



# *Holy Ground*

Music by Damien Geter  
Libretto by Lila Palmer

Photo Credit: Brittany Lesavoy

Prepared for The Glimmerglass Festival by Kelley Rourke and Nick Richardson

## *From the Dramaturgs*

Hark, Glimmerglass!

This dramaturgy packet explores topics related to *Holy Ground*, Damien Geter and Lila Palmer's modern riff on the Annunciation. The opera will have its world premiere this summer, in a double bill with Kamala Sankaram and Jerre Dye's *Taking Up Serpents*. This packet includes links to several external sites, including a [Google Drive with PDFs](#) of additional articles.

If there are any topics you're interested in exploring more deeply, don't hesitate to reach out.

Peace,  
Kelley and Nick  
[kelleyrourke@me.com](mailto:kelleyrourke@me.com)  
[nicholas.k.richardson@gmail.com](mailto:nicholas.k.richardson@gmail.com)

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# Meet the Creators

## *Lila Palmer, librettist*

[Lila Palmer](#) is a librettist and producer with a secondary practice in creating activation events for museum interpretation. Current and future plans include the children's opera *The Selfish Giant* with [Clarice Assad](#), commissioned by American Lyric Theater for Opera Saratoga; the rescheduled premier of *In Her Own Valley* with Grace Evangeline Mason for the Liverpool Philharmonic; *The Fox Sisters* with [Marc Migo Cortes](#) for [Theatre Liceu](#) and *American Apollo* with [Damien Geter](#) for [Des Moines Metro Opera](#).

Other recent highlights include the song cycle *This Be Her Verse*, commissioned by soprano [Golda Schultz](#) with [Kathleen Tagg](#); a sold-out promenade electronic opera *These Wondering Stones* for [Barbican Center](#) Sound Unbound Festival; and her collaboration with serving women of the British Army, *Dead Equal*. Previous commissions include *The Reckoning*; *Bloodlines*, an outdoor electronic children's opera with giant puppets, *Scraww*; *The Jewel Merchants*; *Sunshine Girl*; *Changing Stations*; and *Heard*. Her first opera libretto, *Harbour* (2016) was called "a work of strange Celtic beauty that turns anguish into art" (*The Times*, London). Directing credits include *Bluebeard's Castle* for the Royal London Philharmonia, *Shorts* at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama and *Marriage of Figaro* (AD) for Aspen Opera Theater.

A lifelong advocate for the arts across the public sphere, Lila's career trajectory has taken her from children's book and storyline editor to cultural commentator: her blogs, program notes and essays have been featured by the Carl Nielsen Competition, English National Opera, Leeds Piano competition and other leading arts programmers. As a presenter and interviewer she has had the great fortune to interview Susan Graham, Ferruccio Furlanetto, Edita Gruberova, and many others. Most recently she co-hosted the International Tchaikovsky awards with Alexander Malich in St. Petersburg for Medici TV.

Lila is a graduate of Cambridge University (BA History 1:1), New England Conservatory, Guildhall School of Music & Drama and an alumna of American Lyric Theater's Composer Librettist Development Program and Tapestry Opera's LIBLAB. An accomplished lyric mezzo-soprano, she trained at ENO and began a performing career before committing to making opera in 2014 in order to expand the perspective of stories on opera stages. Her ongoing research project, [The Archetypes Project](#), challenges the fetishized death culture towards women in modern and period operatic repertoire within the expanded framework of Jungian archetypes, with grateful acknowledgment of the pioneering scholarship of Catherine Clément. Lila is Interim Managing Director of [American Lyric Theater](#).

<https://www.lilapalmer.com>



## *Damien Geter, composer*

"Possessed of a rolling, resonant voice even at the lowest register," **Damien Geter** is an acclaimed bass-baritone, actor, and composer whose credits include performances from the operatic stage to the television screen.

Damien is also an acclaimed composer who infuses classical music with various styles from the black diaspora to create music that furthers the cause for social justice. Damien's growing body of work includes chamber, vocal, orchestral, and now full operatic works. Some recent highlights include commissions *Cantata for a Hopeful Tomorrow* for The Washington Chorus with subsequent performances this fall at Pacific Chorale, *Invisible* for Opera Theater Oregon, *The Justice Symphony* for the University of Michigan, *Buh-roke* for the Portland Baroque Orchestra, and *String Quartet No. 1, Neo-Soul* for All Classical Portland and On-Site Opera. His piece *1619* also appeared with On Site Opera this past fall as part of their presentation "What Lies Beneath."

