



What Does That Mean?

As we celebrate the 2019 Book of Common Prayer, it seems appropriate to review some of the vernacular that we use in our worship service. Here's one of those terms.

What is “Trisagion?” Why this term?

The *Trisagion* (pronounced, “trē'sagēon, -'säyôn”) is Greek for “thrice holy” and is a canticle – a sung invocation to God. The Byzantine tradition introduced it to the Mass in the fourth century as an entrance hymn. It is based on the angelic reaction of both Isaiah 6:3 (the “Sanctus”) and Revelation 4:8.

The Trisagion

Holy God, holy and Mighty, Holy Immortal One, have mercy upon us.

The 1979 Episcopal Book of Common Prayer introduced the *Trisagion* as an alternative response to the *Kyrie Eleison*. It may be sung or recited. The Roman tradition commonly uses it on Good Friday and for funerals.

Just as with the *Kyrie*, reciting the *Trisagion* unites us with the millions of believers who preceded us in faith because we are vocalizing it the same way they did. In addition, as we sing it, we instantly join the Angelic Host, rejoicing about the majesty of God. What a privilege! We say these ancient words to proclaim God’s grace and mercy as demonstrated on the Cross.



Sources:

- *The Anglican Way*, (2014)
- Holy Trinity Parish of Ocean Beach
- *Anglican Services*, 1953
- *The Worship of the Church* (1952)

