

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 #12

*Typology of God's Dwelling
in the Tent of Meeting and the Temple*



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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".
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Typology of God's Dwelling in the Tent of Meeting and the Temple

The Tabernacle and the Ark of the Covenant

When Moses ascended to Mount Sinai and was before the Lord for forty days and nights, the Lord commanded him: "And let them make me a *sanctuary, that I may dwell in their midst*. According to all that I show you concerning the pattern of the tabernacle, and of all its furniture, so you shall make it."¹ The liturgy of the Old Covenant centered on this sanctuary in which God dwelt with His People.

On Mt. Sinai Moses received instructions regarding the Ark of the Covenant, the Tent of Meeting, the altars, the menorah, and other sacred objects. It is interesting that even the dimensions are specified. They involve simple harmonic numeric proportions that correspond to musical harmonies.

The heart of this sanctuary was the Ark of the Covenant, which was a wooden chest two and half cubits² in length, one and half cubits in breadth and height. Thus its proportions are 5 x 3 x 3. The Ark had a cover known as the "mercy seat," "atonement cover," or "throne of God."³ It was adorned with cherubim facing each other and overshadowing the mercy seat with their wings (Ex 25: 18–20). God then spoke to Israel through Moses "from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim that are upon the ark of the covenant" (Ex 25:22).

The Ark of the Covenant was a magnificent type of Christ, for it held three sacred items that refer to Christ: the two tablets of the Ten Commandments, which prefigure Christ as the living Torah who reveals the will of God in every aspect of His life, and particularly in His Passion; the jar of manna, which prefigures Christ who is the true Bread from heaven who gives life to the world, and the rod of Aaron that blossomed as a sign of his election to the high priesthood which prefigures Christ who is true High Priest, but according to the line of Melchizedek.

Moses was also commanded to construct the Tent of Meeting, also known as the Tabernacle or Sanctuary, in which the Ark would be housed. This portable structure was indeed a tent, constructed of curtains hung on a series of narrow frames joined together. The Tabernacle was surrounded by a courtyard⁴ 150 feet long, 75 feet wide, and 7-1/2 feet high, made of linen curtains hung on bronze pil-

lars. Thus the sacred dwelling of the Lord and its courtyard would accompany the Israelites in their journeying in the desert, and in their entrance into the Promised Land.

The Tabernacle was divided by a precious veil adorned with cherubim⁵ into two parts: the "Holy of Holies" and the "Holy Place." In other words, the entire tabernacle is holy, but the interior part with the Ark of the Covenant is "most holy." The tabernacle was 30 cubits long, 10 cubits wide, and 10 cubits high.⁶ The Holy of Holies was a cube of 10 x 10 x 10, and the Holy Place was twice as long: a rectangular volume composed of two cubes of 20 x 10 x 10 cubits.

The Holy Place in the Tabernacle contained the Table of the Bread of the Presence and the altar of incense and a golden lampstand (Menorah). The Table of the Bread of the Presence was two cubits long, one cubit broad, and one and a half high, according to Exodus 25:23. Thus its proportions are 4 x 2 x 3. The Altar of Incense was one cubit long, one cubit wide, and two cubits tall.

The altar of burnt offering was situated in a court outside the tabernacle. The altar was a square 5 cubits long, 5 cubits broad, and three cubits high.⁷ The court of the tabernacle, according to Exodus 27:9–18 has the proportions of 100 cubits long, 50 wide, and 5 high. Thus the proportions are 20 x 10 x 1. The east front of the court was to have a gate 20 cubits wide. Thus the east front was structured in the proportions of 3 x 4 x 3, with a height of 1.

The Temple of Solomon was built on the same proportions as the Tent of Meeting, but simply doubled in size.

Hebrews 9:2–7 gives a description of the Tabernacle housing the Ark:

For a tent was prepared, the outer one, in which were the lampstand and the table and the bread of the Presence; it is called the Holy Place. Behind the second curtain stood a tent called the Holy of Holies, having the golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant covered on all sides with gold, which contained a golden urn holding the manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant; above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat. Of these things we cannot now speak in detail. These preparations having thus been made, the priests go continually into the outer tent, performing their ritual duties; but into the second only the high priest goes, and he but once a year, and not without taking blood which he offers for himself and for the errors of the people.

