Typology in Sacred Scripture
Session 1:  Introduction to Typology With Examples

Session 2:  Types and Prefiguring – Genesis, Adam, Water, Baptism, Exodus & More

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

Session 4:  Typology of Mary, Joseph, Jesus and Kings
In rabbinic teaching there’s an expectation of a return of the past (e.g., Elijah, the Tree of Life, the Davidic Kingdom) but this isn’t typology, since here the past and future are seen as essentially identical.

Typology isn't about a return to something past; it points to a new creation, something greater.

In a sense it offers us signs (clues) pointing to the fulfillment of God’s plan for us.
Typology in Eden (Gen 1-3)

† We encounter typology first in Paradise, where the past is recalled as a foundation for future hope.

I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; he shall strike at your head, and you shall strike at his heel [Genesis 3:15]

† As God had set man in Paradise so must Israel wait to be brought into a New Paradise.

† This is the very essence of typology in which past events are figures of greater events to come.
Typology in Eden (Gen 1-3)

Isaiah, in the shadow of prophecy, and St. Paul, in clarity of fulfillment, reveal the realization of God’s first promise:

Because of his anguish he shall see the light; because of his knowledge he shall be content; My servant, the just one, shall justify the many, their iniquity he shall bear [Isaiah 53:11].

“For just as through the disobedience of one person the many were made sinners, so through the obedience of one the many will be made righteous” [Romans 5:19].
Typology and Paradise

† The NT didn't need to devise a typology of Paradise and Adam. It was there already.

† The 1st Paradise was a type of that which God planned for His People. In the NT that New Paradise has come with Jesus.

† The word “Paradise” occurs once in the Gospel: Jesus speaks to the repentant thief...

“Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise” [Luke 23:43].

† This “Today” is the essence of Christianity – neither a return, nor an indeterminate future. Paradise is upon us. It is today, the Kingdom: a very real presence.
A Time of Fulfillment

† John preached: “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!” [Matthew 3:2]

† Jesus, too, began His ministry by proclaiming the fact of fulfillment - that the “Kingdom of God is at hand.”

“This is the time of fulfillment. The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel” [Mark 1:15]

† What is fulfilled? Nothing less than all that has gone before: the Revelation of the Old Covenant.
A Tale of Two Temptations


† One occurs in a Garden; the other in a wilderness

† Like Adam [Genesis 2:19-20], Jesus [Mark 1:13] is given mastery of the animals

† From one comes death; from the other is life

† One leads to ruin; the other to redemption

† One suggests the victory of evil (if only temporarily); the other that evil is forever defeated
A Tale of Two Temptations

† To Eve and Adam Satan disguised himself as a serpent; to Jesus he revealed himself openly

† Eve and Adam are snagged by the lust of the flesh and the eyes, the pride of life; Jesus rejects these temptations

† Jesus is later served by the angels; Adam barred by the angels

† By His victory over Satan Jesus restored the status which Adam had forfeited through his defeat
Christ, the New Adam

The Temptation of Christ becomes a sequel to Adam’s temptation. Adam, then, is a “type” of Jesus. In his Letter to the Romans Paul puts Jesus forward as the New Adam, the One to come.

“But death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who did not sin after the pattern of the trespass of Adam, who is the type of the one who was to come” [Romans 5:14].
Paul: Christ Brings Life

Adam's disobedience is opposed to the obedience of Jesus

Adam's disobedience destroyed God's original calling of humanity to immortality

Jesus, the second and New Adam will lead humanity into a New Paradise

"But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive" [1 Cor 15:20-22].
Adam, Flesh - Christ, Spirit

Adam, then, because of his disobedience, gives us our mortal, earthly life, but Jesus, the second Adam, is the source of our spiritual existence. Paul finds the type of the two Adams early in Genesis.

"...then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being" [Gen 2:7].

