

SACRED VESSELS AND VESTMENTS

The MC must have an intimate knowledge of the items used in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, particularly those used by the Celebrant.

Sacred vessels, their linens and coverings

The sacred vessels have mainly a practical purpose, namely to prevent any sacrilege to the Sacred Species, and hence their use in conjunction with the Sacred Species demands that they be made with materials of high quality befitting to God's majesty, as was commanded to the Jews in the worship in the Temple. Therefore, gold and silver, fine linen (which is purified and made with much labor) and fine materials of cloth are employed for their construction and use.

Shown below are the various items that are used in conjunction with the chalice and their order and method of assembly:



CHALICE

This is a cup made of gold or silver, or if of silver, the interior must be of gold. It holds the wine for the Holy Sacrifice. There are four parts of a chalice: the foot (or base), stem, node and cup. The node is in the center of the stem and the celebrant uses this to elevate and hold the chalice.

Every chalice has a cross or crucifixion scene to demark its "front" on its foot. Always vest the chalice with the front facing you and center all items with it.



PURIFICATOR

This is a linen cloth used for wiping the chalice, and the fingers and mouth of the celebrant after *Communion*. It is spread over the cup of the chalice at the beginning and end of Mass. From the *Offertory* until the *Ablutions* the purificator is placed folded next to the corporal. Most purificators are marked with an embroidered cross in the center.

Ensure that purificator is slightly tucked into the cup and that the bottom edges are even.



PATEN & CELEBRANT'S HOST

This is a plate which the top surface (upon which the celebrant's host rests) must be at least gold plated. The host remains on the paten until the *Offertory* and then is placed on the Altar (the paten is then covered with the purificator and corporal, though during a Solemn High Mass it is held at this time by the subdeacon). After the *Consecration*, the Sacred Host is once again placed on the paten in order to prevent the loss of Sacred Particles.

Most patens have an emblem on their underside. Ensure that the paten and its emblem are centered on the cup and that host (and its impressed design if any) is centered upon the paten.

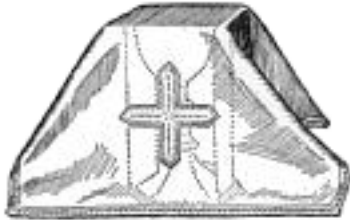


PALL

This is a square stiffened piece of linen which covers the chalice after the wine and water have been poured in at the *Offertory* and until the *Ablutions*. It is used to protect the offered wine and upon its consecration, the Precious Blood from dust and falling matter. This linen is often stiffened with a piece of card stock, or even plastic, which can be removed when the pall needs to be

cleaned. While a pall's top can be made of cloth other than linen, the bottom (*i.e.*, that which might come into contact with the Precious Blood) must be made of linen.

The top of the pall is usually marked with a cross. Ensure that the pall is centered upon the paten.



CHALICE VEIL

This is the cloth which covers the chalice until the *Offertory*, and again after *Communion* (*i.e.*, when the chalice is not being used). It also is made of the same material and color as the vestments. The act of covering the chalice follows the rule of covering those items that are sacred or used for sacred purposes.

Ensure that the veil just barely touches in front of the chalice's foot, and that it is centered widthwise on the chalice.



BURSE AND CORPORAL

The burse is a square container for the corporal when the latter is not in use. It is made of the same material and color as the vestments. The corporal is a square piece of linen. In size and appearance it resembles a small napkin. It is spread out on the Altar, and the chalice is placed upon it. During the Mass the Sacred Host rests for a time on the corporal, hence the reason for its name, meaning *body*, as the Sacred Body of Our Lord rests upon it.

Ensure that the corporal is fully inside the burse with the opening of the corporal facing the opening of the burse.



CHALICE ASSEMBLY

Ensure that the burse is centered on the top of the chalice assembly.

When moving the chalice, carry it with your right hand on the node, and your left hand flat over the burse, with the front of the veil facing away from you.

