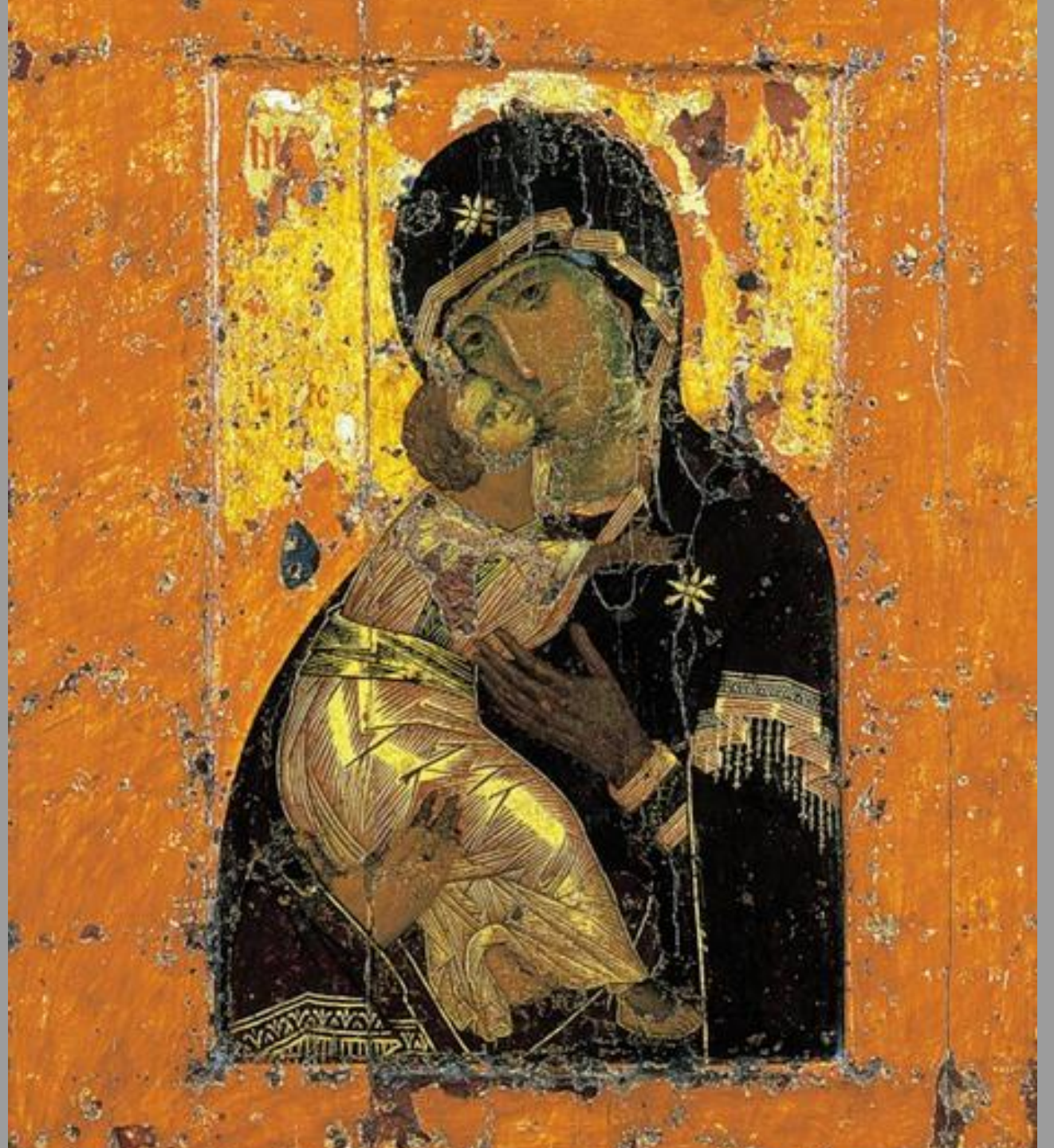


God in Unexpected Places

Vladimir Icon
of Mary, the
God-Bearer
(12th century)



Olivier Messiaen, The Virgin's Contemplation of the Infant

The Annunciation

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary.

And he came to her and said, "Hail, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and considered in her mind what sort of greeting this might be.

“Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there will be no end.”

And Mary said to the angel, “How shall this be, since I have no husband?” And the angel said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God.”

