

Association of Hebrew Catholics Lecture Series
The Mystery of Israel and the Church

Spring 2013 – Series 11

Typology, How the Old Testament Prefigures the New

Talk #8

Typology of Jacob and Joseph



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Note: *This document contains the unedited text of Dr. Feingold's talk. It will eventually undergo final editing for inclusion in the series of books being published by The Miriam Press under the series title: "The Mystery of Israel and the Church". If you find errors of any type, please send your observations to lfeingold@hebrewcatholic.org*

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Typology of Jacob and Joseph

The story of Jacob, the father of the twelve tribes of Israel, is extremely rich in typology, especially with regard to the theme of the blessing promised to Abraham in his descendants.

Jacob and Esau

There is a recurring pattern in the Old Testament that the younger son receives the blessing from the father that should, by right, have gone to the firstborn son. This can be seen beginning with Cain and Abel, then Isaac and Ishmael, Joseph with Judah and Reuben, Joseph's sons Ephraim and Manasseh (Gen 48:8–20), David and his brothers, and Solomon and his brothers. What mystery is concealed here?

The most famous of these occurrences is the blessing of Jacob by his father Isaac. Like Sarah, Rebecca was barren and after twenty years of marriage she conceived twins through the intercession of Isaac's prayer.¹ Esau, his twin brother, should have received that blessing, for he emerged first from the womb, although not without a struggle from Jacob, who was clasping his heel. Esau, however, sold his birthright to Jacob for a bowl of lentils (Gen 25:30–34), and thus Jacob did in fact have legal title to be the eldest. Isaac did not know this as he blessed his sons on his deathbed, and he favored Esau, a hunter who brought fresh venison to his father. Through the aid of his mother Rebecca, Jacob disguised himself as Esau, and received the blessing that his father had destined for his older brother (Gen 27:27–29):

See, the smell of my son is as the smell of a field which the Lord has blessed! May God give you of the dew of heaven, and of the fatness of the earth, and plenty of grain and wine. Let peoples serve you, and nations bow down to you. Be lord over your brothers, and may your mother's sons bow down to you. Cursed be every one who curses you, and blessed be every one who blesses you!

St. Augustine comments:

Thus the blessing of Jacob is the proclamation of Christ among all nations. This is happening; this is actively going on. Isaac is the Law and the Prophets; and Christ is blessed by the Law and the Prophets . . . as by someone who does not know what he is doing, because the Law and the Prophets are themselves not understood. The world is filled like a field with the fragrance of the name of Christ; and his is the blessing of the dew of heaven, that is, of the showers of divine words. . . . It is Christ whom the nations serve, and to whom the princes do reverence. . . . He it is to whom

the sons of his father do reverence, that is, the sons of Abraham according to faith. . . . Our Christ, I repeat, is blessed, that is, he is truly spoken of, even by the lips of Jews who, although in error, still chant the Law and the Prophets: and they suppose that another is being blessed, the Messiah who is still awaited by them, in their error.

Look at Isaac! He is horror-stricken when his elder son asks for the promised blessing, and he realizes that he has blessed another in his place . . . and yet he does not complain that he has been deceived. . . . The great mystery is straightway revealed to him, in the depths of his heart, and he eschews indignation and confirms his blessing. . . . One would surely expect at this point the curse of an angry man, if all this happened in the ordinary course of events, instead of by inspiration from above. *Historical events, these, but events with prophetic meaning! Events on earth, but directed from heaven!* The actions of men, but the operation of God!²

St. Augustine gives a perfect description of Biblical typology in these words: "*Historical events...but events with prophetic meaning.*" Just as Jacob, the younger son, received the blessing reserved for the firstborn, so the Church, the younger descendant of Abraham according to faith, received the blessing of Isaac after the synagogue, elder brother of the Church, had fulfilled its sublime mission to prepare for the Messiah. Pope John XIII memorably pointed to this relationship when he said to a delegation of Jews in the 1960s: "I am Joseph, your brother."

According to a moral sense, Esau represents carnal man, who puts no value on things of the spirit (represented by his birthright), and who afterwards through jealousy opposes the recipient of the promises of God.