Paul contrasts the two Adams as the "flesh" and the "spirit" - the first from Adam, the second from Christ.
"If there is a physical body, there is also a spiritual body. Thus it is written, 'The first man Adam became a living being'; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. But it is not the spiritual which is first but the physical, and then the spiritual. The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. As was the man of dust, so are those who are of the dust; and as is the man of heaven, so are those who are of heaven. Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven" [1 Cor 15:44-49].
New Adam & Son of Man

† Christ, then, is revealed as the true Adam who comes to restore Paradise

† "Son of Man", a common title in the OT and Jewish Apocalyptic literature, is used by Jesus in a prophetic sense

“I saw coming with the clouds of heaven one like a son of man...He received dominion, splendor and kingship; all nations, peoples and tongues will serve him.” [Daniel 7:13-14]

“I am, and you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven” [Mark 14:62].
New Adam & Son of Man

† Jesus also uses the title “Son of Man” to express His unique nature — human and divine — something greater than Adam.

† It shows His solidarity with humanity; like Adam, as true man He needs rest (Matthew 8:20) and nourishment (Luke 7:34).

† But it also shows His divine prerogatives: to forgive sins (Mark 2:10); suspend the Sabbath (Mark 2:28); judge all (John 5:27; Matthew 25:31); provide eternal life in the Eucharist (John 6:53-54).
Christ’s Work Continued

The recapitulation of the first Adam, fully accomplished by Christ, is continued in each Christian. It begins in Baptism, as a new creation and Paradise.

“We were indeed buried with him through baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might live in newness of life. For if we have grown into union with him through a death like his, we shall also be united with him in the resurrection. We know that our old self was crucified with him, so that our sinful body might be done away with, that we might no longer be in slavery to sin” [Romans 6:4-6].
The Trinity and Water

† In the very first words of Sacred Scripture we find an interesting and most profound relationship

† God creates; He speaks His Word; His Spirit moves over the waters [Genesis 1:1-3]

† From the beginning, then, there is this connection between the Trinity (God, Word, Spirit) and water
The Word, Creation & Life

“In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the Spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters. And God said: ‘Let there be light’, and there was light” [Genesis 1:1-3].

† We see this connection emphasized by John in the Prologue of his Gospel

† Guided by the Holy Spirit, John models his opening verses on the opening verses of Genesis

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came to be through him, and without him nothing came to be. What came to be through him was life, and this life was the light of the human race; the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it” [John 1:1-5].
“Once the elements of the world were set in order, when it was to be given inhabitants, it was the primordial waters which were commanded to produce living creatures. The primordial waters brought forth life, so that no one should be astonished that in Baptism the waters are able to give life” [Tertullian, *On Baptism*]
A New Creation

† In that first creation, described in Genesis, we see the Holy Spirit sanctifying water, making it holy

† This first creation also foreshadows a new creation in Jesus Christ

† The Father, then, does not abolish the Old but gives it definitive fulfillment in the Son, and through the Spirit

† In both the first and the new creation water plays a key role: It is life-giving

“Since the beginning of the world, water, so humble and wonderful a creature, has been the source of life and fruitfulness” [CCC 1218].
The Prophets: Living Water

Old Testament prophets point to the living water of Jesus, prefiguring His teaching, particularly as revealed in John’s Gospel...

“I will pour out water upon the thirsty ground, living streams upon the dry land; I will pour out my spirit upon your offspring, my blessing upon your descendants” [Isaiah 44:3].

“Two evils my people have done: they have forsaken me, the source of living waters” [Jeremiah 2:13].

“On that day a fountain will be opened for the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to purify from sin and uncleanness” [Zechariah 13:1].
Jesus: Life-Giving Water

✝ In his dialog with Nicodemus, Jesus proclaims the role of Baptism (water and Spirit) in salvation and new creation.

“Amen, amen, I say to you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit” [John 3:5].

✝ This birth “of water and Spirit” is a direct reference to Baptism, a fact reinforced by the verses immediately following in which John and Jesus baptize.
Jesus: Life-Giving Water

† In Genesis the Spirit hovers over the waters of Creation [Gen 1:2]

“...and the Spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters.” [Genesis 1:2.]

† At Jesus’ Baptism the Spirit hovers over the waters of Baptism [Matthew 3:13-17]

“After Jesus was baptized, he came up from the water and behold, the heavens were opened for him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming upon him.” [Matthew 3:16].
Jesus: Life-Giving Water

† Jesus teaches of “living water” as he speaks with the Samaritan woman

“...whoever drinks the water I shall give will never thirst; the water I shall give will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life” [John 4:14].

