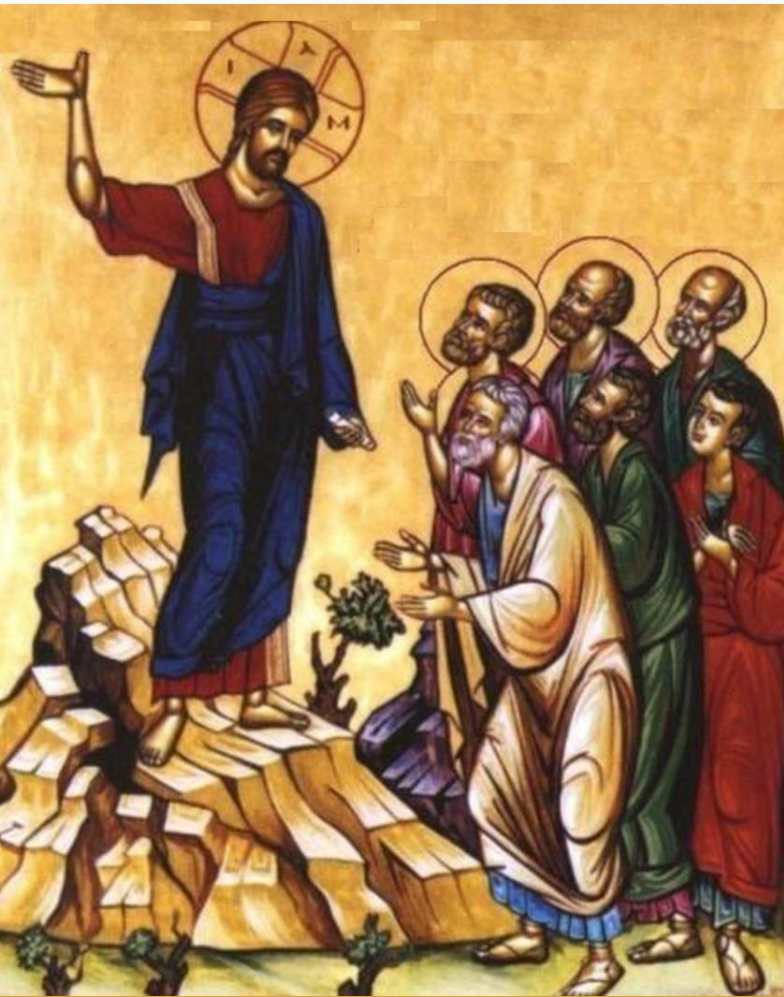
Typology of Christ



“I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brethren; and I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him” [Dt 18:18].

- † Christ appears often in the New Covenant as a new Adam, a new Moses, and the Son of David, thus recapitulating the three mountain peaks: Creation, Exodus, Kingdom
- † Among the Jews there was an expectation that “the prophet” foretold by Moses would soon be sent by God
- † In the Gospels we encounter the hope that Jesus is the fulfillment of God's promise through Moses

Typology: Christ As The Prophet



In John's Gospel we find many references to "the Prophet" – the one foretold by Moses:

- † "Are you the prophet? And he [John] answered 'No'" [Jn 1:21].
- † "Then why are you baptizing if you are neither the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the prophet" [Jn 1:25]?
- † "When the people saw the sign which he had done, they said, 'This is indeed the prophet who is to come into the world'" [Jn 6:14].
- † "When they heard these words, some of the people said, 'This is really the prophet" [Jn 7:40]