St. Augustine tells us that in this text Isaac represents the Law and the Prophets, whereas Jacob—the son of the promise according to the secret intention of God—represents Christ. Isaac blesses Jacob without knowing the object of his blessing, which represents the blessing given by the Law and the Prophets to Christ. These books truly prophesy His coming, even though so many who reverence the Law and the Prophets have not yet received the gift of faith to see this. We pray that there may be an ever fuller outpouring of grace to enable more and more to see.

Rebecca

There is yet another dimension of Biblical typology in this story. It is very interesting how Rebecca plays a key role in helping Jacob to attain the blessing, which he

1 See Gen 25:21.

2 St. Augustine, *The City of God*, trans. Henry Bettenson (New York: Penguin Books, 1972), 16.37, p. 700 (my italics).

never would have received without her expert counsel, even though he had acquired the birthright of Esau. The saints see in this event a figure of the intercession of the Blessed Virgin in favor of all the members of the Mystical Body of Christ. This is an example of typology in its moral dimension, in service of the spiritual life. St. Louis de Montfort develops this typology very beautifully in his great classic, *True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin* (chapter 5). The saint writes:

Before explaining this beautiful story, let me remind you that, according to the early fathers and the interpreters of Holy Scripture, Jacob is the type of our Lord and of souls who are saved, and Esau is the type of souls who are condemned. We have only to examine the actions and conduct of both in order to judge each one.

1. Esau, the elder brother, was strong and robust, clever, and skilful with the bow and very successful at hunting.

2. He seldom stayed at home and, relying only on his own strength and skill, worked out of doors.

3. He never went out of his way to please his mother Rebecca, and did little or nothing for her.

4. He was such a glutton and so fond of eating that he sold his birthright for a dish of lentils.

5. Like Cain, he was extremely jealous of his brother and persecuted him relentlessly.

This is the usual conduct of sinners:

1. They rely upon their own strength and skill in temporal affairs. They are very energetic, clever and well-informed about things of this world but very dull and ignorant about things of heaven.

2. And so they are never or very seldom at home, in their own house, that is, in their own interior, the inner, essential abode that God has given to every man to dwell in, after his own example, for God always abides within himself. Sinners have no liking for solitude or the spiritual life or interior devotion. They consider those who live an interior life, secluded from the world, and who work more interiorly than exteriorly, as narrow-minded, bigoted and uncivilized.

3. Sinners care little or nothing about devotion to Mary the Mother of the elect. It is true that they do not really hate her... Nevertheless they cannot bear to see anyone love her tenderly, for they do not have for her any of the affection of Jacob; they find fault with the honour which her good children and servants faithfully pay her to win her affection. . . .

4. Sinners sell their birthright, that is, the joys of paradise, for a dish of lentils, that is, the pleasures of this world. They laugh, they drink, they eat, they have a good time, they gamble, they dance and so forth, with-

out taking any more trouble than Esau to make themselves worthy of their heavenly Father's blessing. . . .

5. Finally, sinners continually hate and persecute the elect, openly or secretly. The elect are a burden to them. They despise them.

St. Louis de Montfort characterizes Jacob in opposition to Esau. He particularly stresses the fact that Jacob preferred to stay home with his mother, to whom he was submissive in all things, as can be seen in the obedience with which he followed her counsel so as to win the blessing of his father. Jacob can thus be seen as a figure of all God's elect:

They stay at home with their mother—that is, they have an esteem for quietness, love the interior life and are assiduous in prayer. They always remain in the company of the Blessed Virgin, their Mother and Model, whose glory is wholly interior... It is true, at times they do venture out into the world, but only to fulfill the duties of their state of life, in obedience to the will of God and the will of their Mother.

Finally, the Saint shows that Rebecca is a figure of the Blessed Virgin Mary:

She loves them not only affectively but effectively, that is, her love is active and productive of good like Rebecca's love for Jacob—and even more so, for Rebecca was, after all, only a symbolic figure of Mary. . . .

1. Like Rebecca she looks out for favorable opportunities to promote their interests, to ennoble and enrich them. . . .

2. She gives them excellent advice, as Rebecca did to Jacob. "My son, follow my counsels."...

3. . . . As she alone knows perfectly what the divine taste is and where the greatest glory to God is to be found, she alone without any fear of mistake can prepare and garnish our body and soul to satisfy that infinitely refined taste and promote that infinitely hidden glory.

4. Once this good Mother has received our complete offering . . . and has stripped us of our own garments, she cleanses us and makes us worthy to appear without shame before our heavenly Father. She clothes us in the clean garments of Esau, the firstborn, namely her Son Jesus Christ....