His large work, *An African American Requiem*, will premiere in Spring 2022 in partnership with Resonance Ensemble and the Oregon Symphony with subsequent performances at the Kennedy Center. *I Said What I Said* for Imani Winds, co-commissioned by Anima Mundi Productions, Chamber Music Northwest, and The Oregon Bach Festival, will premiere in 2022. Damien also looks forward to the premiere of his second opera, *Holy Ground*, at the Glimmerglass Festival. Future commissions include World Premiere productions in 2022, 2024, and 2025.

He is the owner of [DG Music](#), [Sans Fear Publishing](#). Damien currently serves as the Interim Music Director & Artistic Advisor for [Portland Opera](#) as well as Artistic Advisor for the award-winning vocal ensemble [Resonance Ensemble](#).

The book he co-authored, *Music in Context: An Examination of Western European Music Through a Sociopolitical Lens* is available on [Amazon](#), or directly from the publisher, [Kendall Hunt](#).

<https://www.damiengetermusic.com>



## Synopsis

An alternate version of the present day. In the Angel control room, three archangels are channel surfing human souls. The feed from Earth is varied, with some channels screeching and dissonant, others harmonious. A moment of unusual beauty and loving attention stops them in their tracks. Could this be the Messiah Suitable (MS) woman the archangels have been searching for?

Cherubiel, who has only recently been elevated to the role of Archangel, is nominated to recruit this lovely soul for the task of carrying and bearing God in human form. The other archangels assure him they have every faith in his ability to succeed, even though the previous 489 MS women approached for the job have declined. On Earth, Mary's mother, Ann, encourages her daughter on the eve of her betrothal.

In this world, a marriage is a business contract, and it is not safe for a woman to be without a husband. Mary struggles against the expectations placed on her, sensing a greater purpose for her life.

When Cherubiel appears to offer Mary the "more" she has prayed for, she experiences a kaleidoscope of emotions: astonishment, confusion, fear, inadequacy. "I cannot be what you ask of me," she finally tells Cherubiel. Dejected, Cherubiel meets with his colleagues for a drink. They encourage him not to give up.

Meanwhile, Mary is tormented by nightmares. Multitudes cry out for help, but there are too many for her to save. When Ann attempts to comfort her, Mary probes Ann's feelings about motherhood. Ann confesses that she wasn't ready "for me to be over, ready for this thing called Mother." But, she tells Mary, that uncertainty changed. Mary recalls a second nightmare, in which she labored in a wild place as a slithering monster prowled. Ann stays with her until she falls asleep again. Mary's concern for the world finally outweighs her fear for herself. She goes out into the night, the dystopian landscape of her nightmares. Suddenly, a great gate is before her. She enters and finds herself in a beautiful garden, where she kneels, prays and makes her choice.

As Mary wakes, Cherubiel greets her: "Hail Mary, full of grace."

*Below: The Annunciation by [Henry Ossawa Tanner](#), 1898.*



# The Annunciation

## From the Bible

In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."

Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end."

"How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?" The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. For no word from God will ever fail."

"I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May your word to me be fulfilled." Then the angel left her.

At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea, where she entered Zechariah's home and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. In a loud voice she exclaimed: "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear! But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfill his promises to her!"

Luke 1:26-45

## "The Dry Salvages" by T. S. Eliot

Men's curiosity searches past and future  
And clings to that dimension. But to apprehend  
The point of intersection of the timeless  
With time, is an occupation for the saint—  
No occupation either, but something given  
And taken, in a lifetime's death in love,  
Ardour and selflessness and self-surrender.  
For most of us, there is only the unattended  
Moment, the moment in and out of time,  
The distraction fit, lost in a shaft of sunlight,  
The wild thyme unseen, or the winter lightning  
Or the waterfall, or music heard so deeply  
That it is not heard at all, but you are the music  
While the music lasts. These are only hints and guesses,  
Hints followed by guesses; and the rest  
Is prayer, observance, discipline, thought and action.  
The hint half guessed, the gift half understood, is Incarnation.

—T.S. Eliot, "The Dry Salvages" (selection from stanza V)  
*Four Quartets*, 1943

## "What Men Can Learn from Mary, Mother of Jesus"

Art historian [Matthew Miller](#), whose specialty is icons of the Virgin Mary, sees the Annunciation as "the hammer that smashes the patriarchy."