“And behold, your kinswoman Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. For with God nothing will be impossible.” And Mary said, “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.” And the angel departed from her. (Luke 1:26–38)

Gabriel — Angel/Messenger/Intermediary
between Heaven and Earth

Mary — Favored, Troubled, Fearful, Trusting

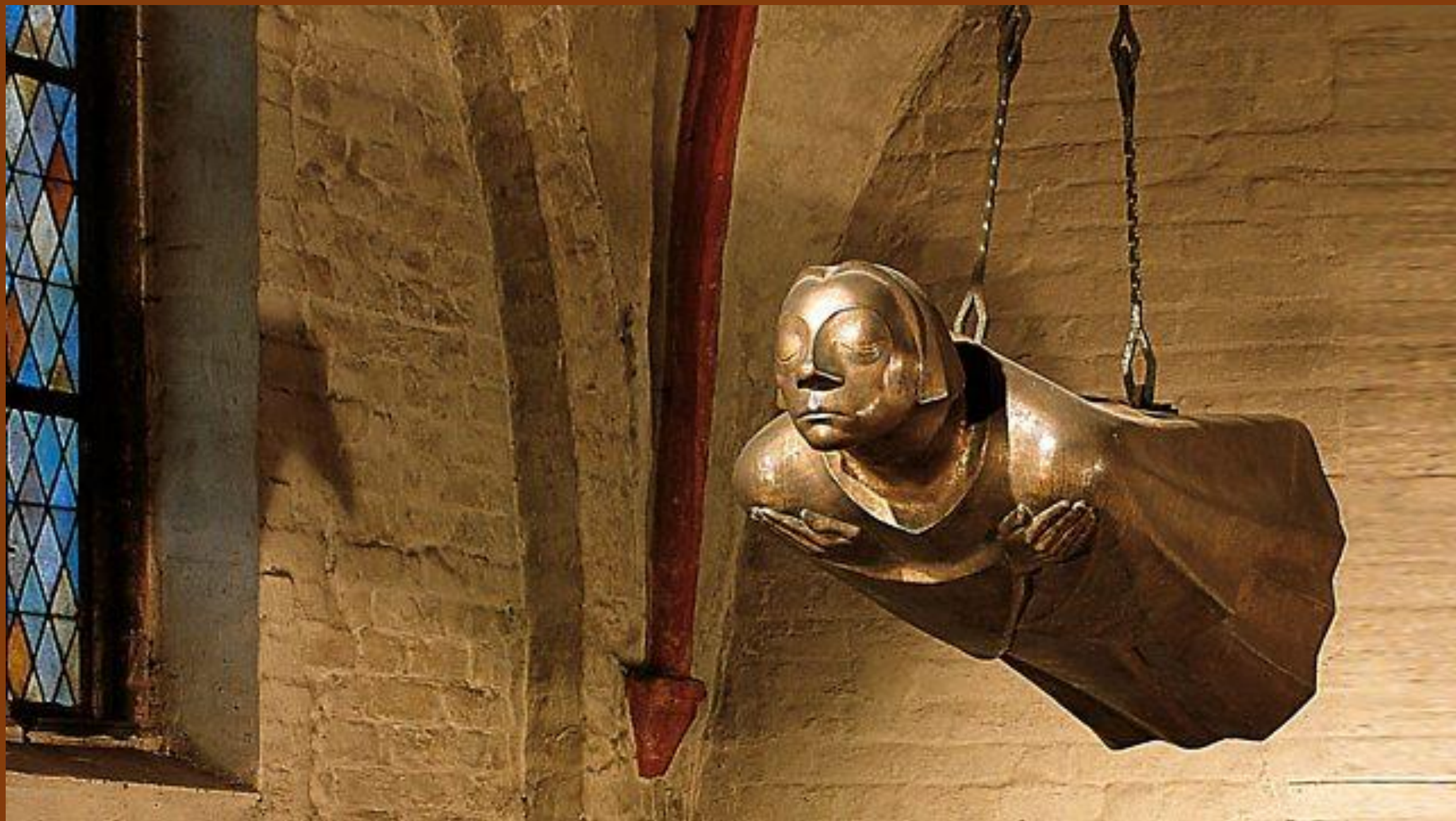
Jesus — Savior, Son of the Most High, Ruler

Holy Spirit — Giver of Life

Ernst Barlach,
1927

The Floating
Angel







Icon,
Novgorod

12th Century





Icon,
16th
century

Pskov,
Russia



Fra Angelico
1443
Italian
Renaissance



Henry
Ossawa
Tanner

1898



Advent, Christmas, Epiphany = **Theophany**

God's Self-Revelation

God's Self-Revelation: One God

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit

- The Father (Most High) who speaks (through the angel Gabriel)
- The Son, Jesus (who is Immanuel, “God with us”)
- The Holy Spirit, God's life-giving power in the world

Mary

- The one who receives God's self-revelation and responds with trust
- The God-bearer (Theotokos)
- The exemplar of Christian faith (favored, troubled, fearful, trusting)

Mary's Magnificat

And Mary said, “My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has regarded the low estate of his handmaiden. For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed; for he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name . . .” (Luke 1:46–49)

The Ending to Luke's Gospel

After Jesus' resurrection and ascension into heaven, the disciples "returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple blessing God." (Luke 24:52–53)