VESTMENTS

By God's command the Jewish priests wore a distinctive garb when they ministered in the Temple. Scripture tells us they were vested in violet and purple, scarlet twice dyed, and fine linen. Gold and precious stones were also used to give the person of the priest that dignity demanded by his exalted office.

No special dress was at first prescribed for the Christian priesthood. During the early days the garments worn at the Holy Sacrifice were not dissimilar in form to the clothing of civilians. They were distinguished, however, from profane apparel in richness and beauty of decorations and of course, their use was restricted to divine worship.

Secular fashion changed, but the Church clung to the ancient style. Thus it was that garments once common to all, presently became the privileged dress of the clergy. Faith then saw in each particular vestment a symbol relating to the Passion of Our Lord, and a reminder of some Christian duty.

The colors of vestments

There are six colors of vestments, though a seventh, gold can also be used.

- WHITE** This is used for Masses of Our Lord (except regarding His Passion) or Persons of the Holy Trinity, Lady, and saints who were not martyred.
- This color can also in necessity be substituted for any other color.
- This color represents sanctity, joy and purity.
- GREEN** This is used for all Sundays and ferials after Pentecost and Epiphany.
- This color represents the hope and life of Sanctifying Grace, especially after Redemptive acts of Our Lord's Passion and Resurrection.
- RED** This is used for Masses of Our Lord where His Passion is concerned (e.g., the Holy Cross), of the Holy Ghost, and for all martyred saints.
- This color represents the shedding of the blood of Our Lord and of the saints, as well as the enkindling of the spirit of the Holy Ghost (e.g., the tongues of fire on Pentecost).
- VIOLET** This color is used for penitential Masses such as during the season of Advent and Lent, and Ember and Rogation days.
- Violet and purple are both made from a combination of red and blue. Violet has more blue and symbolizes penance and mourning for one's sins. Purple on the other hand has more red and symbolizes joy, which is why it is strictly used only for prelatial garments (also in relation to royalty; e.g., "the royal purple"), and not for the Mass. The *Caeremoniale Episcoporum* confirms this distinct usage in its terms of *violaceus* and *porpura*, the former only in relation to the Mass vesture and the latter only in relation to the personal prelatial garments (e.g., his choir cassock) worn by the bishop. One should not make the one synonymous with the other in reference or in usage.
- ROSE** This color is used only on *Gaudete* (Third Sunday of Advent) and *Laetare* (Third Sunday of Lent) Sundays. If a church does not have rose vestments, then violet are used instead.
- This color symbolizes subdued joy mixed with a penitential spirit and is used on these two Sundays as both penitential seasons are drawing to a close.
- BLACK** This color is used for Requiem Masses only.
- This color symbolizes the human yearning to mourn for the deceased soul, and yet, the supernatural hope of Eternal Life is shown through the use of gold, silver, and even green trimming on the various vestment pieces.
- Black may never be placed on the Tabernacle (for Our Lord lives), and so a violet conopaeum is used instead.
- GOLD** This color, though not an official liturgical color, is often used for solemn feast days of great rejoicing. Real gold thread or cloth of gold ought to be used in the making of such vestments.

A word about the Altar vestments: Altar linens, antependium and conopaeum

The Altar by liturgical law and the Church's ancient custom is covered with three Altar linens for a practical and spiritual purpose. Practically, the Altar is covered with the three clothes to prevent any sacrilege of the Precious Blood, should any spill from the chalice after the *Consecration*; thus the cloths will absorb it and prevent any from spilling onto the ground. Symbolically, the cloths represent the three-fold nature of the Church: Triumphant, Suffering and Militant; it can also represent the Holy Trinity and most especially the winding cloths of Our Lord in the Sepulcher (*i.e.*, the Holy Shroud of Turin). The cloths must be made of white linen, as linen is purified after a long process. The cloths must cover the *mensa* (top) of the Altar and the sides as well, just reaching to the floor.