1 Exodus 25:8–9.

2 The cubit was the length from the elbow to the tip of the fingers, or about 18 inches.

3 The mercy seat was the top of the Ark, and was 2.5 x 1.5, which is the proportion of 5 x 3 (Ex 25:17–22).

4 Ex 27:9–18.

5 See Exodus 26:31.

6 William Brown, *The Tabernacle: Its Priests and Its Services*, updated ed. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1996), 5–7.

7 Exodus 27:1.

The Tabernacle: Place of Sacrifice to God and God's Dwelling with Men

The Tabernacle was both the place of God's dwelling with Israel and the place of sacrifice offered to God. All sacrifice was to be offered on the altar in the court of the Tabernacle to the Lord who "dwelt" in the Holy of Holies behind the veil. The Tabernacle thus combined God's presence with sacrifice offered to Him. In this, the Tabernacle was a magnificent type of the Mass, in which the perfect sacrifice offered to the Father and divine presence are combined. Transubstantiation effects both the divine presence and the perfect sacrifice of Calvary.

Dedication of the Altar

Leviticus 9 describes the dedication of the altar. On the eighth day after Aaron's consecration as High Priest, his priesthood was inaugurated with a solemn sacrifice for himself, for his sons, and for all the people. The ceremony concluded dramatically with fire coming down from heaven to consume the offering:

Then Aaron lifted up his hands toward the people and blessed them; and he came down from offering the sin offering and the burnt offering and the peace offerings. And Moses and Aaron went into the tent of meeting; and when they came out they blessed the people, and the glory of the Lord appeared to all the people. And fire came forth from before the Lord and consumed the burnt offering and the fat upon the altar; and when all the people saw it, they shouted, and fell on their faces.⁸

The same miracle of the consuming fire occurred some four centuries later when Solomon inaugurated the Temple. It occurred a third time on the altar built by Elijah to refute the prophets of Baal.

The Fathers of the Church see this miracle as a figure of what happens in every Mass: the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit by which the miracle of transubstantiation is realized and the perfect sacrifice of Christ is made present on the altar.

In his work, *On the Priesthood*, St. John Chrysostom compares the Eucharistic sacrifice to the sacrifice performed by Elijah on Mt. Carmel, in which the fire of God came down from heaven through Elijah's prayer to consume the sacrifice:

Would you like to be shown the excellence of this sacred office by another miracle? Imagine in your mind's eye, if you will, Elijah and the vast crowd standing around him and the sacrifice lying upon the stone altar. All the rest are still, hushed in deep silence. The prophet alone is praying. Suddenly fire falls from the skies on to the offering. It is marvelous; it is charged with bewilderment. Turn, then, from that scene to our present rites, and you will see not only marvelous things, but things that transcend all terror. The priest stands bringing down, not fire, but the Holy Spirit. And he

8 Leviticus 9:22–24.

offers prayer at length, not that some flame lit from above may consume the offerings, but that grace may fall on the sacrifice through that prayer, set alight the souls of all, and make them appear brighter than silver refined in the fire.⁹

St. Ambrose makes the same comparison in his *De Mysteriis*:

But if the benediction of man had such power as to change nature, what do we say of divine consecration itself, in which the very words of our Lord and Saviour function? For that sacrament, which you receive, is effected by the words of Christ. But if the words of Elias had such power as to call down fire from heaven, will not the words of Christ have power enough to change the nature of the elements? You have read about the works of the world: "that He spoke and they were done; He commanded and they were created."¹⁰ So, cannot the words of Christ, which were able to make what was not out of nothing, change those things that are into the things that were not?¹¹

The Shekinah

The mystery of the Incarnation and the substantial presence of Christ—Body, Blood, soul and divinity—in the Eucharist was prefigured in the special presence of God manifested first on Mt. Sinai,¹² then in the Ark of the Covenant housed in the Tent of Meeting, and later in the Holy of Holies in the Temple. This special presence was manifested at certain times by a visible glory overshadowing the holy place. This overshadowing presence of God is referred to by Jews as the *shekinah*, which is derived from the Hebrew verb *shachan*: "to dwell or abide."

