

VESTMENTS

Vestments are special garments worn by the clergy, at the celebration of the Mass, administration of the sacraments, in procession, when giving blessings, and in general whenever exercising their official priestly duties. The use of vestments goes back to the ritual garb of the priesthood of Aaron. In the Catholic Church, even in catacomb days, priests and bishops were specially garbed when celebrating the liturgy. With the Church's liberation and her emergence into public life, liturgical garments were commonly used to distinguish them from secular dress.



Amice

The **amice** is a short, oblong vestment of white linen, worn beneath the alb to cover the shoulders of the priest while celebrating Mass. Now optional in the Latin Rite. When putting on the amice, the priest says, "Put on my head, O Lord, the helmet of salvation in order to repel the assaults of the devil." (Latin: amictus)

The **maniple** is a short, narrow strip of cloth which hangs from the left arm. The vesting prayer is, "Let me deserve, O Lord, to bear the maniple of tears and sorrow, so that one day I may come with joy into the reward of my labors." This vestment is no longer used.



Maniple



Alb

The **alb** is a full length white linen vestment secured with a cincture. Adapted from the undertunic of the 4th century Greeks and Romans, it is blessed before wearing. It symbolizes the garment in which Christ was clothed by Herod and the purity of the soul with which the Sacrifice of the Mass should be offered. "Make me white O Lord and cleanse my heart that, made white by the Blood of the Lamb, I may be able to serve Thee," is said by the priest as he puts on the alb. (Latin: albus, meaning "white")

The **cincture** is the cord which fastens the alb at the waist. 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 remain in me." (Latin: cinctura meaning "girdle")



Cincture

Vestments...continued



Stole

The **stole** is the long silk band that hangs over both shoulders of the priest or bishop. Deacons wear the stole over one shoulder. It is the symbol of authority in the Church, of all vestments most blessed. The vesting prayer is, "Restore to me O Lord, the state of immortality which was lost to me by my first parents, and although unworthy to approach Thy sacred mysteries, grant me nevertheless eternal joy." The Pope alone has the right to wear it always.

The **cassock** or soutane is the principal vestment used by ecclesiastics. It is a robe reaching down to the feet, and buttoned in the front. For priests it is black, for bishops violet, for cardinals red, and for the Pope white.

In some Catholic countries ecclesiastics go everywhere in their cassocks. When a priest dies, he is buried dressed in his cassock and surplice, and with the purple stole, the badge of his priesthood.



Cassock



Chasuble

The **chasuble** is the uppermost vestment worn by the celebrant at Mass. It hangs from the shoulders, in front and behind, down almost to the knees. The vesting prayer at Mass is, "O Lord, Who hast said, 'My yoke is sweet and my burden light,' grant that I may carry it so as to obtain Thy grace." The chasuble, stole, and veil for the chalice are made as a set of vestments, of the same material, color and design. (Latin: chasubla, meaning "little house")

The **surplice** is a large-sleeved tunic of half length, made of linen or cotton, without a cincture, and occasionally embroidered at hem and sleeves. It is a liturgical garment worn by all clergy to choir, during processions, and when administering the sacraments. Originally worn by clergy from northern countries over their fur coats. (Latin: superpellicium, means "over the chest")



Surplice



Cope

The **cope** is a mantle used for benediction, processions, and other occasions outside of Mass. The **humeral veil** is silk, about 8 ft. by 3 ft., fringed and ornamented in the middle. It is worn by the priest carrying the Blessed Sacrament in procession, giving benediction and when a relic of the True Cross is carried in procession. It is worn round the shoulders like a shawl and the ends cover the hands only, if the Host is in a monstrance; any other vessel is covered entirely. At Mass it matches the other vestments, and is red for relics of the Cross.

Humeral Veil