† The rabbis sometimes referred to the Law as “living water” and so Jesus, as the fulfillment of the Law, alludes here both to His revelation and to His gift of the Spirit - a gift at Baptism

† The early Church also taught that there are definite Baptismal overtones in this teaching by Jesus at the well of Jacob
Waters of the Flood

“God remembered Noah and all the animals, wild and tame, that were with him in the ark. So God made a wind sweep over the earth, and the waters began to subside. The fountains of the abyss and the floodgates of the sky were closed, and the downpour from the sky was held back. Gradually the waters receded from the earth. At the end of one hundred and fifty days, the waters had so diminished that, in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat” [Genesis 8:1-4].
“Put to death in the flesh, he was brought to life in the spirit. In it he also went to preach to the spirits in prison, who had once been disobedient while God patiently waited in the days of Noah during the building of the ark, in which a few persons, eight in all, were saved through water. This prefigured baptism, which saves you now” [1 Peter 3:18-21].
“The story of the flood is a mystery and the details are types of the future. The ark is the Church, Noah is Christ, the dove the Holy Spirit, the olive branch the divine philanthropy. As the ark in the midst of the waters protected those inside it, so does the Church protect those who have strayed. But while the ark took in brute animals and kept them as such, the Church takes a man who is without logos, and she does not merely keep him, she transforms him” [St. John Chrysostom].
The Church and Baptism

† For St. Peter, then, the flood is a “type” signifying something greater: sacramental Baptism

† St. Augustine describes the survivors – Noah and his family – as a type of the Church, and the wood of the ark as a type of the Cross

And is not the Church prefigured by Noah and his sons? They escape the flood, with wood (which symbolizes the Cross) carrying them” [Augustine, Tractates on the Gospel of John].
Types in the Flood

The Early Fathers, in the story of the flood (Genesis 5-9), find many types of things to come.

+ Noah the just, prefigures Christ
+ The ark is the Church - Noah and his family are saved; salvation through the Church
+ Water brings death and life; destruction of something old and re-creation something new: Baptism
+ The dove and the wind: Presence of the Holy Spirit
+ The olive branch as a sign of God’s gift of peace
+ Eight: the new day of the Lord’s resurrection
+ Ark coming to rest: Church resting on the Lord’s day
Infant Moses in the Nile

† As a newborn infant, Moses (and an entire nation) is saved by his “baptism” on the water of the Nile [Ex 2:3-10]

† Pharaoh intended the Nile as a means of death, yet for Moses it is the means of life

† This event prefigures the saving waters of Baptism

† It is also seen by the Church as prefiguring infant baptism [See also Acts 2:38-39; 16:33; 1 Cor 1:16; 12:13]
In the Book of Exodus we find the story of God’s People coming up out of the waters of the Red Sea [Exodus 14:29-31].

The Church has long taught that the crossing of the Red Sea is a type of Baptism.

Just as God’s People were freed from the slavery of Egypt, so are we freed from the slavery of sin through Baptism.
Baptized in Cloud and Sea

✝ Just as God’s People were freed from the slavery of Egypt, so are we freed from the slavery of sin through Baptism

✝ As God, through Moses and Joshua, leads his flock to the Promised Land, so Jesus and the Holy Spirit lead us to salvation through Baptism

“...our ancestors were all under the cloud and all passed through the sea, and all of them were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea” [1 Corinthians 10:1-2].
The Red Sea and Baptism

Virtually all the Church Fathers, by accepting the typology of St. Paul, agree that the crossing of the Red Sea is a type of sacramental Baptism – a consistent teaching of the Church.

“But the Israelites had walked on dry land through the midst of the sea, with the water as a wall to their right and to their left. Thus the LORD saved Israel on that day from the power of Egypt.

When Israel saw the Egyptians lying dead on the seashore and saw the great power that the LORD had shown against Egypt, the people feared the LORD. They believed in the LORD and in Moses his servant” [Exodus 14:29-31].
Didymus the Blind (313-398)

“The Red Sea receives the Israelites who did not doubt and delivered them from the perils of the Egyptians who pursued them: and so the whole history of the Flight from Egypt is a type of the salvation obtained through Baptism” [Didymus the Blind, De Trinitate].