The glory that overshadowed Sinai then descended on the Tent of Meeting and centuries later on the Temple in Jerusalem. With regard to the Tent of Meeting, God says:

There I will meet with the people of Israel, and it shall be sanctified by my glory; I will consecrate the tent of meeting and the altar; Aaron also and his sons I will consecrate, to serve me as priests. And I will dwell among the people of Israel, and will be their God. And they shall know that I am the Lord their God, who brought them forth out of the land of Egypt that I might dwell among them; I am the Lord their God.¹³

When the Tent of Meeting was finished and consecrated (1400 BC?), Exodus 40:34–38 describes how the glory of the Lord visibly descended on it and remained, except when they were to travel:

9 St. John Chrysostom, *Six Books On the Priesthood* 3.4, p. 71.

10 Psalm 148:5.

11 St. Ambrose, *De mysteriis* 9.52–54, trans. Roy Deferrari, in *Saint Ambrose: Theological and Dogmatic Works* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1963), 25–26.

12 See Ex 24:16–17: "The glory of the Lord settled on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days; and on the seventh day he called to Moses out of the midst of the cloud. Now the appearance of the glory of the Lord was like a devouring fire on the top of the mountain in the sight of the people of Israel."

13 Ex 29:43–46.

Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting, because the cloud abode upon it, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. Throughout all their journeys, whenever the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the people of Israel would go onward; but if the cloud was not taken up, then they did not go onward till the day that it was taken up. For throughout all their journeys the cloud of the Lord was upon the tabernacle by day, and fire was in it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel.

Through the presence of the sanctuary, the whole of Israel was sanctified with God's indwelling presence. In Numbers 35:34, God says: "You shall not defile the land in which you live, in the midst of which I dwell; for I the Lord dwell in the midst of the people of Israel."

During the time of Eli, the high priest, the Ark of the Covenant was lost to the Philistines. The special presence of the Lord was manifested no longer in visible glory, but rather in the destruction of the Philistine idols and in a plague on the Philistines.

When Solomon finally constructed the Temple in Jerusalem (c. 1000 BC), the glory of God descended on the Temple:

When Solomon had ended his prayer, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the Lord filled the temple. And the priests could not enter the house of the Lord, because the glory of the Lord filled the Lord's house.¹⁴

The visible manifestation of God's presence in the *shekinah* was one of the glories of Israel, showing the nearness of God to Israel. As Moses said to Israel: "What great nation is there that has a god so near to it as the Lord our God is to us, whenever we call upon Him?" (Deut 4:7).

God's mysterious indwelling in the Tent of Meeting and in the Holy of Holies in the Temple was a figure of the supreme indwelling that is totally unique: the Word became flesh and dwelt among us (Jn 1:14). It is not by accident that John chose the word "dwell" (from the root σκηνη), which literally means to "dwell as in a tent." This term recalls the dwelling of God with His people through the *shekinah* in the tabernacle (translated into Greek by the term σκηνη) that housed the Ark.¹⁵

Joseph Ratzinger, in *Jesus of Nazareth: The Infancy Narratives*, comments on John 1:14:

The man Jesus is the dwelling-place of the Word, the eternal divine Word, in this world. Jesus' "flesh," his human existence, is the "dwelling" or "tent" of the Word: the reference to the sacred tent of Israel in the wilderness is unmistakable. Jesus is, so to speak, the tent of meeting—he

¹⁴ 2 Chr 7:1–2.

¹⁵ Jn 1:14 also recalls Sir 24:8: "Then the Creator of all things gave me a commandment, and the one who created me assigned a place for my tent. And he said, 'Make your dwelling in Jacob, and in Israel receive your inheritance.'"

is the reality for which the tent and the later Temple could only serve as signs.¹⁶

The Tabernacle as the Prototype of Christian Churches

The Tent of Meeting and the Temple of Solomon became the prototype of Christian churches, but with a very important difference. The Holy of Holies corresponds to the sanctuary of the Christian church with its altar, tabernacle, and the bishop's chair. The Holy Place next to the Holy of Holies corresponds to the nave in a Christian church. Very often the proportions of a Christian church correspond generally to those of the Tent of Meeting, with the sanctuary occupying one third of the space, and the nave two-thirds. Like the Holy of Holies in Solomon's Temple, the sanctuary is generally raised with respect to the nave. The Cathedral Basilica in St. Louis is a good example of how the Christian church is modeled on the Mosaic tabernacle.

