

Grace Notes in Miniature

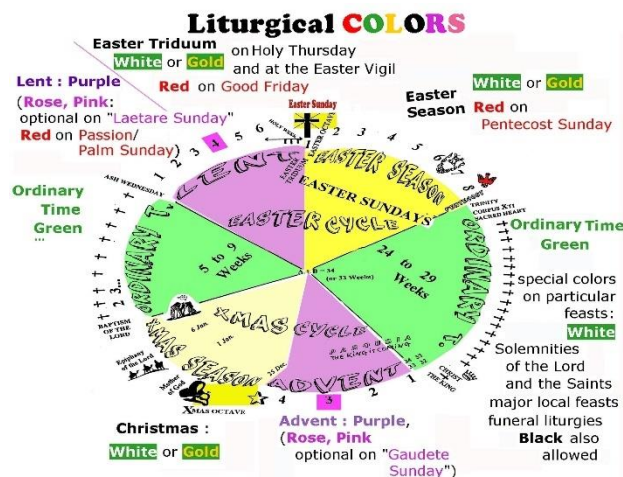
Friday, September 25, 2020

Dear Friends:

As I drove home from the CEC a couple of days ago, I was quite amazed at how quickly the colours had begun to change. As I live about fifteen minutes north of Guelph, the temperatures have been lower than in Burlington and the contrast was quite significant. There has been "frost on the pumpkins" a few times and I am starting to think about wrapping sensitive plants in burlap already.

It got me thinking about the colours we associate with the seasons: the soft greens and yellows in the Spring as the trees begin to bud; the range of greens, the bright pinks and reds and blues and oranges of Summer; the brilliant crimson and gold of the Fall against the background of the evergreens; and the black, white, greys and darker greens of Winter. We change wreaths and decorative items in our houses to mark the passage of the seasons and have special choices to observe Thanksgiving and Christmas and Easter.

The passage of the Church year, too, is marked with colours and, regardless of the flowers or plants with which we decorate our sanctuaries, there are predictable colours for our vestments and draperies. These are chosen with consideration for the historical significance of the colours and have not



always been the same. For instance, older Roman Catholics will remember the use of black or grey chasubles and stoles for funerals, the distinction between indigo and violet for Advent and Lent, and the more wide-spread use of rose vestments for the Third Sunday in Advent and the Fifth Sunday in Lent. In some places, blue

is authorised for Feast Days of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Basically, the colours are considered to express feelings associated with the liturgical seasons. Violet, an ancient royal colour is a sign of the sovereignty of Christ and represents repentance from sin. White and Gold symbolize the brightness of the day, thus their use at Christmas and Easter. Red, the colour of blood, and also of the fire of the Holy Spirit, is used for the memorials of martyrs, of Christ's death on the Cross and of Pentecost. Green represents hope, bountiful growth and life. Note that Eastern Rite Catholics use a different set of colours and that other Christian communities may use other colours.

In his school liturgy, Chaplain Wayne at ND addressed the story of Jesus healing a blind man and showed this video clip which I want to share with you: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1ZcK-Eima-w> Can you imagine spending your entire life in a black and white world and seeing colour for the first time? What struck me – and is very obvious – is that this man had no frame of reference for any of the colours and had to ask what they were.

Did you ever have an “a-ha!” moment when suddenly something you had not really understood came into focus for the first time? We can have moments like that in our faith if we take the time to allow them to happen. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DD80vgXxixc> It is interesting to reflect that God's sign of reconciliation and mercy to the world after the Flood was a rainbow; we continue to use that symbol as a sign of acceptance and inclusion. The community where I live chose a rainbow as a sign of working together through the pandemic and every store on our main street shows their function in rainbow colours: the multi-coloured cow on the butcher's window, a basket of coloured reels of cotton in the dressmaker's window – you get the picture.

May you find time to enjoy the colours of our beautiful world this weekend!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bue38LefSUU>

Peace be with you,

Gillian

