This fascinating volume draws together contributions from a wide range of theologians and practising musicians to consider the ways that theology and belief can interact with the practice and appreciation of music, to mutually invigorating effect. It is an impressive and exciting achievement and I am sure it will be read eagerly by all those for whom music can illuminate the sacred.

—Dr. Jeremy Thurlow, University of Cambridge

Our contemporary culture is communicating ever-increasingly through the visual, through film, and through music. This makes it ever more urgent for theologians to explore the resources of art for enriching our understanding and experience of the Judeo-Christian tradition.

Annunciations: Sacred Music for the Twenty-First Century, edited by George Corbett, answers this need, evaluating the relationship between the sacred and the composition, performance, and appreciation of music.

Through the theme of ‘annunciations’, this volume interrogates how, when, why, through and to whom God communicates in the Old and New Testaments. In doing so, it tackles the intimate relationship between scriptural reflection and musical practice in the past, its present condition, and what the future might hold.

Annunciations comprises three parts. Part I sets out flexible theological and compositional frameworks for a constructive relationship between the sacred and music. Part II presents the reflections of theologians and composers involved in collaborating on new pieces of sacred choral music, alongside the six new scores and links to the recordings. Part III considers the reality of programming and performing sacred works today.

This volume provides an indispensable resource for scholars and artists working at the interface between theology and the arts, and for those involved in sacred music. However, it will also be of interest to anyone concerned with the ways in which the divine communicates through word and artistry to humanity.

As with all Open Book publications, this entire book is available to read for free on the publisher’s website. Printed and digital editions, together with supplementary digital material, can also be found at www.openbookpublishers.com.

Cover image: Don Simone Camaldolese. Frontispiece from a Choir Book, ca. 1390. Ink on vellum, 59.4 x 44.8 cm. (irregular left edge). Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn Museum Collection, X1015. Cover design: Anna Gatti.
The Infancy Narratives (the first two chapters of the Gospels of Matthew and Luke) are marked by powerful moments of divine annunciations and epiphanies, as well as by human and angelic response in song. These accounts of the birth and childhood of Jesus have served as profound inspiration for Christian theology and art throughout history, and the truths they embody are central to the Christian imagination. The thirteenth-century Franciscan theologian, Bonaventure, treats in an exemplary way the evangelists’ detailed discussions of the birth of John the Baptist, as well as of the events surrounding and following the nativity and epiphany of Jesus. Far from seeing the Infancy Narratives as a prelude to the main events of the Gospel, Bonaventure sees in them an indispensable summation of the main themes of the Christian faith and the fulfillment of the promises of the Old Testament.

This chapter focuses on Bonaventure’s discussion of the three Gospel canticles recited in the Divine Office: the Benedictus, Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis. His treatment of these songs makes it clear how the Infancy events found in the Gospel are the culmination of the history of Israel, and are thus suitable focal points for the liturgy. Drawing upon a venerable tradition of exegesis from the patristic and earlier medieval period, Bonaventure explicates the meaning of these three canticles from Luke’s gospel in the daily liturgical prayer of the Church. In doing so, Bonaventure relies upon the idea of typology: the figurative reading of the Old Testament in light of its fulfillment in the Christian dispensation. These exegetical and liturgical contexts at the heart of the Christian tradition may open up many opportunities for rich and original forms of artistic expression.
1. St Bonaventure, and Typology in the Bible and Christian tradition

Typology is a method of biblical interpretation whereby an element found in the Old Testament is seen to prefigure one found in the New Testament. The initial one is called ‘the type’ and the fulfilment is designated ‘the antitype’. Either type or antitype may be a person, thing, or event, and somehow relates to the person and mission of Christ and the salvation of believers. The use of biblical typology was fundamental to much Christian exegesis before the rise of modern critical biblical scholarship, and persists in various forms to our own day. With deep roots in Hellenistic Greek and Hebrew literary and religious cultures, it also became central to Christian biblical interpretation. Beyond being a tool for Christian exegetes, typology has become central to the Christian imagination over the centuries, shaping liturgical, artistic and literary expression.