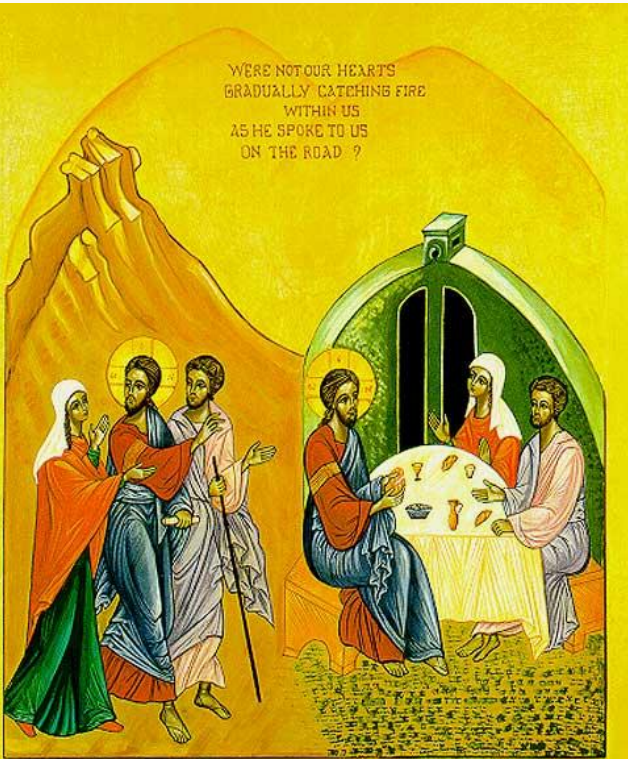
Typology by Jesus Himself



- † Jesus is our first teacher
- † He teaches us that the Old Testament is both a memory and a prophecy
- † In His teaching he used typology to reveal Himself in the Scriptures; for example, to the two disciples along the road to Emmaus

“...beginning with Moses and all the prophets, He interpreted to them what referred to Him in all the scriptures” [Lk 24:27].

Emmaus: Sign of the Church



- ✝ Not only does Jesus bring the Old Covenant to fulfillment in Himself, but through His revelation in the New Covenant – through His words and actions – He also gives the Church its sacramental life
- ✝ Emmaus becomes a “type” of the Church

“Every Eucharistic liturgy conforms to the pattern established at Emmaus: the opening of the Scriptures followed by the Breaking of the Bread, the Liturgy of the Word followed by the Liturgy of the Eucharist. The Mass, then, is the place par excellence of the Scriptures’ faithful reception” [Scott Hahn, *Letter and Spirit*, 29]

St. Hilary on Ecclesial Typology



“Christ begets the Church, cleanses it, sanctifies it, redeems it by true authentic prefigurations through the whole course of world history: in the sleep of Adam, in the flood of Noah, in the blessing of Melchizedek, and the justification of Abraham. Everything which Christ would fulfill had then been prefigured since the beginning of the world”
[*Tractatus Mysteriorum*, 1,1].

St. Hilary of Poitiers
310-367 A.D.

The Sleep of Adam



The Sleep of Adam referred to by St. Hilary is bound up with the birth of the Church. It is through this "sleep" that Eve comes into being.

In Ephesians Paul addresses the "great mystery" in which the union of man and woman is related to Christ and His Church. (See also Gen 2:24)

"'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.' This is a great mystery, and I mean in reference to Christ and the church..." [Eph 5:31-32]

Typology & Scriptural Unity



- † Typology depends upon the unity of all Sacred Scripture and God's salvific intent from all eternity.
- † At the Transfiguration we encounter this scriptural unity and the eternal existence of God's plan for salvation.
- † In the OT Moses must hide his face from the glory of God [Ex 33:18-23] and Elijah, too, speaks with God but hides his face [1 Kgs 19:12-13].

- † These OT events prefigure the Transfiguration: Moses and Elijah (Law & Prophet) present with the glorified Jesus.
- † At the Transfiguration Moses and Elijah talk with Christ [Lk 9:30-31], but the apostles hide their faces [Mt 17:6-7].

