

# ‘A Joyful Trinity Sunday’ by Greg Wismar

Major Christian holidays have their own special greetings. In December, we wish one another “a blessed Christmas,” and on Easter, we greet fellow believers with “He is risen!” and hear the responding “He is risen indeed!”

Although Trinity Sunday is a major celebration of the Church Year, it has no such traditional greeting. In fact, the day has little notice beyond its observance at our worship service, even though it has a surprisingly rich history as a day for great rejoicing.

Until the Middle Ages, a specific day for celebrating this central confession of the Christian faith, that we worship “God in three persons, [the] blessed Trinity,” had no fixed date in European nations. That changed in 1334 when a specific “Trinity Sunday” was added to the official calendar of the Western Church and was assigned a non-movable date on the Sunday after Pentecost.

Finding joy in the knowledge of the one true God and expressing that truth seems only natural. Individual Christian people have found many ways to honor the Trinity. Religious processions and concerts on Trinity

Sunday have been part of the piety of Christians in many places. Countless churches have been given the name “Trinity” or “Holy Trinity” in honor of this greatest teaching and confession of the Christian faith.

The Trinity is often symbolized in the artwork of cathedrals and local churches by three interlocking circles. One of the most famous Trinity symbols is the shamrock, which, according to Irish tradition, was used by Saint Patrick to explain the mystery of the Trinity to converts to the Christian faith.

Another plant with related symbolic usage is the pansy, often called the “Trinity flower” in areas of Europe.

Many of our greatest hymns close with what are called “doxological” stanzas—an expression of praise to God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. These are well worth learning by heart.

Our Lord rejoices in our affirmations of faith and in our expressions of praise. Perhaps this year you will expand your celebration of Trinity Sunday by greeting someone that day with the words “A Joyful Trinity Sunday to you!”



## Changing Colors, Changeless Themes by Greg Wismar

Each of the three colors in a traffic signal has an important meaning that affects the actions of motorists and pedestrians. In the life of the Church there are special liturgical colors that influence and enrich the worship of God’s faithful people. We see three of them in June this year.

The **red** used on Pentecost Sunday recalls fire of the Holy Spirit that fell upon those at prayer in the upper room in Jerusalem. Red is associated with witness, discipleship, and sacrifice.

Then on Trinity Sunday, **white** in the Church reflects a sense of joyful celebration. The great festi-

vals of the Church Year, including Christmas and Easter, feature white.

**Green** symbolizes growth.

Week by week, and year by year, we grow in grace, visually aided and enriched by the changing colors of the Church that convey the changeless themes of our faith.

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