"And when Mary reflects on what she sees around her, on her own experience and knowledge of what has happened to Elizabeth, she is finally able to say yes to this strange request by God: 'Let it be done to me according to your will!' Mary does this in perfect freedom. As do we. God meets us in myriad ways, through nature, through prayer, especially through people—'playing lovely in ten thousand limbs,' as the Jesuit poet Gerard Manley Hopkins put it. God invites us to join him, he invites us to follow him, he invites us to create with him. **But the decision is always up to us. We are free to say yes or no.**

With her yes, with her fiat, her 'let it be,' Mary partners herself with the Almighty and is empowered to bring Christ into the world."

~Rev. James Martin, S.J.,  
"[The Annunciation and You](#)"

# “ART IS FUNDAMENTALLY ABOUT LIFE.”

## *A conversation with Lila Palmer and Makoto Fujimura*

**Makoto Fujimura** is the artist and bestselling author of *Art + Faith: A Theology of Making and Culture Care*. His work has been praised by The New York Times as “a small rebellion against the quickening of time.”

Lila Palmer: I discovered your work while creating *Holy Ground* for Glimmerglass. You speak eloquently into the conflicts of our culture which anyone making or experiencing art at this time senses. Your investigation of the interconnected realities of art, artist and Creator ended up deeply informing *Holy Ground*.

For those who are not familiar with your work, perhaps you could begin by speaking about your notion of “Culture Care”?

Makoto Fujimura: *Culture Care* began as my journey as an artist trying to navigate culture wars and all that is divisive. I’m a survivor of 9-11; I was trapped underneath the towers when the towers were coming down. The culture wars were just beginning to take shape in our country. I was feeling like I didn’t have language to explain what was happening.

Then, I got a call from the White House to help redirect the National Endowment for the Arts. I began to wonder, what do you call this effort if it’s not culture wars? I began to think about culture care, changing the metaphor from culture as a battle ground to culture as an ecosystem or a garden to tend.

LP: After reading *Art + Faith*, which is so luminous, I was struck by the practicality of *Culture Care*.

MF: Yes, when I started out, I was concerned about very practical matters. (Laughter.)

LP: In *Culture Care*, you offer up four suggestions for developing artists: form them, deputize them, commission them and support them. We see this ecosystem at Glimmerglass, where the company’s Young Artists Program and Apprenticeship Program are part of everything the company does. The fact that opera is a collaboration between many artistic entities is both a challenge and an opportunity. Can you speak to a Culture Care of Collaboration?

MF: Daniel Libeskind, who designed the new ground zero, is my neighbor. And he was collaborating with all the architects who were coming in after he won the competition to design the site. The result was a drastic alteration of the original design. And I said, “Daniel, does that bother you?” And he said, “No. Architecture is a collaborative art form. I consider it valuable as democracy, to have these different viewpoints colliding against each other.”

So in that diversity of voices – even conflicting voices – we

have a picture of how unity in diversity can take place. The arts fundamentally have this capacity to bring an example of cohesion.

LP: That opportunity to make a space where conflicting voices can coexist is really powerful. Opera, like many of the arts, is focusing right now on social justice. Can art with an overt agenda be great art?

MF: If we’re doing specific work, there’s nothing wrong with that, but if you turn to an instrumental path towards inverting power, or whatever it is we’re trying to do, that’s not really art, that’s propaganda. And propaganda is limited in what it can accomplish.

Ultimately art can be a place where integration is happening in the work itself. By taking that in as an audience, we can have hope that some place of equality and empowerment can be a reality. That would seem to me a way for us to sanctify imagination, to allow ourselves to believe that reality can exist in the world in the future. The arts can be a place where you’re no longer talking about divisions and evils that we’re trying to change, but instead working backwards generatively into the world that’s struggling to find solutions. Arts can give a different perspective and open the door of new creation from the future, back into our world.

LP: One of the realities that permeates *Holy Ground* is the notion that motherhood is a creative act; mothers create the first culture we inhabit. In *Art + Faith*, you write about those who are not practicing artists in the traditional sense, but who are nonetheless nurturing beauty and thereby also creating the culture. In *Culture Care* you write not only about your call to be an artist, but also about how being a parent has revealed certain truths. Can you speak about how those two callings intersect?

MF: That's a wonderful and beautiful question. [My children's] intuitions and longings as Ground Zero children were revelatory to me. For me, being a father has been an indispensable part of my art.

To me, it's odd that we have pitted one against the other. Going to openings with my children was probably the greatest transgression I could commit against the art world. My daughter always loved going to openings with her dad. I would bring her, and people would look at her like 'what's she doing here?' And I'd be like 'This is my life, I live here, this is my daughter.' So, it's really odd to me you had to ask that question, because art is fundamentally about life.