As the Ark of the Covenant was the heart and focus of the tabernacle in which God "dwelt," so the heart and focus of the Christian church is the tabernacle with the Blessed Sacrament in which God made man substantially dwells. Another similarity is the decoration of cherubim in the Holy of Holies. This points to the fact that the church's liturgy involves a participation in the heavenly liturgy celebrated in the celestial Jerusalem with the angels and saints. This is beautifully expressed in Vatican II, *Sacro-sanctum concilium* 8:

In the earthly liturgy we take part in a foretaste of that heavenly liturgy which is celebrated in the holy city of Jerusalem toward which we journey as pilgrims, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God, a minister of the holies and of the true tabernacle; we sing a hymn to the Lord's glory with all the warriors of the heavenly army; venerating the memory of the saints, we hope for some part and fellowship with them; we eagerly await the Saviour, Our Lord Jesus Christ, until He, our life, shall appear and we too will appear with Him in glory.

The great difference between the Mosaic Tabernacle and the Christian church is that the Holy of Holies was only entered by the High Priest once a year, on Yom Kippur, with the blood of sacrifice. The Christian sanctuary is entered every day by clergy who celebrate the Mass. Similarly, the Holy Place was entered only by the priests of Israel, but the nave of the church is entered by all the faithful. In the Temple in Israel, on the other hand, the faithful were relegated to the courts. Thus there is an enlargement of the holy place in the Christian church that is itself typological.

Because our Head and great High Priest has entered into the heavenly tabernacle, typologically represented by the rending of the veil from top to bottom on Good Friday, the

¹⁶ Joseph Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth: The Infancy Narratives*, trans. Philip J. Whitmore (New York: Image, 2012), 11.

way of access has been enlarged and all the faithful enter into the temple of the Lord's sacrifice.

Marian Typology of the Ark of the Covenant

The Ark of the Covenant also is a figure of Mary's womb that bore the living Torah. The "dwelling" of the Lord in the Ark of the Covenant through His glory is not only a type of Christ in the Incarnation, but also, for that very reason, a type of Mary's womb that bore the Word Incarnate. Mary, bearing the Lord for nine months, was truly the Ark of the Covenant, which is one of the titles by which she is revered in the Church and in her litanies.

There is a reference to the *shekinah* in the Annunciation account in Luke 1:35 when Gabriel says: "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you." The overshadowing of God's glory in the Sanctuary and the Temple was only a figure of this supreme "overshadowing" by which the Word became flesh. Ratzinger comments:

In terms of the language used, it belongs to the theology of the Temple and of God's presence in the sanctuary. The sacred cloud—the *shekinah*—is the visible sign of God's presence. It conceals the fact that God is dwelling in his house, yet at the same time points to it. The cloud that casts its shadow over men comes back later in the Lord's transfiguration. Again it is a sign of God's presence, of God's self-revelation in hiddenness. So the reference to the overshadowing by the Holy Spirit brings us back to the Zion theology of the salutation.¹⁷ Once again Mary appears as God's living tent, in which he chooses to dwell among men in a new way.¹⁸

After becoming pregnant with the Lord, Mary's voyage from Nazareth to the home of Zechariah and Elizabeth (Ain Karim) recapitulates an important episode from the Old Testament: the procession of the Ark of the Covenant from Philistine possession to Jerusalem, where it was brought solemnly by King David.¹⁹ Mary is the true Ark of the Covenant who traverses Israel from Galilee to Jerusalem, first at the Visitation, and then later with St. Joseph in the journey to Bethlehem.

That Mary is the Ark of the Covenant is also implied in Isaiah 7:14 in the prophecy of the virgin birth: "Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel." The title "Emmanuel" means "God with us." Thus it refers to the dwelling of God with His people that culminates in the Incarnation, but which was foreshadowed in the Ark of the Covenant. The virgin who bears the indwelling God is the reality that the Ark prefigured.