5. Finally, Mary obtains for them the heavenly Father's blessing. As they are the youngest born and adopted, they are not really entitled to it. Clad in new, precious, and sweet-smelling garments, with body and soul well-prepared and dressed, they confidently approach their heavenly Father.³

³ St. Louis de Montfort, *True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin* (Bay Shore, NY: Montfort Publications, 1980), pp. 94–104 (ch. 5).

How rich are these Biblical stories! St. Augustine and St. Louis de Montfort see two completely different spiritual or typological lessons contained here, and yet there is no conflict between them. The text has a literal or historical meaning, as do all other histories, and yet at the same time it is prophetic of Christ and the Church, and speaks to us of the maternal intercession of the Virgin Mary and of the spiritual life of Christians who are devoted to her.

Jacob's Ladder in His Dream at Bethel

After receiving the blessing from Isaac, Rebecca counseled Jacob to flee from the fury of Esau, who was planning to kill him. She therefore asked Isaac to send Jacob back to Padannaram to take as wife one of the daughters of Laban, his mother's brother. While on the journey, Jacob passed through Bethel and had a prophetic dream recounted in Genesis 28:12–17:

And he dreamed that there was a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven; and behold, the angels of God were ascending and descending on it! And behold, the Lord stood above it and said, "I am the Lord, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and to your descendants; and your descendants shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south; and by you and your descendants shall all the families of the earth bless themselves. Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done that of which I have spoken to you." Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, "Surely the Lord is in this place; and I did not know it." And he was afraid, and said, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven."

Jesus Himself refers to Jacob's ladder in conversation with Nathanael in John 1:50–51 and implicitly claims to be the ladder on which the angels ascend and descend:

"Because I said to you, I saw you under the fig tree, do you believe? You shall see greater things than these."

⁵¹ And he said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man."

Jesus, as the perfect mediator between God and man (see 1 Tim 2:5), is indeed the ladder that unites heaven and earth. Through the union of His two natures, He bridges heaven and earth in His Person, and is the only means by which men ascend to the Father, and by which all graces flow to men.

The priesthood Christ established continues the typology of Jacob's ladder. The priest mediates between God and man with a supernatural activity that is both ascending

and descending. The central act of the priest's ascending mediation is the offering of sacrifice, which is the most essential element of the priesthood. This is affirmed in the letter to the Hebrews (5:1): "For every high priest chosen from among men is appointed to act on behalf of men in relation to God, *to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins.*"

Through the offering of sacrifice, the priest seeks to propitiate God, and thereby to receive gifts of grace and knowledge from Him which can be distributed to the people. Ascending mediation—through intercession and propitiation—has the purpose of bringing down God's gifts. *Ascending mediation thus leads to descending mediation.*

Jacob's Servitude

Another important type in the story of Jacob is his fourteen years of servitude for Rachel. Genesis 29:20 says that "Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed to him but a few days because of the love he had for her." St. Hilary says that Christ was prefigured in Jacob's servitude.⁴ As Jacob undertook voluntary servitude for fourteen years for love of his bride, so Christ in His Incarnation underwent thirty-three years of voluntary servitude for love of His bride, the Church. St. John Chrysostom applies this figure also in a moral sense, as the model of all who count as nothing their service to Christ, as St. Paul says.⁵

If this good man brought himself to serve seven years for the love of the maiden and endure the hardships of tending flocks, without taking account of his labors or the length of time but thinking it all light and easy, buoyed up by the expectation of fruition and regarding that long time to be a few days, what excuse would we have for giving evidence of no such love for our Lord, who has shown us kindness and care and is everything to us?⁶

Jacob Wrestling with the Angel (Gen 32:24-30)

After marrying Leah and Rachel and returning to the Promised Land, and just before his reconciliation with his brother Esau, Jacob had a most mysterious nightlong encounter with an angel:

And Jacob was left alone; and a man wrestled with him until the breaking of the day. When the man saw that he did not prevail against Jacob, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and Jacob's thigh was put out of joint as he wrestled with him. Then he said, "Let me

4 St. Hilary, *Tractatus mysteriorum*, bk. 1, preface,

5 See Phil. 3:8: "Indeed I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as refuse, in order that I may gain Christ"

6 St. John Chrysostom, *Homily 55 on Genesis*, in *Homilies on Genesis 46-67*, trans. Robert C. Hill (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1992), 111–112.

go, for the day is breaking.” But Jacob said, “I will not let you go, unless you bless me.” And he said to him, “What is your name?” And he said, “Jacob.” Then he said, “Your name shall no more be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with men, and have prevailed.” Then Jacob asked him, “Tell me, I pray, your name.” But he said, “Why is it that you ask my name?” And there he blessed him. So Jacob called the name of the place Peniel,⁷ saying, “For I have seen God face to face, and yet my life is preserved.”