For Didymus, Egypt represents the world; the people are those who are now enlightened (baptized); the waters, the means of salvation, represent Baptism; Pharaoh and his soldiers types of the devil and his legions.
“That which the Jews consider to be the crossing of the Sea, St. Paul calls Baptism. That which they believed to be a cloud proves to be the Holy Spirit” [Origen].

“...the typology of Baptism... is not the opinion of any particular school, but is part of the official catechesis given by the magisterium of the Church herself” – Jean Daniélou

The Exodus saved them from slavery; they were saved through water; and the cloud (a sign of the Holy Spirit) demonstrated God’s presence with them as they wandered through the desert.
Healing Baptismal Waters

† Naaman commanded the Syrian army, but was also a leper, which in the Old Covenant was often seen as a sign of sin [2 Kgs 5:1-14]

† The prophet, Elisha, has him wash 7 times in the waters of the Jordan, the same waters in which John would baptize Jesus

† As Jesus is baptized in the Jordan [Mt 3:13-17], the Trinity is manifested, confirming Jesus words of commission [Mt 28:19]
Salvation for All

Jesus refers to the healing of Naaman when preaching in the synagogue of His home town of Nazareth [Lk 4:27]

Speaking of this (and of Elijah saving the widow of Sidon) Jesus shows how the OT prefigures God’s saving grace for all; He also refers to the Jews’ rejection of God’s Word

For these comments they try to kill Him

Like Naaman, we too are healed by the saving waters of Baptism, making us new creations in Christ
St. Irenaeus, among the early church fathers, described how Christian baptism is prefigured in the story of Naaman the Syrian [2 Kings 5:1-14]

“And Naaman dipped himself...seven times in the Jordan'. It was not for nothing that Naaman of old, when suffering from leprosy, was purified upon his being baptized, but this served as an indication to us. For as we are lepers in sin, we are made clean, by means of the sacred water and the invocation of the Lord, from our old transgressions, being spiritually regenerated as newborn babes, even as the Lord has declared: 'Except a man be born again through water and the Spirit, he shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven’” [St. Irenaeus, Fragment 34, A.D. 190]
Jesus' Baptism as Type

“...are you unaware that we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were indeed buried with him through baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might live in newness of life. For if we have grown into union with him through a death like his, we shall also be united with him in the resurrection” [Romans 6:3-5]

† Christ's baptism [Mt. 3:16-17], prefigured the Paschal Mystery and our own baptism that now saves us [1 Pt 3:21]
† Jesus was baptized to sanctify the waters, to impart to them His power and grace
† The Trinity, present at Jesus' baptism, is present at ours
† The Father says to each of us: “This is my beloved child in whom I am well pleased” and we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.
After their coming out of the Red Sea, God’s People, led by Moses, wandered in the desert for 40 years.

During their wanderings in the wilderness, they managed to worship a false idol, put God to the test, and demanded bread to eat and water to drink.
Jesus in the Desert

Jesus rises from the Jordan, and enters the desert for 40 days where He passes the tests the Israelites failed under Moses:

+ Refused to worship a false god (Satan)
+ Refused to put God to the test by throwing Himself off of a tower
+ Refused to command the stones to be turned into bread

Jesus’ words [Mt 4:4] foreshadow the Mass: Word and Eucharist

“Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every Word that proceeds from the mouth of God” [Mt 4:4].
“Then Moses led Israel forward from the Red Sea, and they marched out to the wilderness of Shur. After traveling for three days through the wilderness without finding water, they arrived at Marah, where they could not drink its water, because it was too bitter...As the people grumbled against Moses, saying, “What are we to drink?” he cried out to the LORD, who pointed out to him a piece of wood. When he threw it into the water, the water became fresh” [Ex 15:22-25].
 Healing: Cross and Baptism

- After 3 days the people thirst
- Moses turns to God for help
- God chooses a piece of wood as the means to make the water fresh and drinkable
- It seems an odd choice but the Holy Spirit is always pointing to Jesus Christ and His saving act of redemption
- The wood, then, is a type of the Cross, through which we are healed, and the means to make the Sacrament of Baptism holy!