Finally, the connection between Mary and the Ark of the Covenant is implied in Revelation 11:19–12:2:

Then God's temple in heaven was opened, and the ark of his covenant was seen within his temple; and there were flashes of lightning, voices, peals of thunder, an earthquake, and heavy hail. And a great portent appeared in heaven, a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars; she was with child and she cried out in her pangs of birth, in anguish for delivery.

Another aspect of the typology of the Ark of the Covenant is the reverence that the Israelites were required to show it. It was separated from any profane contact, such that only the high priest could enter into the Holy of Holies once a year on Yom Kippur, prostrating himself with the blood of the sacrifices. An impressive example was given when the Ark of the Covenant was recovered from the enemies of Israel, and was being carried by two Israelites, Uzzah and Ahio, on a cart driven by oxen. At a certain point the oxen stumbled and Uzzah touched the Ark to steady it, and was struck dead by the Lord.²⁰

The fact that the Ark of the Covenant could not be touched by unconsecrated human hands is a figure of the holiness required of the true Ark of the New and everlasting Covenant: the Mother of the Redeemer. If Uzzah was killed because he touched the Ark containing the tablets of the Law with unconsecrated hands, what must the sanctity of Mary be to carry the Word of God made man in her womb?

This also provides an argument of fittingness for Mary's perpetual virginity. If the Ark was separated from all profane contact, it is fitting that Mary's womb, which is the true Ark that bore the Son of God, should not be touched by any man.

Some Fathers see the Marian typology of the Ark of the Covenant in relation to Mary's Assumption, citing Psalm 131:8: "Arise, O Lord, into your resting place: you and the ark, which you have sanctified." The Lord does not ascend alone, for He is accompanied by another: the Ark of sanctification. It is not unreasonable to see the Ark as a figure of our Lady, whose womb was the true ark sanctified by the Lord to hold and nourish the living Torah for nine months. Pius XII, in his bull, refers to this tradition:

Often there are theologians and preachers who, following in the footsteps of the holy Fathers,²¹ have been rather free in their use of events and expressions taken from Sacred Scripture to explain their belief in the Assumption. Thus, to mention only a few of the texts rather frequently cited in this fashion, some have employed the words of the psalmist: "Arise, O Lord, into your resting place: you and the ark, which you have sanctified" [Ps 131:8]; and have looked upon the Ark of the Covenant, built of incorruptible wood

²⁰ See 2 Sam 6:7: "The anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzzah; and God smote him there because he put forth his hand to the ark; and he died there beside the ark of God."

²¹ See St. John Damascene, *op. cit.*, Hom. II, n. 11; and also the *Encomium* attributed to St. Modestus.

¹⁷ See Zeph 3:14–17.

¹⁸ Joseph Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth: The Infancy Narratives*, 29.

¹⁹ 2 Sam 6.

and placed in the Lord's temple, as a type of the most pure body of the Virgin Mary, preserved and exempt from all the corruption of the tomb and raised up to such glory in heaven.²²

The Bread of Presence in the Tabernacle

In addition to the manna in the Ark of the Covenant, the Tent of Meeting (and later the Holy Place in the Temple) had another figure of the Eucharist in the "bread of the Presence"²³ and in libations of wine. God commanded Moses to place in the tabernacle a table plated with gold on which the Israelites were to "set the bread of the Presence on the table before me always" (Ex 25:30), and to pour libations in flagons of pure gold.

Further details of the offering of the "bread of the Presence" are given in Leviticus and Numbers. Leviticus 24:5–9 describes the offering of bread every Sabbath:

And you shall take fine flour, and bake twelve cakes of it; two tenths of an ephah shall be in each cake. And you shall set them in two rows, six in a row, upon the table of pure gold. And you shall put pure frankincense with each row, that it may go with the bread as a memorial portion to be offered by fire to the Lord. Every Sabbath day Aaron shall set it in order before the Lord continually on behalf of the people of Israel as a covenant for ever. And it shall be for Aaron and his sons, and they shall eat it in a holy place, since it is for him a most holy portion out of the offerings by fire to the Lord, a perpetual due.