Inter-Biblical Typology

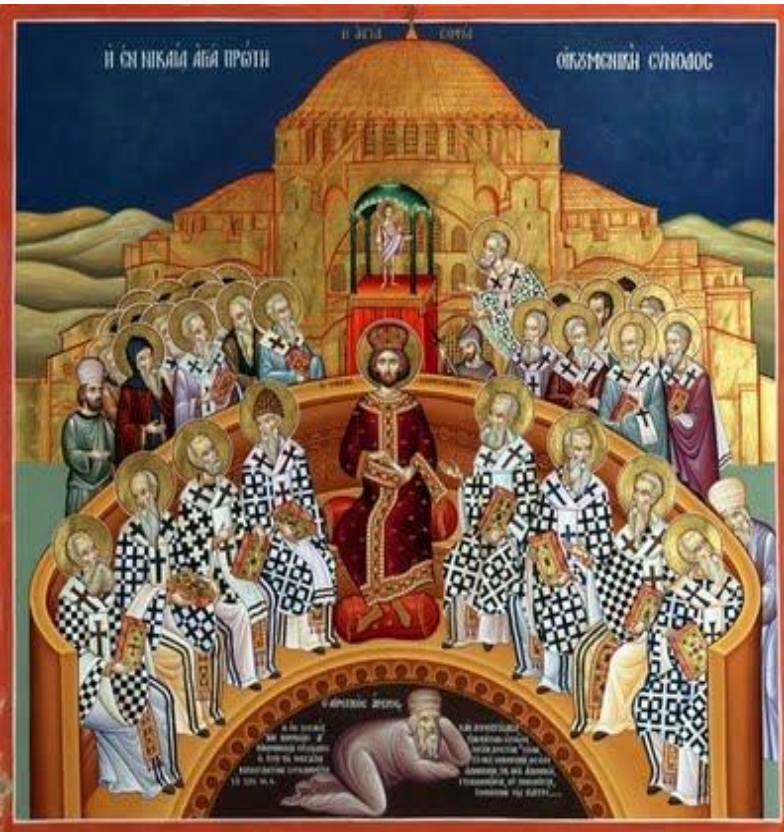


- † The Church takes special note of “inter-biblical typology” – the literal sense in which a subsequent Biblical author attributes meaning to an earlier Biblical text
- † Inter-biblical typology is apparent in the New Testament writer's interpretation of the Old Testament
- † In inter-biblical typology the New Testament itself shows how a particular Old Testament figure foreshadows a reality in the New

Inter-Biblical Typology

“The connection involved in typology is ordinarily based on the way in which Scripture describes the ancient reality...Consequently in such a case one can speak of a meaning that is truly Scriptural.” [Pontifical Biblical Commission, *Interpretation of the Bible in the Church*, II,B,2]

Extra-Biblical Typology



- ✝ This is a typology in which the connection is made not by a Biblical author but by an extra-biblical agent such as a Church Father, a Church Council or a magisterial pronouncement
- ✝ Extra-biblical typology involves the creative discernment of the theologian who perceives connections between the Old Testament, the New Testament, and the Christian faith

Extra-Biblical Typology

“Both extra-biblical and inter-biblical typology can contribute positively to one’s understanding of God’s revelation through Scripture. Both have been used in the Church throughout the centuries and both should continue to be employed in Catholic Scriptural interpretation” [Edward Sri].

Types and Antitypes



The “type”, then, is the prefiguring sign which points to or signifies something greater, the “antitype”.

For example, Jonah is seen as the type of Christ in that he emerged from the fish's belly after three days, in a sense rising from the dead. [See Jon 2:1 & Mt 12:40]

Jonah, Jesus and Typology



"But the LORD sent a great fish to swallow Jonah, and he remained in the belly of the fish three days and three nights. Jonah prayed to the LORD, his God, from the belly of the fish...Then the LORD commanded the fish to vomit Jonah upon dry land" [Jonah 2:1-2,11].

"But he [Jesus] answered them, 'An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign; but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh will arise at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold, something greater than Jonah here'" [Mt 12:39-41].

Something Greater...

In the Letter to the Hebrews, the author highlights the greatness of Jesus, the antitype of Moses, the type.