“For I am the Lord, your healer” [Ex 15:26].
Thirst for Living Water

† Thirsty, the people murmured against Moses and put the Lord to the test

† Moses cried out to the Lord; God provided water from the rock at Horeb [Ex 17:1-7]

† The water gives the people life, and as “living water” is seen as a type of Jesus based on His words in Jn 7:37-38, foreshadowed by Is 44:3-4

“Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock at Horeb, and you shall strike the rock, and water shall come out of it, that the people may drink” [Ex 17:6].

“If anyone thirst, let him come to me and drink. He who believes in me, as the Scripture has said, ‘Out of His heart shall flow rivers of living water’” [Jn 17:37-38].
Living Water and the Rock

† Throughout Scripture the “Rock” symbolizes God
† Paul refers to the “Rock” of Christ that provided sustenance to their ancestors in faith
† We also find images of this in many of the Psalms, in the Prophets, and especially in Deuteronomy

“Behold, a king will reign in righteousness, and princes will rule in justice...like streams of water in a dry place, like the shade of a great rock in a weary land” [Is 32:1-2].

“Our ancestors...all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink, for they drank from a spiritual rock that followed them, and the rock was the Christ [1 Cor 10:3-4].
Jesus is our Rock, the Church’s cornerstone, and He saves us through the waters of Baptism.

But Jesus does something new and gives this name – Rock – to Peter and so to the Church, which is the font of the living water of Baptism [Mt 16:13-20]

“Thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”

Matthew 16:18
Peter on the Rock

“You were ransomed...with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot...Come to Him, to the living stone, rejected by men but in God's sight chosen and precious;...I am laying in Zion a stone...The very stone which the builders rejected has become the cornerstone, and a stone that will make men stumble, a rock that will make them fall” [1 Pt 1:18-29; 2:4,6-8].
The Light of the World

† The Pillar of Fire, a theophany, led the people during the Exodus; it was a manifestation of God’s presence [Exodus 13:17 – 14:29]
† It lit their way at night and offered protection from the sun
† It settled over the Tabernacle in their encampment
† The Fathers viewed it as a type, a figure of the Holy Spirit leading the faithful to the true promised land, and as Jesus, the “light of the world.”
† Paul also saw it as a type of Baptism [1 Cor 10:1-2,6]

“I am the light of the world; he who follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life” [Jn 8:12].
Manna as a Type of Eucharist

Manna coming down from heaven and feeding God’s people [Ex 16] is described by Church Fathers as a type of the Eucharist.

Jesus Himself makes this connection during His “Bread of Life Discourse” in John’s Gospel.

“The bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world...I am the bread of life...” [Jn 6:32-33,35]
A Type of Jesus & the Cross

In Jn 3:14-15 Jesus presents the events of Nm 21:9 as a sign of His healing Passion and death:

“So Moses made a bronze serpent, and set it up as a sign; and if a serpent bit any man, he would look at the bronze serpent and live” [Nm 21:9].

“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him may have eternal life” [Jn 3:14-15].
Passover Lamb: Eucharistic Type

† Jesus introduces the Eucharist at the Last Supper, the Passover feast at which He is the spotless sacrificial lamb, the “Lamb of God”

† In the early Church the sacraments were first received at Easter Vigil, recalling Passover, the Jewish feast that memorializes the Exodus, the departure from Egypt.

“Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world...And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God” [Jn 1:29,34].
What About Us?

† We too wander in an arid wilderness, bombarded with the world's false idols to which Satan hopes we will succumb.

† Do we also put God to the test through our sins and with the presumption that since God is love, we don't have to stop sinning?

† Do we overindulge in the world's goods, instead of filling our hearts and minds with the Word of God?

† Are we too much like the self-centered people of the Exodus, or are we Christ-like?

“I came that they may have life and have it abundantly” [Jn 10:10].
In our next session (Session 3) we will examine several Old Testament figures as “types”: Moses, Isaac, and Job.

We will also take a brief look at typology as manifested in some of the books of the Old Testament Prophets.