Exodus 29:40²⁴ and Numbers 28:4–7 describe a daily offering of bread and wine, and specify that it was to accompany the daily offering of two unblemished one-year-old male lambs, one in the morning and the other in the evening:

The one lamb you shall offer in the morning, and the other lamb you shall offer in the evening; also a tenth of an ephah of fine flour for a cereal offering, mixed with a fourth of a hin of beaten oil. It is a continual burnt offering, which was ordained at Mount Sinai for a pleasing odor, an offering by fire to the Lord. Its drink offering shall be a fourth of a hin for each lamb; in the holy place you shall pour out a drink offering of strong drink to the Lord.²⁵

The "bread of the Presence" comes up in 1 Samuel 21:4–6, when David and his men were fleeing from the persecution of Saul. David asked Ahimelech, the high priest, for bread, and the priest responded that the only bread he had was the "holy bread" that had been set before the Lord. Ahimelech gave it to David and his men, since they fulfilled the one condition that they be pure from sexual intercourse.

²² Pius XII, bull *Munificentissimus Deus* 26.

²³ The Hebrew expression is *lechem haPanim*, which literally means "bread of the face [of God]."

²⁴ "With the first lamb [you shall offer] a tenth measure of fine flour mingled with a fourth of a hin of beaten oil and a fourth of a hin of wine for a libation."

²⁵ Num 28:4–7. See also Num 15:5–7, which prescribes offerings of bread and wine to accompany the sacrifices of lambs, rams, and bulls.

Jesus referred to this episode in Matthew 12:3–6,²⁶ saying:

He said to them, "Have you not read what David did, when he was hungry, and those who were with him: how he entered the house of God and ate the bread of the Presence, which it was not lawful for him to eat nor for those who were with him, but only for the priests? Or have you not read in the law how on the sabbath the priests in the temple profane the sabbath,²⁷ and are guiltless? I tell you, something greater than the temple is here.

The bread of the Presence was consecrated to the Lord and thus normally could be eaten only by the consecrated descendants of Aaron. The story is a figure of the extension of those who could partake in the consecrated bread to all the faithful of the New Israel. What in the Old Covenant had been reserved for the consecrated sons of Aaron is extended in the Church to all who have been consecrated by Baptism.

This "bread of the Presence" and the libations of wine in the tabernacle prefigure the Eucharist in four fundamental ways. First, they prefigure the sacramental sign of the Eucharist in their matter of bread and wine that was consecrated and set aside from ordinary use. Second, they prefigure Holy Communion in that they were consumed by the priests as a sign of communion with God. Third, they are sacrificial offerings that accompanied the daily sacrifice of the unblemished lamb, which is also a figure of Christ's sacrifice. Thus they also prefigure the sacrificial aspect of the Eucharist. Finally, they prefigure the adoration of the Eucharist, in that they were placed with the Ark of the Covenant in the tabernacle.

Brant Pitre has shown that there was even a tradition of blessing the people of Israel who came to the Temple on the pilgrimage feasts with the bread of the Presence. The Babylonian Talmud records that the priests "used to lift it [the golden Table] up and exhibit the Bread of the Presence on it to those who came up for the festivals, saying to them, "'Behold, God's love for you!'"²⁸ This was probably understood in the sense that the oblation of the consecrated bread was a sign of the covenant, which is a manifestation of God's love for man.

Although a marvelous figure, it must be remembered that the bread of the Presence and the libations of wine were but bread and wine. They prefigured something infinitely greater than their own reality. St. Cyril of Jerusalem brings out the figure in his catechetical lecture on the Eucharist:

Even in the Old Testament there were "Loaves of the Presence," but since they belonged to the old dispensation they have come to fulfillment. But in the New Testament

²⁶ The parallel texts are Mk 2:25–26 and Lk 6:1–5.

²⁷ The priests worked on the Sabbath by preparing and offering the bread of the Presence and the other sacrifices.