Jacob can be seen in this episode as the type of spiritual combat to win God’s blessing. It is striking that so much of the story of Jacob revolves around blessing. First Jacob received the blessing of the primogeniture from Esau in exchange for a bowl of lentils. Then he received the prophetic blessing from his father Isaac through the intercession of Rebecca. But still Jacob seeks a blessing, this time from God through the mediation of an angel with whom he wrestles all night long. Why does Jacob continue to ask for the blessing?

On the literal level, the blessing Jacob seeks seems to regard his encounter with Esau who is coming with four hundred men. However, the blessing he receives is clearly larger in scope, and should be connected with the messianic blessing given by God to Abraham, that in his seed shall “all the kindred of the earth be blessed.”⁸ This blessing passed through Isaac rather than Ishmael. The blessing in the story of Jacob and Esau has such importance because it determines which of the twins shall be the forefather of the Messiah in whom all nations will be blessed.

Jacob wins the blessing a third time from the angel and with the blessing a new name: Israel. The name “Israel” is interpreted by Genesis 32:28 as “he who strives with God.” Many of the Fathers, following Philo,⁹ offer another etymology: “he who sees God.”¹⁰

Jacob’s wrestling with the angel and seeking the blessing can be understood as a typological figure according to all three modes. In the allegorical sense, Jacob represents all Israel—of whom he is the forefather and namesake—who seeks from God the blessing of the Messiah, and wrestles in prayer for that great blessing. Jacob could also be said to be here a type of Mary whose prayers are thought to have hastened the great blessing of the Incarnation.

In a moral sense, Jacob’s wrestling with the angel is a type of spiritual magnanimity, or of the spiritual combat of the Christian to gain the greatest blessing that we can receive on earth, which is sanctity. Jacob comes out of the struggle victorious but with the price of lameness.

Similarly, the Christian generally comes out of spiritual combat wounded or lame in the things of this world, but enriched with a blessing from above. Jacob’s lameness thus prefigures a price that is paid—a participation in the Passion of Christ—for the grace of the heavenly blessing. The spiritual magnanimity shown by Jacob here is praised by Jesus when, with regard to John the Baptist, He says: “From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and men of violence take it by force” (Mt 11:12).

Finally, Jacob’s wrestling with the angel has an anagogical sense, in that the ultimate blessing is the vision of God. This sense is strengthened by Philo’s interpretation of the meaning of “Israel” as “one who sees God.”

St. Augustine in *The City of God* has a different interpretation of this event. He sees the angel as a type of Christ and Jacob as a type of Israel. However, instead of seeing Jacob’s wrestling with the angel and overcoming him as a type of spiritual magnanimity, he sees it as a type of the passion of Christ. As the angel was overcome by Jacob not for lack of angelic power, but by a secret design of God, so Christ was overcome in His Passion, not for lack of divine power, but for the redemption of the world. Thus the end result of the angel’s being overcome is the granting of the blessing and a new name—he who sees God—which is the final beatitude won for us by Christ:

As I said a little ago, Jacob was also called Israel, the name which was most prevalent among the people descended from him. Now this name was given him by the angel who wrestled with him on the way back from Mesopotamia, and who was most evidently a type of Christ. For when Jacob overcame him, doubtless with his own consent, that the mystery might be represented, it signified Christ’s passion, in which the Jews are seen overcoming Him. And yet he besought a blessing from the very angel he had overcome; and so the imposition of this name was the blessing. For Israel means *seeing God*, which will at last be the reward of all the saints.¹¹

St. Augustine also has an interesting interpretation of the lameness of Jacob in one leg. He sees the difference between Jacob’s legs as a type of the difference between Jews who believed and disbelieved in Christ:

The angel also touched him on the breadth of the thigh when he was overcoming him, and in that way made him lame. So that Jacob was at one and the same time blessed and lame: blessed in those among that people who believed in Christ, and lame in the unbelieving.¹²

⁷ This name means “the face of God.”