LP: It might be worse in opera since we're obsessed with the death impulse. (Laughter.) Which brings me to the point you make in *Art + Faith* about the alignment between the small-a 'artist' and the large-A 'Artist' as synonymous with the Creator. So a mother who is also an artist is like a small-a artist squared in your characterization. I wonder if there's a way of honoring that double offering that artist-mothers make?

MF: Absolutely. My last show in December, a collaboration with Susie Ibarra, was dedicated to both my parents, but particularly to my mother. I was thinking, "Why am I so invested in honoring my parents, four or five years after their passing?" And it seemed to me in our culture we are not honoring our parents. Whatever success we have in the world is due to our parents' sacrifice. As parents, we know how much sacrifice goes into each child. And we don't think of it as a negative thing, we think of it as part of creativity.

LP: This summer is going to be the first time for many to have a shared experience in the theater again. And our audiences – and our artists – are coming back changed, probably having suffered. So everyone has kind of been re-oriented. What do we do with that?

MF: On one hand, over a million people lost their lives. And that's a generational impact that we will be talking about for decades. On the other hand, the impact is that there is not a single person on this earth who has not been affected by this. So we all share in this suffering. So perhaps there's a way artists [can] hold that in the way we go about performing and presenting. There's something about brokenness and trauma that leads us into a new collective reality.

LP: Relatively early in your career, identifying as a Christian in the art world seemed very risky. *Holy Ground* came about because Francesca came to me and asked me to write a piece that reflected upon faith in some way. T.S. Eliot, an Anglo-Catholic whose poetic voice has been important to you,

rejected the notion of being a "religious poet" because to him it implied that faith didn't touch all the great emotions people experience; it implied his poetry was in some way small. And other makers who are also Christians have had difficult relationships with being called 'religious' artists. In *Art + Faith* you talk about how identifying yourself as a Christian wound up being positive.

MF: I've been told by prominent critics that if I hadn't identified myself as a Christian, I would be so much further along in my mainstream career. And I say, "well thank you, that's a great compliment." (Laughter.) I never felt like I was called to play that game. I've always felt very at peace, being very ambitious about what I can do and want to do, but at the same time leaving the results up to God. I'm not here to win the world, I'm here to follow Christ into it. So the pushbacks are not surprising. That's what Jesus experienced and you know, I hope not to be crucified, so comparatively we're doing well! (Laughter.)

But we can witness, in a quiet way, through our work, make beauty, resonance, in such a time as this. Ground Zero created this deep challenge: How do I love my enemy?

Going back to you becoming a mother: One of the ways we live and breathe is to be a family, of any kind. To do that is to grow in hope. Without faith in the future it is impossible to have children. Art and making is connected to birth, creating community, to hope. Our role may be very limited as individuals, but we still have to do it faithfully.

## Isaiah 7:14

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.

## Micah 5:2

“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah,  
though you are small among the clans of Judah,  
out of you will come for me  
one who will be ruler over Israel,  
whose origins are from of old,  
from ancient times.”

## Isaiah 9:6-7

For to us a child is born,  
to us a son is given,  
and the government will be on his shoulders.  
And he will be called  
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.  
Of the greatness of his government and peace  
there will be no end.  
He will reign on David’s throne  
and over his kingdom,  
establishing and upholding it  
with justice and righteousness  
from that time on and forever.  
The zeal of the Lord Almighty  
will accomplish this.

## Isaiah 11:12

He will raise a banner for the nations  
and gather the exiles of Israel;  
he will assemble the scattered people of Judah  
from the four quarters of the earth.

*Below: Annunciation by Salvador Dalí, 1956.*

Read more about this piece at the Dalí Museum [archive](#).



## From Holy Ground

CHERUBIEL

How much do you know about the coming  
of the Messiah?

MARY

He was supposed to come  
a long time ago.

CHERUBIEL

Anything else?

MARY

God in human form.  
Carried by a woman.  
Rebuild the temple.  
“Overthrow the devil!”  
Free his people.  
Save the world.  
But no one came.

CHERUBIEL

A decent summary.  
So what do you think happened?  
Why did no one come?

MARY

Maybe he did  
and no one listened.  
Or the prophecy wasn’t true.