When examining the history of Christian biblical exegesis, typology specifically refers to the interpretation of the Old Testament based on the fundamental theological unity of the two Testaments — with God as the ultimate inspiration — whereby something in the Old foreshadows or prefigures something in the New. This view of the theological unity of scripture is expressed in Catechism of the Catholic Church:

The Church, as early as apostolic times, and then constantly in her Tradition, has illuminated the unity of the divine plan in the two Testaments through typology, which discerns in God’s works of the Old Covenant prefiguration of what he accomplished in the fullness of time in the person of his incarnate Son. Christians therefore read the Old Testament in the light of Christ crucified and risen. Such typological reading disclose the inexhaustible content of the Old Testament; but it must not make us forget that the Old Testament retains its own intrinsic value as Revelation reaffirmed by our Lord himself. Besides, the New Testament has to be read in light of the Old. Early Christian catechesis made constant use of the Old Testament. As an old saying put it, the New Testament lies hidden in the Old and the Old Testament is unveiled in the New.¹

Christian exegetes felt empowered to take this approach because they found it utilized within the New Testament itself. Firstly, authors of various New Testament books use the Old Testament as a source of prophecy pointing forward to Jesus.² Christ himself used a reference to Jonah as a prefiguring of himself (Matthew [Mt] 12.40). St Paul, too, portrays the desert wanderings of the ancient Israelites as a type of the Christian life (1 Corinthians 10.1–6), and the story of Hagar and Sarah is seen as typologically representing the contrast between slavery to the Law in the Old Covenant with the freedom of the Christian New Testament (Galatians [Gal] 4.21-31). Likewise, the

² Restricting ourselves just to the Infancy Narrative of Matthew’s Gospel, examples include: Matthew 1. 23; and 2. 6, 14-15, 17-18, 23.
Epistle to the Hebrews portrays many aspects of the Old Testament, such as the priest, Melchizedek (Heb 7.15-19), as typologically looking forward to Christ. Inspired by these New Testament examples, early Christian exegetes discovered many typological connections in Hebrew scripture, such as how the manna in the desert may prefigure the Eucharist, or animal sacrifice may prefigure the death of Christ on the Cross. To give an example from the Infancy Narratives, Mary’s song Magnificat was seen to echo clearly the Prayer of Hannah in 1 Samuel [Sam], where Hannah would be a type of Mary.

Furthermore, over time these typological readings were tied to an idea of the different “senses” of scripture. These came to be seen in terms of four senses, usually adhering to the following pattern: 1) Literal sense, or ‘the meaning conveyed by the words of scripture and discovered by exegesis’; 2) Allegorical sense, or how the Old Testament person or thing stands for or prefigures a New Testament counterpart; 3) Tropological or Moral sense, how the text teaches virtue; 4) Anagogical sense, how the text teaches something about salvation. Throughout the patristic and medieval centuries, the relationship of these ‘senses’, and how the three ‘figurative’ senses related to the literal or historical, resulted in a great deal of variety and creativity among a wide range of authors.4

Seen from this rich and complex viewpoint, the Old Testament antecedents of the Gospel Narratives would have resonated with their Christian audiences, echoing, calling to mind, and providing a deeper meaning to the Infancy Narratives and, indeed, to the whole of the Gospels. This view of the fundamental unity of the two testaments was imaginatively put to use in the earliest traditions of the Church. Most basically, the Church enshrined typology in the liturgy, from the great sequences of Easter, to the readings for every single Sunday, where usually an Old Testament passage was read, which either would foreshadow or be fulfilled in some readings from the Gospels. This liturgical practice also accentuates the moral meanings of the scriptures: that is, how they are meant to be applied in the lives of Christian believers today. The liturgical expression of typology could also lend itself to the full resources of music and art, opening out and articulating these multivalent theological connections.

This way of reading the scriptures arguably reaches its apogee in the scriptural commentary of Bonaventure. This Franciscan master envisaged scriptural exegesis as preaching the Word of God and aiding other teachers to do likewise. As he expresses it in his prologue to the Commentary on Luke, ‘Now to expound and teach the Gospel of God is to preach the divine word. And therefore, the teacher must be inflamed by

---

3 Catechism of the Catholic Church, Canon 116.
fraternal love’. Bonaventure’s method reflects this ideal. As Robert Karris expresses it, ‘Briefly put, Bonaventure’s hermeneutical method is to interpret Scripture by Scripture’. This view of scripture, interestingly, has often been described in artistic terms. The Quarrachi editors of Bonaventure’s works see his commentary as ‘a mosaic constructed from innumerable and varied stones’; it uses other scriptural texts, in other words, to expound on the text of scripture he is considering in any given moment, to bring out its full meaning. Moreover, in his Collations on the Six Days of Creation, Bonaventure compares scripture to a stringed instrument, a zither, that is a cithara or psaltery: ‘All of Scripture is like a single zither. And the lesser string does not produce the harmony by itself, but in union with the others. Likewise, one passage of Scripture depends upon another. Indeed, a thousand passages are related to a single passage.’

