

# WHAT IS THE PRIEST WEARING?

April 10, 2016

## WHAT'S THIS?

### What do you call that thing that the priest is wearing?

This is a commonly asked question that Catholics ask because they do not know what to call the clothing that is being worn by the clergy.

- The word “vestment” is simply Latin for “clothing”.
- It is generally used to represent the garments that are worn by the ministers in the performance of their sacred duties, such as:
  - Celebration of Mass
  - Administration of Sacraments
  - In procession
  - When giving blessings
  - In general, whenever exercising their priestly duties.
- Vestments are a sacramental. That means they are set apart and blessed by the Church to inspire good thoughts and to increase devotion in those who see and those who use them.
- The Mass vestments were originally ordinary garments of the ancient Roman world. Thus, the priest, vested for Mass, is a wonderful witness to the historical continuity of the Catholic Church with the early Church of Rome, founded by the Prince of the Apostles.
- Today the draping form of the vestments such as the alb and chasuble, puts the emphasis on his liturgical role. As such, the priest’s body is “hidden” in a way that takes him away as the center of the liturgical action and recognizes the true source and summit of the celebration, Jesus Christ.
- The priest thus dons the vestments not in his own name, but rather *in persona Christi*.

In the coming weeks, we will describe vestments and other priestly garments in greater detail.

# WHAT IS THE PRIEST WEARING?

April 17, 2016

## WHAT'S THIS?

### What do you call that thing that the priest is wearing?

A priest wears the vestments that are prescribed by Church regulations, in keeping with the norms established by the local bishops' conferences and especially the regulations given by the General Instructions of the Roman Missal (the "GIRM"). The GIRM stipulates that the required vestments are to signify the specific role each person has in the rite.

**There is a process all priests follow when getting dressed prior to celebrating Mass.** The colors, materials and decorations used hold historical and spiritual significance.

**ALB** – The alb is the long, white, robe-like vestment worn by the priests, deacons and acolytes.

**CINCTURE** (SINK-cher) – The cincture is a long cord used for fastening albs at the waist. It holds the loose fitting type of alb in place and is used to adjust it to proper length. It is usually white or the liturgical color of the day may be used.

**STOLE** – Whenever a priest celebrates Mass, or administers the Sacraments, he wears the stole as a sign that he is occupied with an official priestly duty. The stole is a long, scarf-like vestment worn over the alb and under the chasuble and matches the liturgical color for the day. The stole is presented at Ordination when made a Deacon and worn diagonally across the body. When ordained a Priest, the stole is ceremonially untied and from then on worn hanging in equal lengths down the chest.

**CHASUBLE** (CHAZ-uh-buhl) – The chasuble also matches the liturgical color of the day. It is the long, often ornate, sleeveless outer garment worn by a priest at Mass. It is worn over all other vestments and is usually decorated with symbols. The arms are free when it is worn. The chasuble symbolizes the virtue of charity and the yoke of unselfish service for the Lord, which the priest assumes at ordination.



Alb



Cincture



Stole



Chasuble

# WHAT IS THE PRIEST WEARING?

April 24, 2016

## WHAT'S THIS?

### What do you call that thing that the priest is wearing?

Special occasions and certain Catholic rituals may require unique vestments to be worn.

**COPE** – The cope is a cape-like garment which is put over the shoulders and hangs to the ankles; it is open in the front and worn by the priest or deacon in processions at Benediction and in other services.



Cope



Humeral Veil

**HUMERAL VEIL** (HYOO-mer-uh) – The humeral veil is worn so as to cover the back and shoulders and its two ends hang down in front. It is fastened across the chest with clasps or ribbons attached to the border. The humeral veil is usually worn over the cope and is worn by the priest or deacon in processions of the Blessed Sacrament, in giving Benediction, in carrying the Host to its repository on Holy Thursday and bringing it back to the altar on Good Friday. In processions of the Blessed Sacrament and at Benediction given with the monstrance, only the hands are placed under the humeral veil; in other cases, it covers the sacred vessel which contains the Host. The humeral veil is usually and properly some shade of white.



Dalmatic

**DALMATIC** (dahl-MAT-ik) – The dalmatic is a loose-fitting robe with open sides and wide sleeves. It is worn in place of the chasuble by the deacon and takes its color from the liturgical feast.

Occasionally you may see priests wear other garments that are **not** considered vestments such as:



Cassock

**CASSOCK** (KASS-uhk) – The cassock is a long black garment. It usually has 33 buttons down the front (symbolic of the years of the life of Jesus).

**SURPLICE** (SIR-plis) – The surplice is a wide-sleeved garment, slipped over the head, covering the shoulders, and coming down over the hips. It is worn over the cassock during rituals.



Surplice



Biretta

**BIRETTA** – The biretta is a stiff square-shaped hat with silk trim and tuft. It has three or four ridges, called “horns” across the crown. It is black for priests, deacons and seminarians, purple for bishops, and scarlet for cardinals.

## WHAT IS THE PRIEST WEARING?

May 1, 2016

### WHAT'S THIS?

#### What do you call that thing that the bishop is wearing?

We are nearing confirmation season and you may witness the bishop or archbishop celebrate confirmation. Some of the special garments that are worn by them are:

**ZUCCHETTO** (zoo-KET-oh) – The zucchetto is the silk skullcap worn by the clergy. It is black for a priest, violet for a bishop, scarlet for a cardinal and white for the Pope.



**MITRE** (mider) – The mitre is the common headdress of bishops, worn at liturgical functions. It is either precious, golden or simple. The precious mitre is worn by celebrants, the simple by concelebrants and the golden by the celebrant at ordination.

**CROZIER** (KROH-zhur) – The word “crozier” comes from the Latin word “crocia” which means “crooked or bend”. It is a Pastoral Staff, the symbol of authority and jurisdiction. This ecclesiastical ornament is conferred on bishops at their consecration.



**PECTORAL CROSS** – The pectoral cross is a small cross, usually about 6 inches in height, worn around the neck of a bishop and suspended by either a cord or a chain. The cord is green and gold for a bishop and scarlet and gold for a cardinal.

**EPISCOPAL RING** – When a Bishop is consecrated as a Bishop, he receives a ring representing his office (Cardinals and the Pope receive their own special ring, also). The Pope's ring, known as the “Fisherman's Ring”, is the personal and unique seal of the reigning Pontiff and is destroyed on his death.



May 8, 2016

### WHAT'S THIS?

#### What do the liturgical colors mean?

It starts with purple and ends with green, and there is a white and red in between. What do the different colors used by the priest signify? As outlined by the Church, different colors represent different liturgical seasons. Since around the sixth century, the primary liturgical colors have been purple, white, red, green and black.

**Purple is worn during Advent and Lent, representing the penitential sense of those seasons. Similar to purple is the color rose, which is worn just two Sundays throughout the year as a sign of hope and joy even in the midst of the more reflective/penitential seasons.** First, is the Third Sunday of Advent, otherwise known as Gaudete Sunday. During Lent it is worn during the Fourth Sunday, otherwise known as Laetare Sunday.

**White denotes times of great celebration as seen in the Christmas and Easter seasons.** White vestments are also worn at baptisms, weddings, ordinations and feast days of the Lord, the Blessed Mother and saints who are not martyrs.

**Red implies the blood of Christ, the Holy Spirit and the martyrs.** It is put on by the priest on Pentecost and for confirmations and for feast days of martyrs.

**Green signifies Ordinary Time in the Church.** It must be noted the shades of green can vary. For instance, the green of spring is a different shade than that of November as the Church year ends.

**Black, rarely seen, can be worn during the Office of the Dead.** It may also be worn on Good Friday.