According to liturgical law and the universal and ancient tradition of the Church, every Altar is to be vested with an **antependium** (or frontal), and the Tabernacle is to be vested with a **conopaeum** (derived from the Greek word meaning, *mosquito net*), which is a veil that covers the *entire* Tabernacle and not just the doors (this imitates the tabernacle, or tent, used by the Jews in the desert to cover the Ark of the Covenant, which was “God amongst them”, though in a spiritual form only).

The Altar is to be vested in the same colors as the Mass because the Altar represents the body of Christ. Hence the only time that the Altar should be denuded is at the end of the ceremonies of Holy Thursday during the *Dividunt* (*They have divided my clothes*) when the Altar is stripped of its garments (which includes the Altar linens) in imitation of Our Lord being stripped of His clothes at the Foot of the Cross.

The Vestments worn at Mass by the Celebrant

The vestments when prepared on the vesting table in the Sacristy are set up in the *opposite* order of how they are worn, or rather, when the celebrant puts on first while vesting.

The vestments can be prepared in many different ways, however, we will explain the most common method used, which can be referred to as the IHS pattern for the manner in which three of the pieces are prepared:

1. **Chasuble:** Place this on the vesting table with the backside facing up and the neck opening nearest the back of the table. The inner ties should be neatly draped within the chasuble; this can be done by forming the ties in a series of x’s or wavy parallel lines.
2. **Stole:** This will be formed as an “H”. Line up the center cross of the stole in the middle of the chasuble and then draped the side pieces over themselves to make two parallel lines.
3. **Maniple:** This will be formed as an “I”. Simply place the maniple (with the pin tag, if any, facing to the right) in the center of the “S” formation.
4. **Cincture:** This will be formed as an “S”. Double up the cincture evenly and place the paired tassels at the bottom left of the chasuble, and curve the rest of the cincture in the shape of the “S”, ending it at the top right hand side of the chasuble.
5. **Alb:** Spread this backside facing up over the chasuble, with the neck opening nearest the back of the table. Fold the sleeves over the backside of the alb and then over themselves two times (for a total of three folds). Then fold the bottom portion of the alb once over itself so that the hem opening is at the front edge of the table.
6. **Amice:** Place this with the cross (in the top center, e.g., the side to which the ties are attached) facing up. Fold both sides to nearly the center of the amice to make a triangle on each side. Then arrange the ties on the chasuble into a series of parallel wavy lines from the center edge of each triangle to the far edge of each triangle.
7. **Chalice Assembly and Biretta:** Set up both these items to the right of the vestments.



Amice

The amice is a piece of fine linen in the form of a rectangle. The celebrant places it for a moment on his head, and then allows it to rest upon his shoulders. As he does so he prays: *“Place, O Lord, on my head the helmet of salvation, that so I may resist the assaults of the devil.”*

Historical Origin

A covering for the head and neck worn like a hood. When indoors it was lowered and thrown over the shoulders. Monastic (e.g., Benedictine, Franciscan, Dominican) priests (and deacons and subdeacons) still do this.

Symbolism

The helmet of salvation (*cf. Ephesians 6:17*)



ALB

A wide linen robe reaching to the feet and covering the whole body. The vesting prayer is: *"Make me white, O Lord, and cleanse my heart; that being made white in the Blood of the Lamb I may deserve an eternal reward."*

Historical Origin

The alb, or tunic, was worn in ancient times by all who enjoyed any dignity.

Symbolism

Signifies the purity of conscience demanded of God's priests.



CINCTURE

The cincture, or girdle, is a cord of linen fastened about the waist to confine the alb. The vesting prayer is: *"Gird me, O Lord, with the cincture of purity, and quench in my heart the fire of concupiscence, that the virtue of continence and chastity may abide in me."*

Historical Origin

Walking and active exertion made it necessary for one to gird up a long garment like the alb. Hence the cincture was an essential article of dress.