⁸ Gen 12:3, Douay-Rheims version.

⁹ Philo, *De congressu eruditionis gratia* 10.

¹⁰ See St. John Chrysostom, *Homily 58 on Genesis*, in *Homilies on Genesis 46-67*, 159; St. Augustine, *City of God* 16.39.

¹¹ St. Augustine, *City of God* 16.39, trans. Marcus Dods (New York: The Modern Library, 1950), 562.

¹²

Ibid.

The Story of Joseph, Sold by His Brothers

The story of Joseph is also extremely rich in typology. Joseph the dreamer is hated by his brothers on account of envy. He has prophetic dreams which foretell that all his brothers, and indeed even his father and mother, would worship him; and he is the favorite son of his father, begotten by Rachel in his old age. “Now Israel loved Joseph more than any other of his children, because he was the son of his old age; and he made him a long robe with sleeves. But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably to him” (Gen 37:3–4).

Jacob sent Joseph to visit his brothers in the field to see how they were doing. The envy of his brothers incited them to plan to kill him, but seeing the opportunity for a profitable transaction, they preferred to sell him into slavery for twenty pieces of silver. They presented the cloak of many colors, stained with the blood of a goat, to their father.

Thus far, it is easy to see in these events a typological allegorical sense. Joseph represents Christ, the promise of Israel and of the nations, sent by His Father to assist his brethren. “He came into his own, but his own received him not” (Jn 1:11). Both the plan to kill him and to sell him for a few pieces of silver were realized in His Passion. His cloak of many colors represents His sacred humanity, which, stained with blood, was presented by his brethren to God the Father.

However, as we know, the allegory does not end here. The treachery and malice worked on Joseph redounds to the salvation of the very same brothers who betrayed him, of their whole house, and indeed of the nations, represented by Egypt, and all those who came to Egypt to buy grain in the time of famine.

Joseph is sold into slavery in Egypt. There, because of his purity in refusing the advances of Potiphar’s wife, he is put in prison. In prison he correctly interprets the dreams of the cupbearer and the baker. Much later, when Pharaoh has the dream of the seven fat cows, followed by seven lean ones, the cupbearer tells Pharaoh of Joseph’s ability, and Pharaoh summons him to interpret his dream. He is then set over all of Egypt, second only to Pharaoh, who orders that all are to go to Joseph in their need. In this capacity his brothers are sent to him to buy grain during the great famine. Although he knows their treachery, Joseph tries their repentance and forgives them with deep emotion.

How marvelous and mysterious are the plans of God! An abominable crime of betrayal and ingratitude is worked, which results in the salvation of the treacherous brothers and their house, and also of Egypt, the greatest of nations. If Christ is prefigured in the prophetic dreams of Joseph, in his predilection by his father, and in his betrayal for twenty

pieces of silver, He is no less prefigured in the wonderful consequences of that betrayal. God permits evil so as to enable an incomparably greater good to be accomplished. He permits Joseph to be sold by his brethren into slavery so as to save all—both his family and the gentile Egyptians—thereby prefiguring how the betrayal of Christ would work the salvation of the children of Israel and of all the Gentiles. Here we can apply the profound phrase that the liturgy of the Church says of the sin of Adam: “O happy fault (*felix culpa*), which merited us so great a Redeemer.”

Blaise Pascal summarizes beautifully:

Christ prefigured by Joseph. Innocent, beloved of his father, sent by his father to see his brothers, is sold for twenty pieces of silver by his brothers. Through this he becomes their lord, their savior, savior of strangers and savior of the world. None of this would have happened but for their plot to destroy him, the sale, and their rejection of him.