This theory of scriptural interpretation, so beautifully articulated through artistic metaphors, is set forth succinctly in the prologue of his Breviloquium, a short compendium of theology meant for the training of fellow Franciscans. Bonaventure identifies theology with sacred scripture: its origin is God; it surpasses knowledge, but is geared toward our capacity; and its end or fruit consists of eternal happiness. Faith in Christ is a fundamental prerequisite for understanding scripture, for grasping its full meaning and how it unfolds before our mind.

Using imaginative metaphors, Bonaventure then describes the breadth, length, height and depth of scripture. He compares the breadth of scripture to a river that is enriched by a diversity of books and genres as it flows from its source. The length of scripture is seen in how it covers all periods from creation until the Day of Judgment. Moving from his river metaphor, Bonaventure describes the whole course of salvation history as being like a beautifully composed poem: an integral view of the poem is necessary to fully appreciate its individual words and stanzas. The height of scripture testifies to how Jesus is the mediator of all grace and knowledge of heavenly things, and the means by which they descend for our own apprehension. The depth of scripture is experienced in its four-fold senses, all of which correspond to its content, audience, source and final end. Each passage of sacred scripture, then, provides the reader with a number of meanings from a single text. For Bonaventure, it is fitting that the teaching of Christ should be humble in word but profound in meaning.

---

7 Ibid.
9 This paragraph is a summary of the Prologue to Breviloquium. St Bonaventure, Breviloquium, trans. with notes by Dominic V. Monti (St Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2005), pp. 1–22.
The most effective way to bring out these spiritual meanings once the basic, literal understanding has been established is, in Bonaventure’s view, by quoting other, more direct scriptural passages. The role of the exegete is to guide the uninitiated Christian soul through the intimidating and seemingly impenetrable forest of the scriptures to an understanding of true theology found in its text. This requires, first and foremost, a hermeneutical lens of humility, desire and charity. The purpose of such exegesis is, then, to illuminate the mind and ignite the heart of the reader or listener. The key, however, in an exegetical process far from straightforward or self-evident, is for the exegete to possess a profound knowledge of all scripture in order to bring appropriate scriptural texts forward in the analysis of a particular biblical episode. Let us now turn to analyse how Bonaventure implements these hermeneutical principles in his exegesis of the canticles in the Lukan Infancy Narratives, keeping in mind the central importance of typology to his method.

2. The Three Canticles

The Divine Office of the Roman Rite from early centuries included three canticles (usually referred to by their first words in Latin) from the Gospel of Luke as integral parts of the liturgy. The Canticle of Mary, known as Magnificat (Luke [Lk] 1.46-55), is sung by the Virgin Mary when she is greeted by her cousin Elizabeth. This song forms an integral and climactic moment as part of Vespers every evening.

‘And Mary said: “My soul doth magnify the Lord. And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. Because he hath regarded the humility of his handmaid; for behold from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. Because he that is mighty hath done great things for me, And holy is his name. And his mercy is from generations unto generations, to them that fear him. He hath shewed might in his arm: he hath scattered the proud in the conceit of their hearts. He hath put down the mighty from their seat, and hath exalted the humble; He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away. He hath received Israel his servant, being mindful of his mercy: As he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his seed forever.”’

The song of Thanksgiving (Lk 1.68-79), uttered by Zechariah at the birth of his son John the Baptist, known as the Benedictus, is full of gratitude and hope for the fulfilment of

---

11 This insight about Bonaventure was first voiced by the fifteenth century Parisian master Jean Gerson. See Marianne Schlosser, ‘Bonaventure: Life and Works’, in A Companion to Bonaventure, pp. 7–59 (p. 57).
12 Lk 1:46-55. The translation known as the Douay-Rheims Version of the Bible, first published in 1582 (New Testament) and 1609 (Old Testament) is quoted here and in the next two canticles, as it is a literal translation of the Latin Vulgate Bible used by Bonaventure. The Holy Bible, Translated from the Latin Vulgate (New York: P. J. Kenedy & Sons, 1914).
Messianic promise, and the child who is to be the forerunner of the Messiah. It is sung as part of the early morning hour of Lauds, and like the Magnificat is accompanied by appropriate seasonal and festal antiphons.

“Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; because he hath visited and wrought the redemption of his people: And hath raised up an horn of salvation to us, in the house of David his servant: As he spoke by the mouths of his holy prophets, Who are from the beginning: Salvation from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us: To perform mercy to our fathers, and to remember his holy testament, The oath which he swore to Abraham our father, that he would grant to us, That being delivered from the hand of our enemies, we may serve him without fear, In holiness and justice before him, all our days. And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the Lord to prepare his ways: To give knowledge of salvation to his people, unto the remission of their sins: Through the bowels of the mercy of our God, In which the Orient from on high hath visited us: To enlighten them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death: to direct our feet into the way of peace.”

Finally, the Nunc Dimittis, sung by Simeon (Lk 2.29-32) upon his encounter with the infant Jesus at his presentation in the Temple, is sung every night at Compline, the final liturgical service of the day.

“Now thou dost dismiss thy servant, O Lord, according to thy word in peace: Because my eyes have seen thy salvation which thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples: A light to the revelation of the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.”

The placement of these three canticles in the liturgy of the Church was seen as having profound significance by Bonaventure, as is evidenced by the following statement in his Lukan commentary:

And because this canticle [Nunc Dimittis] contains in itself the fullness of the praise of Christ, and the consolation of a dying old man, it is, therefore, sung in the evening at Compline. Wherefore, these three canticles of Mary, Zechariah and Simeon are ordered so that one begins where the other leaves off: the first at Vespers, the second in the morning, and third in the evening. Also it is signified in this that every station in life must praise God for the incarnation: virgins, married people, and widows; those in contemplative life, prelates, those in active life; lay and clerics and religious, who must be consecrated to God.

Let us now turn more closely to what Bonaventure has to say about each canticle and about what the episodes surrounding them can reveal about the nature of revelation. It is also important to include the Ave Maria, which, although not liturgical, was becoming, in Bonaventure’s time, a cornerstone of private devotion. Bonaventure draws his sources primarily from Jerome (in particular, for his references to Hebrew words); from Ambrose and Bede (especially for their comments in the Glossa Ordinaria);

---

13 Lk 1.68-79 (Douay-Rheims Version).
14 Lk 2.29-32 (Douay-Rheims Version).
and from the Marian sermons of Bernard of Clairvaux. As in all his works, however, Bonaventure takes things selectively from his predecessors, creatively fashioning his thoughts with his own voice and style in fidelity to received tradition.

The *Ave Maria*, or the Angelic Salutation, as drawn from Lk 1.28 and Lk 1.42, was becoming an important private prayer in his day, and was developing into the practice of the Rosary.

Hail Mary, full of grace,
The Lord is with thee!
Blessed art thou among women,
And blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.\(^{16}\)

Bonaventure’s discussion of these verses gives him the opportunity to portray the Virgin Mary, at the moment of the Annunciation and thus Incarnation, as the fulfilment of all great Old Testament women, with explicit mention of Esther, Jael, Abigail, Ruth and Judith.\(^{17}\) Focusing on the Incarnation as fundamentally a realization of promise, Bonaventure provides a lens through which to read the story of all Old Testament women as major players in salvation history, in the promise, its fulfilment, and now redemption itself.

This continues with his treatment of the *Magnificat*. This song is the climax of Vespers and, on Saturday evening, the beginning of the liturgical celebration of the resurrection. In discussing the *Magnificat*, Bonaventure makes clear that it is related to various Old Testament canticles, including the Song of Hannah (1 Sam 2.1-10), which it intentionally echoes: ‘Her canticle shows that the fulfilment of all promised blessings has come about, and therefore brings about the fulfilment of all praise and canticles and even of the scriptures.’\(^{18}\) Unlike many modern biblical scholars, Bonaventure does not make the leap to say that Luke has essentially put these words in the mouth of Mary in order to make the theological point. Rather, he believes the Virgin, inspired by the Holy Spirit, is quite capable of echoing the songs and plaintive aspirations of her Hebrew mothers on her own. Bonaventure asserts that the *Magnificat* bridges the gap to the New Testament, as these previous promises are now fulfilled.

A similar significance is given to the *Benedictus*, the song of Zechariah. This is placed by the Church in the morning service of Lauds to signify, as its final lines make clear, the dawn on the day of resurrection. The only response, Bonaventure asserts, should be praise and thanksgiving. For him, this canticle is all about divine Mercy, which is at the heart of the Infancy Narratives. In this canticle, he asserts that three important facets of divine Mercy are established: the mystery of the Incarnation; the

---

16 The now familiar final sentence of this prayer, ‘Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death’, did not become common or universal until the sixteenth century.
price of redemption; the triumph of the resurrection. ‘In these’, he states, ‘is the remedy of our salvation’. The song of Zechariah, moreover, speaks of the beginning of our reparation, giving knowledge of salvation, and of the promise to enlighten those who live in darkness. This, he says, is a perfect expression of the theme of Consolation for Israel and ultimately for everyone.