CHERUBIEL

Logical possibilities.  
The reason is simpler.  
The Messiah can only be born of a woman  
who chooses to bend all  
to the task.  
Body, mind, and soul.  
A woman with capacity  
to nourish beauty,  
embrace, love absolutely.  
Hold the power of the cosmos  
at her breasts.

The Messiah must be wanted by his mother.  
Chosen.  
As God must be chosen  
Freely.

## Hymn: “Come to Us, Creative Spirit”

Come to us, creative Spirit,  
in this holy house;  
ev’ry human talent hallow,  
hidden skills arouse,  
that within your earthly temple,  
wise and simple may rejoice.

Poet, painter, music-maker,  
all your treasures bring;  
craftsman, actor, graceful dancer,  
make your offering;  
join your hands in celebration:  
let creation shout and sing!

Word from God eternal springing,  
fill our minds, we pray;  
and in all artistic vision  
give integrity:  
may the flame within us burning  
kindle yearning day by day.

In all places and forever  
glory be expressed  
to the Son, with God the Father  
and the Spirit blest:  
in our worship and our living  
keep us striving for the best.

—David Mowbray

### *How to Make Art, Three Steps:*

Step number one:  
*Imagine the world you want to live in.*

Step number two:  
*Create that world.*

Step number three:  
*Live in it.*

—Peter Sellars, “Art as Moral Action”



Above: *Tapestry with the Annunciation*, c.1410-1420. South Netherlandish culture. Read about it at The Met’s [website](#).

## From Holy Ground

The gift of creation,  
to be a creator is God-like  
Humans can use it.  
Twist it.  
A good gift  
warped  
Makes worse the horror.

Making without grace.  
Bearing without caring.  
Work without rest.  
Utility, an endless race.  
Hollowing your human race.

But not you Mary,  
To you is given the choice  
to make something perfect.  
Make all the world rejoice.

### “Death and life dance like lovers In the birthing chamber.”

According to the WHO, every day in 2017, approximately 810 women died from preventable causes related to pregnancy and childbirth. The CDC reports that the rate of maternal mortality in the US is on the rise, with 17.4 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2018; 20.1 in 2019; and 23.8 in 2020.

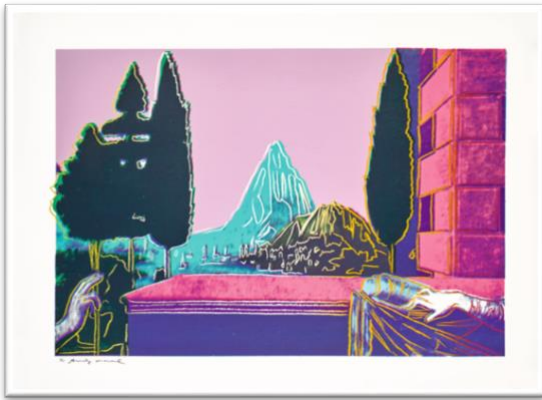
A 2020 study looked at [Maternal Mortality and Maternity Care in the United States Compared to 10 Other Developed Countries](#). Among its conclusions: The U.S. has the highest maternal mortality rate among developed countries. Obstetrician-gynecologists (ob-gyns) are overrepresented in its maternity care workforce relative to midwives, and there is an overall shortage of maternity care providers (both ob-gyns and midwives) relative to births. In most other countries, midwives outnumber ob-gyns by severalfold, and primary care plays a central role in the health system. Although a large share of its maternal deaths occur post-birth, the U.S. is the only country not to guarantee access to provider home visits or paid parental leave in the postpartum period.





Visual artist [Kelly Latimore](#) explains her motivation for painting icons: “I feel the need for new images. In some icons I wish to embrace the traditional forms and image but for many icons the image needs re-shaping, re-imagining, and re-wondering. There are icons here that people may find theologically unsound and wrong, or for others, helpful and inspiring. I think both reactions are important. My hope is that these icons do what all art can potentially do, which is, to create more dialogue. By transcending our biases, listening and having inner silence about our convictions, our inherited traditions, or our favorite ideas we can become open to the patterns of work, knowledge and experience we may not have seen in the other or buried in ourselves. The other may have something to teach us about what we know, about who God is, the world we live in and who are our neighbors. This is the real work of being human and of art. Being more present.”

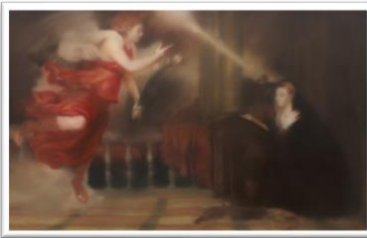
Left: *Mama* by Kelly Latimore, 2020. Based on George Floyd.