“Therefore, holy ‘brothers,’ sharing in a heavenly calling, reflect on Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession, who was faithful to the one who appointed him, just as Moses was ‘faithful in all his house.’ But he is worthy of more ‘glory’ than Moses, as the founder of a house has more ‘honor’ than the house itself. Every house is founded by someone, but the founder of all is God. Moses was ‘faithful in all his house’ as a ‘servant’ to testify to what would be spoken, but Christ was faithful as a son placed over his house” [Hebrews 3:1-5].

Typology and Prophecy



The Old Testament is both conservative and prophetic:

- † Conservative in that it recalls the great works of God in the past
- † But prophetic since these works are a foundation for faith in greater works to come.

"Hear this word that the Lord has spoken against you, O sons of Israel, against the whole family which I brought up out of the land of Egypt" [Am 3:1].

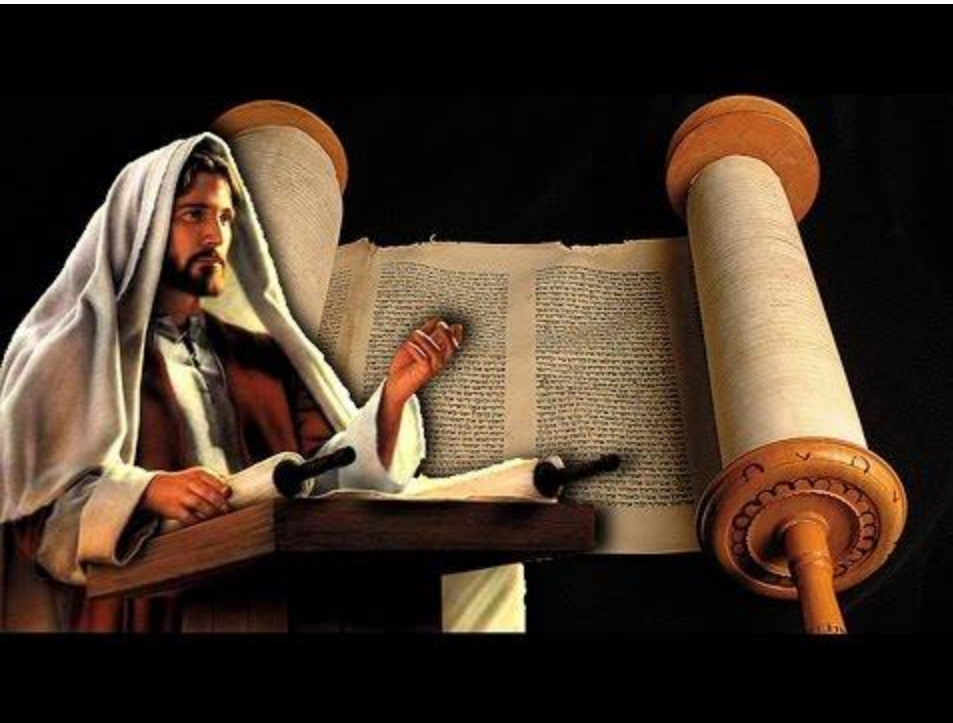
Typology and Prophecy



“And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit on all flesh; your sons and daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. Even upon menservants and maidservants in those days I will pour out my spirit” [Jl 2:28-29].

- † The prophets are typological when they interpret events in the Torah as foreshadowing events in both their time and the future.
- † Prophecy is the revelation of God's will, and may involve a "type" or may simply point to something without reference to a prefigurement or to a contemporary event or person

Typology: Fulfilled in Christ



As we will see, the OT gives us an eschatological typology, while the NT in the Gospel shows us how all is fulfilled in Christ. (See below.)

“...you have taken off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed, for knowledge, in the image of its creator [Col 3:9-10].

“...put on the new self, created in God's way in righteousness and holiness of truth [Eph 4:24].

Session 2



- † In our next session (Session Two) we will examine typology and prefiguring as manifested in *Genesis*, *Exodus*, and some of the prophets.
- † In doing so we will identify types relating to Baptism and the persons of both Adam and Moses as types of Jesus Christ.