

The Word of God in Sacred Art  
Edward Riojas

I. Introduction

e.g., Edward Riojas, "Adoremus." 2012. [Luke 2:12]

II. Form vs. Function: Basics of art applied to Christendom

A. Works on the theme of The Prodigal Son [Luke 15:11-31]

e.g., Thomas Hart Benton, "Return of the Prodigal Son." 1939. [Proverbs 14:12]

e.g., Julie Quinn, "Embrace." 2008 [2 Timothy 4:1-4]

e.g., Edward Riojas, "The Prodigal Son." 2004. All from the Gerbens Collection, Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan. [1 Corinthians 1:18-25]

B. Architectural design

e.g., Robert the Mason (original design)," St. Alban's Cathedral."  
Late 11<sup>th</sup> century.

C. Church "furniture"

e.g., "Roman Baptismal Immersion Font." 6<sup>th</sup> century. Tunisia.

D. Confession made personal

e.g., Edward Riojas, "Resurrection Polyptych. [detail]" 1999.

III. "Illustrating" Holy Scripture: The historical event approach

e.g., Frances Hook, "Zacchaeus in a Sycamore Tree." [Luke 19:1-6]

e.g., Roger Van Der Weyden, "The Escorial Depositon." 1435. Prado, Madrid. [Matthew 27:55-61]

e.g., Edward Riojas, "Leper." Ecclesiastical Art. [Luke 5:12-13]

IV. Speaking with pictures: The pattern of Christ and His parables

V. Symbolism and Scripture: Visual short hand

e.g., Edward Riojas, "The Ark." Ecclesiastical Art, Proper 17, alt. O.T./Easter Vigil, alt., Year B, New Three Year Lectionary [Genesis 7]

e.g., Edward Riojas, "The Gate." Ecclesiastical Art, Pentecost Tuesday, Year B, New Three Year Lectionary [John 10:1-13]

e.g., Edward Riojas, "St. James the Lesser." From the Christian Symbolism Project [Mark 15:40]

VI. Confessional symbolism

e.g., Warner Sallman, "Head of Christ." 1940.  
e.g., unknown artist, "The Good Shepherd." Date unknown.  
e.g., unknown artist, "Christ Icon." Byzantine. Date unknown.

## VII. Early symbolism

e.g., The Good Shepherd [John 10:11].  
e.g., Ichthus, "Roman Funerary Stele." Roman. Early 3<sup>rd</sup> Century. [Luke 9:20]  
e.g., "The Anchor [cross]." Roman catacombs. 4<sup>th</sup> Century. [Hebrews 6:19].

## VIII. The cross and crucifix

e.g., "The Anchor [cross]." Roman catacombs. 4<sup>th</sup> Century. [Hebrews 6:19].  
e.g., "The Anchor [cross] with Jonah." Turkey. 3<sup>rd</sup> Century ossuary [Matthew 12:38-40].  
e.g., "Early cross with Chi Rho." Roman. c. 350 A.D. [Galatians 6:14].  
e.g., "Crucifix [detail]." Church of Santa Sabina, Rome. Early 5<sup>th</sup> century. [Galatians 6:14].

## IX. Scriptural text in Art: Visual long hand

e.g., Matthias Grunewald, "The Isenheim Altarpiece." c. 1516. [John 3:30]  
e.g., "Eastern Orthodox Crucifix." [Psalm 24:7-10]  
e.g., Edward Riojas, "The Te Deum." 1995. Our Savior Lutheran Church, Grand Rapids, Mich. [Psalm 24:7-10]  
e.g., Edward Riojas, "The Resurrection." 1999. Our Savior Lutheran Church, Grand Rapids, Mich. [Revelation 1:17-18]  
e.g., Edward Riojas, "Ecce Homo." 2014. [Exodus 24:8, also Matthew 27:24-25]  
e.g., Edward Riojas, "The Emmanuel Altarpiece." 2013. Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Adell, Wisc., [Luke 2:12]

## X. Adding layers of meaning: The conceptual approach

e.g., Edward Riojas, "The Emmanuel Altarpiece." 2013. Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Adell, Wisc., [Luke 2:12]  
e.g., Edward Riojas, "Crucifix." 2009. Private collection. [John 19:33-35]  
e.g., Anonymous, "The Baptism of Christ Icon." With Christ standing on a cross, which in turn is crushing Satan. [Genesis 3:14-15]  
e.g., Robert Campin, "The Merode Altarpiece." 1428. MOMA, with detail of Joseph in his workshop. [Jude 1:6]  
e.g., Edward Riojas, "St. Paul Mural." [Acts 17:22-24]

## XI. Some anomalies

A. Moses "horned"

e.g., Michaelangelo, "Moses." c. 1515.

e.g. Claus Sluter, "Well of Moses" detail. c. 1406 [Exodus 34:29]

B. "Modern" angels

e.g., "Kitschmas angel."

e.g., "Nike of Samothrace." Greek; Raphael Sanzio, "Putti." 1513

e.g., Pierre Mignard, "Time Clipping Cupid's Wings." 1694.

[Gabriel, Luke 1:19; Michael, Jude 1:9, Rev. 12:7, Luke 1:13, Luke 1:30, Luke 2:19, 2 Kings 19:35, Isaiah 6:2]

C. The occasional Eastern Orthodox icons

e.g. "The Baptism of Jesus Icon."

D. Depiction of the Holy Trinity: Time to split hairs.

e.g., Masaccio, "Holy Trinity." c. 1428. [Matthew 3:13-17, Matthew 27:45-46]

E. An Example from Roman Catholicism

e.g., Sr. Grace Remington, OCSO. "Mary consoles Eve." 2005. [Genesis 3:14-15]

Intermission

Before I show one last example of how Holy Scripture is shown in art, I want to take a minute to let you know about the availability of presentation outlines, giclee prints and contact information.

XII. A final example, and then some

e.g., Riojas "The Parable of the Buried Treasure." 2013 [Matthew 13:44]