The culmination of the Infancy Narratives for Bonaventure is the Presentation of Christ in the Temple, an episode where both Christ and his Mother, through his presentation and her ritual purification, submit themselves to the law. This, he asserts, is a profound act of humility, for such purification is needed, in fact, by neither of them. The infant Christ is presented to the elderly Simeon who, embodying Old Testament wisdom, is enabled to experience the promised, but long-awaited Consolation of Israel. His ecstatic song is prayed every night by the Church at Compline, which Bonaventure feels is appropriate as it encapsulates the whole gospel story and its central theological meaning:

Thus in this canticle Christ is praised as peace, salvation, light and glory. He is peace, because he is the mediator. He is salvation, because he is the redeemer. He is light, because he is the teacher. He is glory, because he is the rewarer. And in these four consist the perfect commendation and magnification of Christ, indeed the most brief capsulation of the entire evangelical story: incarnation in peace; preaching in light; redemption in salvation; resurrection in glory.  

For Bonaventure, Simeon can only be explained in light of Old Testament scriptures because he is the antitype of the ‘just’ man, responding for all the just who had come before him. Simeon, then, is himself a figure of scriptural fulfilment, traversing the trestle between the Old and New. Indeed, Bonaventure tells us how the Holy Spirit continued to speak to Simeon through the scripture, making more annunciations — especially on the theme of looking for the Consolation of Israel: ‘Thus the Holy Spirit in a most powerful way said to him what is read in Habakkuk 2.3: “if he taries a little, look for him, for he will surely come and will not delay”’. Bonaventure argues that the Spirit was present with Simeon through grace and love — characteristics of the New dispensation — and thus the full meaning of this Lukan text can be best understood by quotations from the New Testament, such as Romans 5.5: “and hope does not disappoint us, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us.” This interweaving of Old and New Testament passages illuminates the actions of Simeon. Simeon also received, in response to his long years of prayer, a special response of Revelation from the Holy Spirit. As Bonaventure says:

Finally, Simeon was told by the Spirit of truth, and prompted to comprehension infused with joy, that he himself would meet the Lord with the suddenness promised in Malachi 3.1: Behold I send my angel and he shall prepare the way before my face. And presently the Lord,
whom you seek, and the angel of the testament, whom you desire, shall come to his temple. Behold he is coming, proclaims the Lord of Hosts.\textsuperscript{22}

The use of Malachi by Bonaventure is not incidental or arbitrary, as it was also the Old Testament reading (Malachi 3.1-4) for Mass for the Feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Thus, Bonaventure links his own interpretation of the method of the Spirit’s inspiration of Simeon to the ancient typological teaching of the Church. Indeed, he seems to be giving future preachers (and artists) the exegetical tools to explain the liturgical mystery in light of the proper readings for the feast.

As Wisdom literature leads Simeon to the brink of encounter with the Lord, so the language of the Song of Songs is used to describe the moment when prophecy, wisdom, and justice through grace bring Simeon to union with Christ. Simeon, Bonaventure explains, ‘exposes himself completely to Christ’. Thus, Simeon fulfils what Song of Songs 8.6 says about having a seal on his heart and also his arm. Bonaventure goes beyond the text to exclaim how Christ is to be comprehended and held with both arms, congruous with the verse Song of Songs 3.4 about not letting go. This demonstrates how, like Simeon, the Christian must serve God with both hands and all of his or her strength, to spiritually work and battle like in Nehemiah 4.17.

Bonaventure then turns to another key figure in this episode, the prophetess and aged widow, Anna. Here, there is even more theological richness to be found in the canticle of Simeon. Bonaventure explains why Anna is a suitable witness to these great events, but, initially, he makes an important digression to assert that witnesses were needed from every stage of life and both genders, as Christ was coming to restore everything and everyone:

After the testimony of an old man there now follows the testimony from a woman. For it is fitting that there be testimony to the advent of Christ from every sort of person, so that those who do not believe the Gospel might be without excuse. Whence there was angelic and human testimony to Christ, and also of the simple and of the perfect of both sexes to show that both sexes looked for redemption just as both had fallen. Therefore to show that there was no crack in the firm foundation of the testimony, there was sevenfold testimony to the birth of Christ.\textsuperscript{23}

Bonaventure then sets forth the sevenfold testimony: 1) heavenly testimony from the star (Mt 2.2); 2) a source above heaven, the angels (Lk 2.13); 3) a source from under heaven, simple men like the shepherds (Lk 2.20); 4) wise men like the Magi (Mt 2.1); 5) elderly men, like Simeon (Lk 2.27); 6) elderly women like Anna; 7) infants who gave their lives (citing the 28 December Holy Innocents oration from the liturgy; and Mt 2.16; also Ps 8.3): ‘And every nature, every sex, every age produced testimony to the

\textsuperscript{22} Ibid., p. 188.