Left: From the series *Details of Renaissance Paintings (Leonardo da Vinci, The Annunciation)* by Andy Warhol, 1984. The impact of Warhol’s faith on his work was the subject [of a recent exhibition at the Brooklyn Museum](#).



Right: *Annunciation* by Beatrice Emma Parsons, 1899.



Top row, left: *Annunciation* by Titian, c.1530s. (Description [here](#).)  
 Top row, right: *Annunciation after Titian* by Gerhard Richter, 1973. [In 1972, the painter Gerhard Richter came upon a painting of the Annunciation by Titian](#). He bought a postcard, copied it, and produced five “Annunciations After Titian,” successively producing more [abstracted versions](#) of the scene (*rows two and three*).

“The story arc of *Holy Ground* is based on the concept of choice in the context of recent restrictions on women’s access to abortions. The story refocuses the annunciation narrative on the free choice of a young woman, elucidating for a modern audience that within its theology, **the Messiah narrative is ‘pro-choice’**; Mary could have, and many potential Marys did, say no. It is only her choice, rather than the will of an all-powerful being, that validates and creates the possibility of saving the world from evil. For this reason, the narrative arc centers solely on the section of the story around the choice itself, whilst leaving open the reality that the choice of Mary is repeated over and over until the birth of her son, inverting the ‘passive handmaid’ narrative for an active one.”

– Lila Palmer

# Glossary

**Angel:** The Hebrew Bible uses the term “malach,” which means messenger, for the angels, who appear to humans as messengers of God.

**Archangel:** An angel of the highest rank.

**Betrothal:** A formal, binding agreement to marry.

**Davidic lineage, “Flowering branch of David’s line”:** The Gospels claim that Jesus descends from the Israelite King David and is therefore the legitimate Hebrew Messiah. The books of [Matthew](#) and [Luke](#) each trace their own version of this genealogy.

**“The fallen world”:** [Genesis 3:1-21](#) describes how Adam and Eve eat of the fruit that God has forbidden them to eat. As a result, God curses them and casts them out of the Garden of Eden; this “original sin” of mankind is seen to taint all future generations.

**“Faultless womb”:** According to the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, Mary is the first woman to be born free of the sin that had accompanied humankind since the “fall” of Adam and Eve.

**Incarnation:** God in human form, carried by a woman. Refers to Isaiah 7:14, “Behold, the young woman shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel” (“God with us”).

**Metatron:** An angel mentioned in the Talmud, traditionally the highest of the Angels

**Messiah:** Savior or liberator of a group of people. Christians believe Jesus is the Messiah prophesied in the Hebrew Bible (see page 7).

**Second Eve:** Just as Eve represented God’s first act of creation, Mary served as a vehicle for the new order ushered into existence by the birth of the Messiah. Justin Martyr was among the first to draw a parallel between Eve and Mary in his *Dialogue with Trypho* (written sometime between 155-167): “[Jesus] became man by the Virgin, in order that the disobedience which proceeded from the serpent might receive its destruction in the same manner in which it derived its origin. For Eve, who was a virgin and undefiled, having conceived the word of the serpent, brought forth disobedience and death. But the Virgin Mary received faith and joy, when the angel Gabriel announced the good tidings to her that the Spirit of the Lord would come upon her, and the power of the Highest would overshadow her: wherefore also the Holy Thing begotten of her is the Son of God; and she replied, ‘Be it unto me according to thy word.’”

**The serpent:** In the book of Genesis, the serpent tempts Eve to disobey God, leading to the fall.

**Soul:** According to Christian tradition (and others), the soul is the non-material part of the person that survives death. The Catholic Catechism defines it as “the innermost aspect of [persons], that which is of greatest value in [them], that by which [they are] most especially in God’s image: ‘soul’ signifies the spiritual principle in [humanity]”.

**Theotokos:** God-bearer, a title given to Mary by the early Church.

*Top:* With this family tree, you can trace the Davidic lineage from Jesus Christ back to David, and even back to Adam. *Bottom left:* An Islamic depiction of Metatron from the 14<sup>th</sup> century by Nasir ad-Din Rammal. *Bottom right:* There are numerous depictions of Theotokos, including the *Virgin of Vladimir* (or *Theotokos of Vladimir*) by an unknown artist from the year 1131. This painting is considered a palladium – a symbol and harbinger of peace and security – for both the Russian Orthodox Church and for the nation of Russia at large.