Symbolism

Symbolizes continence and chastity, and also readiness for hard work in God's service.



MANIPLE

A strip of silken cloth worn on the left arm of the priest. The vesting prayer is: *"May I deserve, O Lord, to bear the maniple of weeping and sorrow in order that I may joyfully reap the reward of my labors."*

Historical Origin

Originally a strip of linen worn over the arm. During the long services, and in the intense heat of southern countries its use was frequently necessary to wipe the perspiration from the face and brow.

Symbolism

An emblem of the tears of penance, the fatigue of the priestly office and its joyful reward in Heaven.



STOLE

A long band of silk of the same width as the maniple, but three times its length. It is worn around the neck and crossed on the breast. The vesting prayer is: *"Restore to me, O Lord, the state of immortality which I lost through the sin of my first parents and, although unworthy to approach Thy Sacred Mysteries, may I deserve nevertheless eternal joy."*

Historical Origin

A kind of neck-piece or kerchief; a part of the dress of the upper classes. It gradually became the distinctive mark of spiritual authority in the higher clerics, *i.e.*, the priest and deacon. It is used whenever the priest or deacon exercises his office during the liturgy or any other type of ceremony or blessing, except for the recitation of the Divine Office.

Symbolism

A reminder of the yoke of Christ. The priest's burden is a heavy one, which Christ nevertheless makes sweet.



CHASUBLE

The chasuble is the outer and chief vestment of the priest. It is essentially the Mass vestment and is now exclusively reserved to the priest. The vestment is familiar to all by reason of the cross usually embroidered on it. The vesting prayer is: *“O Lord, who has said, ‘My yoke is sweet and My burden light,’ grant that I may so carry it as to merit Thy grace.”*

Historical Origin

The word chasuble is derived from the Latin word meaning *“little house”*. So imagine a large circular cloth with a hole cut in the center for the head. This will help one to visualize the ancient chasuble, which was an immense cloak, over the head and completely enveloped the body (like a house). When it was necessary to use the hands, the garment had to be folded up on each side over the arms. Because of its inconvenience (for two assistants were needed to manipulate it, hence the reason why Gothic-style chasubles are always held back by the MC and Thurifer when the celebrant incenses the Altar), the vestment was gradually cut and altered until it now has its present shape. It is usually ornamented with a large cross on the back, and sometimes on the front of the garment. There are two styles of chasubles: Roman (as shown to the left) or the fuller, Gothic or Medieval style. These “Gothic” chasubles are more ample and drape over the shoulders down to the wrists. The cross on such chasubles is in the shape of the letter “Y,” the top arms of which extend over the shoulders towards the front.

Symbolism

An emblem of charity, which must encompass the priest completely. When the ordaining bishop gives it to the new priest, he says: *“Receive the priestly garment, for the Lord is powerful to increase in you charity and perfection.”*

POMP AND CIRCUMSTANCE IN REGARDS TO VESTMENTS

The quality of the vestments (and Altar cloths), especially in regards to the use of lace on the linens, will depend on the solemnity of the feast or the penitential degree. Hence, in conformity with the liturgical spirit of the Church, the following should be studiously observed:

3rd class (or typical) feast days, and votive Masses	A small amount of lace and embellishment may be used on the chalice linens and alb.
2nd class Sundays, feast days and Masses	A medium amount of lace and embellishment may be used on the chalice linens and alb.
1st class Sundays during Pentecost	A large amount of lace and embellishment may be used on the chalice linens and alb.
1st class Feast days (includes particular feasts to the parish and/or diocese and country)	The very best of everything ought to be used in all regards.
Advent Season	No lace should be used during the Advent season, though a medium amount may be used on <i>Gaudate Sunday</i> ; nevertheless, the decorations on the chalice linens ought to be reserved.
Lenten Season, Ember days, and Requiem Masses	No lace at all should be used on such occasions as the penitential spirit, expressed through austerity, must be shown. This also includes any extra embellishments on the chalice linens.