\textsuperscript{23} Ibid., p. 199. Here one is reminded of canon 130 of the Catechism of the Catholic Church: ‘Typology indicates the dynamic movement toward the fulfilment of the divine plan when God “will be everything to everyone”’. 
birth of Christ, because he had to restore all things.” Bonaventure sums this point up dramatically by citing Lk 19.40 about how all things, even the stones and material world, will cry out in response to God’s appearance among us, even if some keep silent. As Simeon is the antitype or fulfilment of all the just men of the Old Testament, so Mary and the Prophetess Anna could be seen as functioning in the same way for all of the Old Testament women, whether in their prophecies, laments, songs of praise, or periods of thoughtful silence.

3. Art, Liturgy and the Typological Imagination

The centrality of typology to patristic and medieval exegesis of scripture manifested itself in an incredible variety of artistic expression of all kinds, such as statues, stained glass, painting, manuscript illumination, poetry, musical composition and performance, and preaching. Many examples could be adduced to demonstrate the interplay of typological exegesis and the arts within a liturgical and performative context. The well-known eleventh-century Bernward Doors of Hildesheim Cathedral are a fitting illustration. These immense bronze doors depict, on the one side, scenes from the book of Genesis; paralleled on the other are episodes from the life of Christ, which the scenes from Genesis are meant to prefigure. This extraordinary masterpiece of Ottonian art reflects a long trajectory of artistic portrayals of typology and, in the medieval period, it was used in tandem with preaching and liturgical celebrations. Cathedrals such as Chartres and Canterbury contained series of stained glass depictions of Old and New Testament typological parallels, often meant to accompany and articulate the meaning of a parable such as the Good Samaritan. The reciprocity and interplay between artists, exegetes and liturgists in these particular contexts inspired ongoing creativity throughout the medieval period. As William Flynn has shown, evidence suggests that in the eleventh-century monasteries and cathedrals, the makers and composers of liturgical music and texts were marked by ‘a reflection and meditation upon memorized scripture provided by the liturgy itself, and deepened by the study of commentary […] [their] training — poetic, musical, liturgical and exegetical — fed into the study of scripture and these seemingly diverse activities were often experienced as a unified pedagogy that had its origin and culmination in the liturgy’.

Thus, typology has long provided rich artistic opportunities for the juxtaposition of Old and New Testament texts in dialogue with one another. Furthermore, these heartfelt and ecstatic utterances, themselves in response to divine messengers or

---

25 For an excellent description and analysis, see Aloys Butzkamm, Ein Tor zum Paradies. Kunst und Theologie auf der Bronzetür des Hildesheimer Doms (Paderborn: Bonifatius, 2004).
divine inspiration, are moments of great dramatic potential. They are intimate, conversational, but also glorious and awe-filled. And what makes them even more so is that the audience understands that these powerful New Testament moments of divine annunciation and human response are anchored and prefigured deeply in the salvation history of the people of Israel. Pope Paul VI, quoting the second century theologian Irenaeus, expressed this tradition about the Magnificat:

It is in Mary’s canticle that there was heard once more the rejoicing of Abraham who foresaw the Messiah (cf. Jn. 8:56) and there rang out in prophetic anticipation the voice of the Church: ‘In her exultation Mary prophetically declared in the name of the Church: “My soul proclaims the glory of the Lord…”’. And in fact Mary’s hymn has spread far and wide and has become the prayer of the whole Church in all ages.28

Thus in this most mysterious way, the Gospel canticles in the liturgy are simultaneously moments of apprehension transformed into relief, promise and fulfillment, always looking toward the future in hope for an eternity of joy. This patristic and medieval tradition of typology can challenge and inspire contemporary artists to perceive in the scriptural narratives manifold openings for creative parallels, juxtapositions, and meaningful, multi-layered connections. A reappraisal of the reciprocal enrichment of theologians and artists in past expressions of the typological imagination may lead, in turn, to a re-invigoration of contemporary Christian art.

---