²⁸ Babylonian Talmud, Menahoth 29a, quoted in Brant Pitre, *Jesus and the Jewish Roots of the Eucharist*, 130–31.

the bread is of heaven and the chalice brings salvation, and they sanctify the soul and the body. . . . Do not, then, regard the bread and wine as nothing but bread and wine, for they are the body and blood of Christ as the master himself has proclaimed.²⁹

Typology of the Temple

According to Deuteronomy 12:10–14, after the Israelites had entered the Promised Land and had rest from their enemies, a permanent place of worship was to be built in the place that the Lord would designate:

But when you go over the Jordan, and live in the land which the Lord your God gives you to inherit, and when he gives you rest from all your enemies round about, so that you live in safety, then to the place which the Lord your God will choose, to make his name dwell there, thither you shall bring all that I command you: your burnt offerings and your sacrifices, your tithes and the offering that you present, and all your votive offerings which you vow to the Lord. And you shall rejoice before the Lord your God, you and your sons and your daughters, your menservants and your maid-servants, and the Levite that is within your towns, since he has no portion or inheritance with you. Take heed that you do not offer your burnt offerings at every place that you see; but at the place which the Lord will choose in one of your tribes, there you shall offer your burnt offerings, and there you shall do all that I am commanding you.

After David conquered Jerusalem and made it his capital and brought peace to Israel, he brought the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem, and desired to build a Temple to house it. At that time, David had defeated Saul, established his capital in Jerusalem, and built himself a palace, but there was not yet a Temple in Jerusalem. David therefore proposes to the prophet Nathan his plan of building a temple in Jerusalem to house the Tabernacle of the Lord. The expression of that desire to the prophet Nathan was the occasion for a magnificent Messianic prophecy, in which God promised that there would be an eternal kingship in David's seed. It is interesting to see the connection that is thus made between the building of the Temple and the Incarnation, which it prefigured.

Nathan at first says: "Go, do all that is in thy heart, because the Lord is with thee" (2 Sam 7:3). However, that night, the word of the Lord came to Nathan telling him to say to David that it would not be for him to build the house of the Lord, but for his son, Solomon:

When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come forth from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son. When he commits iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men;

but I will not take my steadfast love from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you. And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure for ever before me; your throne shall be established for ever.³⁰

This prophecy could be understood to refer partly to King Solomon, who built the glorious Temple of the Lord and established a glorious earthly kingdom, and whose iniquity (and that of his descendants) could be punished by God. However, the throne of Solomon was not eternal, nor was his kingdom established forever. Either God was grossly exaggerating, or this text refers to another son to be born of the seed of David, who will *reign forever over Jacob*: the Messiah. What earthly throne and what house can be firm *forever*? The prophecy applies strictly only to Christ, who built the spiritual house of the Lord, which is the Church, a kingdom which shall last until the end of time, which is ruled over by Christ the King, and administered through His vicar on earth, the Pope.³¹

The kingship of Solomon is a type of Christ the King through the universality of his reign, the peace it enjoyed, the wisdom with which he ruled, and the building of the Temple. However, the true temple and the true kingdom that last forever are established by Christ. The true temple of the divinity is His own human body, and the true kingdom is the kingdom of God which He came to establish: the Church on earth and the Church in heaven.

The Temple has a very rich typology, with various levels of meaning. It is a type of the humanity of Christ, every church housing the Blessed Sacrament, the entire Church militant, the Blessed Virgin Mary, every Christian in a state of grace, and of the Church triumphant.

Jesus demonstrates that the Temple is a type of Him in John 2:19–21 when He was asked for a sign for chasing out the money-changers from the Temple, and He answered: "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." John clarifies that "he spoke of the temple of his body."

The Temple is also the type of the Christian who receives Christ in Holy Communion and of the divine Indwelling of the Blessed Trinity in the souls of the just. St. Paul speaks of the Temple with reference to the Christian in 1 Corinthians 6:19–20: "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God? You are not your own; you were bought with a great price. So glorify God in your body."

The Temple is also a type of the unity of the Church. The unity of the Church's sacrifice was prefigured in the Mosaic Law which stipulated that all sacrifice was to be done in the Temple in Jerusalem. This commandment, on the one hand, was a great difficulty for the Jewish people, requiring them to travel to Jerusalem three times

²⁹ St. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Mystagogic Catecheses*, Sermon 4.5–6, in Edward Yarnold, *The Awe-Inspiring Rites of Initiation: The Origins of the RCIA* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1994), 85.

³⁰ 2 Sam 7:12–16.