In prison Joseph, innocent between two criminals. Jesus on the cross between two thieves. He prophesies the salvation of the one and the death of the other when to all appearances they are alike. . . . Joseph only prophesies, Jesus acts. Joseph asks the man who will be saved to remember him when he comes in glory. And the man Jesus saves asks to be remembered when He comes into His Kingdom.¹³

In fact, it is easy to see in this story a figure not only of Christ, but of the centuries of Christendom. In Egypt, Joseph was first put into prison, which could signify the three hundred years of brutal Roman persecution of the Church. He was then raised up to the right hand of Pharaoh, to whom all pay deference, which can be seen as a figure of the social kingship of Christ during the centuries of Christendom. Joseph ruled for fourteen years (and more), as a parallel to the same number of centuries in which the nations publicly recognized Christ. In the end, the once perfidious brethren themselves come to be reconciled, in the final triumph of providence worked through Joseph. This final element of the story is, it would seem, a figure of an event foretold, but not yet fully realized: the final conversion of Israel to faith in Christ in the last times before Christ our Lord comes a second time in majesty to judge the living and the dead.¹⁴

¹³ Blaise Pascal, *Pensées*, section 2, series 23, n. 570 (New York: Penguin Classics, 1966), 223.

¹⁴ St. Paul foretells this event in enigmatic language in Rom 11:23–26. The idea is that God has permitted the unbelief of the Jews in their promised Messiah, which in itself is a heart-breaking tragedy, so as to permit the accomplishment of a greater good: the conversion of the Gentiles and their insertion into the Covenant. And after the time of the conversion of the Gentiles has been completed with the preaching of the Gospel in the whole world, Israel shall be aided by God to come to faith in Christ.

The Christian tradition sees Joseph not only as a type of Christ, but also as a type of St. Joseph, the husband of Mary and legal father of Jesus. The coincidence of names suggests this typology, but more importantly, it is based on the fact that the first Joseph was entrusted with all the treasures of Pharaoh's realm, and Pharaoh said to him: "You shall be over my house, and all my people shall order themselves as you command" (Gen 41:39). St. Joseph in the New Testament, as head of the Holy Family, is entrusted with the greatest treasures of the heavenly Father: Jesus and Mary, who obeyed him. In a footnote in his apostolic letter on St. Joseph, *Redemptoris custos*, John Paul II writes:

The Fathers of the Church and the Popes, on the basis of their common name, also saw in Joseph of Egypt a prototype of Joseph of Nazareth, inasmuch as the former foreshadowed in some way the ministry and greatness of the latter, who was guardian of God the Father's most precious treasures—the Incarnate Word and his most holy Mother.¹⁵

But whereas the former Joseph was entrusted with the material treasures of Pharaoh, the latter Joseph was entrusted with infinitely greater treasures—the spiritual treasures of the Heavenly Father and of all creation. Furthermore, the Egyptians were told to "go to Joseph" in all their needs. Similarly, Christians are advised to "go to Joseph" for spiritual and material aid.¹⁶ Finally, as the first Joseph

led the Chosen People into Egypt, so the latter Joseph led the Holy Family into Egypt and back again to Nazareth.

15 John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation on the Person and Mission of Saint Joseph in the Life of Christ and of the Church, *Redemptoris custos*, footnote 4. The footnote gives the following sources: St. Bernard, Super "Missus est," Hom. II, 16: *S. Bernardi Opera*, Ed. Cist., IV, 33f.; Leo XIII, Encyclical Epistle *Quamquam pluries* (August 15, 1889): loc. cit., p. 179.

16 See Leo XIII, *Quamquam pluries* 4: "You well understand, Venerable Brethren, that these considerations are confirmed by the opinion held by a large number of the Fathers, to which the sacred liturgy gives its sanction, that the Joseph of ancient times, son of the patriarch Jacob, was the type of St. Joseph, and the former by his glory prefigured the greatness of the future guardian of the Holy Family. And in truth, beyond the fact that the same name—a point the significance of which has never been denied—was given to each, you well know the points of likeness that exist between them; namely, that the first Joseph won the favour and especial goodwill of his master, and that through Joseph's administration his household came to prosperity and wealth; that (still more important) he presided over the kingdom with great power, and, in a time when the harvests failed, he provided for all the needs of the Egyptians with so much wisdom that the King decreed to him the title "Saviour of the world." Thus it is that We may prefigure the new in the old patriarch. And as the first caused the prosperity of his master's domestic interests and at the same time rendered great services to the whole kingdom, so the second, destined to be the guardian of the Christian religion, should be regarded as the protector and defender of the Church, which is truly the house of the Lord and the kingdom of God on earth. These are the reasons why men of every rank and country should fly to the trust and guard of the blessed Joseph. Fathers of families find in Joseph the best personification of paternal solicitude and vigilance; spouses a perfect example of love, of peace,

and of conjugal fidelity; virgins at the same time find in him the model and protector of virginal integrity."