³¹ The mention of "committing iniquity" in 2 Sam 7:14 should be understood as referring to the members of His Mystical Body.

a year. After the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD, this commandment meant that the entire sacrificial system of Mosaic Judaism could no longer be observed.

Why did God command that all sacrifice had to be offered in the Temple? First of all, it was a visible symbol of the unity that God wanted in His liturgy. Secondly, it helped preserve the unity of faith and worship in Israel, since all sacrifice was offered in one place under the oversight of the High Priest. Beyond these reasons, however, the precept that all sacrifice had to be offered in the Temple was a great symbol prefiguring the unity of worship in the New Covenant.

Although sacrifice is offered everywhere in the Catholic world, from the rising of the sun to its setting,³² nevertheless, the worship of the Church is even more unified than that of Israel. Everywhere in the Catholic Church, *one and the same sacrifice*—the sacrifice of Calvary—is offered until the end of time in the Holy Mass. In Israel, many animal sacrifices were offered in only one place (the Temple), whereas in the Church, one and the same sacrifice is offered in every place under the sun.

St. Augustine brings this out beautifully in a sermon to the newly baptized on Easter day. He speaks of the Eucharist as the true sacrificial offering of Christ's Body and Blood that was prefigured in all the sacrifices of the Old Covenant. The Eucharist alone is the sacrifice of the "body and blood of the priest himself":

You have all just now been born again of water and the Spirit, and can see that food and drink upon this table of the Lord's in a new light, and receive it with a fresh love and piety. So I am obliged . . . to remind you infants of what the meaning is of such a great and divine sacrament, such a splendid and noble medicine, such a pure and simple sacrifice, which is not offered now just in the one earthly city of Jerusalem, nor in that tabernacle which was constructed by Moses, nor in the temple built by Solomon. These were just "shadows of things to come" (Col 2:17; Heb 10:1). But "from the rising of the sun to its setting" (Mal 1:11) it is offered as the prophets foretold, and as a sacrifice of praise to God, according to the grace of the New Testament.

No longer is a victim sought from the flocks for a blood sacrifice, nor is a sheep or a goat any more led to the divine altars, but *now the sacrifice of our time is the body and blood of the priest himself*. . . .

So Christ our Lord, who offered by suffering for us what by being born he had received from us, has become our high priest for ever, and has given us the *order of sacrifice which you can see, of his body that is to say, and his blood*. . . . *Recognize in the bread what hung on the cross, and in the cup what flowed from his side*.

You see, *those old sacrifices of the people of God also*

32 See Mal 1:11: "For from the rising of the sun to its setting my name is great among the nations, and in every place incense is offered to my name, and a pure offering; for my name is great among the nations, says the Lord of hosts."

represented in a variety of ways this single one that was to come. . . . And therefore receive and eat the body of Christ, yes, you that have become members of Christ in the body of Christ; receive and drink the blood of Christ. In order not to be scattered and separated, eat what binds you together; in order not to seem cheap in your own estimation, *drink the price that was paid for you*. . . . You are then, after all, receiving that flesh about which Life itself says, "The bread which I shall give is my flesh for the life of the world" (Jn 6:51).³³

Jerusalem

Because Jerusalem was the city chosen to house the Temple, Jerusalem also shares in the same typology as the Temple. The etymology of Jerusalem seems to be "foundation of peace" or "possession of peace."³⁴ The name is mentioned in Joshua 10:1, and it seems to be the same city as the earlier Salem mentioned in Genesis 14:18 in connection with Melchizedek.

The anagogical typology is brought out in the New Testament, in which the Church triumphant is referred to as the heavenly Jerusalem. A key text which connects Jerusalem, the Temple, the Shekinah, the Incarnation, and the heavenly Jerusalem is Revelation 21:1–23:

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband; and I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling of God is with men. He will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself will be with them. . . . And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine upon it, for the glory of God is its light, and its lamp is the Lamb.

33 St. Augustine, Sermon 228B, 1–3, trans. E. Hill, in *Sermons* III/6, pp. 261–262.

34 The name is a compound of two roots: *jrh*, which means to cast, direct, or instruct; and *shlm*, which means peace or completion.