

**Faith in Five – Adults**  
**Liturgical Vestments**  
**July 8, 2022**

1. **What are liturgical vestments?** Liturgical vestments are special garments worn by the clergy for religious occasions, most commonly in the celebration of the Mass. Depending on the liturgical calendar, specific-colored vestments are worn. **These vestments are not meant to draw attention to the wearer, but to the greatness of God who is present *in persona Christi*.**

2. In the Old Testament, there is a reference to holy garments worn by the High Priest (Exodus



28:2-4): “For the glorious adornment of your brother Aaron you shall have sacred vestments made. Therefore, tell the various artisans whom I have endowed with skill to make vestments for Aaron to consecrate him as my priest. These are the vestments they shall make: a breastpiece, an ephod, a robe, a brocade tunic, a turban, and a sash.” Holy garments such as this distinguish the unique role of the wearer and identify him as one set apart for the Lord.

The actual liturgical vestments we know today in the Catholic Church developed over centuries from the civil clothing the citizens wore of the Greco-Roman world, under the Roman empire. This was mainly a tunic and mantle. Other pieces were gradually added, and by the fourth century, garments worn at liturgical functions were distinct from everyday clothing and reserved for special use. As early as 330 A.D., it was written that Emperor Constantine presented a sacred robe to the new church in Jerusalem, to be used by the bishop at baptisms and the Easter Vigil.

3. **Liturgical Colors of the vestments** worn signify certain seasons in the church year or the type of Mass being celebrated.

Gold: the most solemn of colors, used all year round, can replace all colors at every opportunity

White: symbolizes light and life, worn at Baptism, at Christmas and at Easter.

Black: used above all for commemorations of the dead and for funerals.

Pink/Rose: used for the fourth Sunday of Lent and for the third Sunday of Advent.

Red: the color of the blood of the Martyrs and the Holy Spirit. Used on Good Friday, Palm Sunday, Pentecost and festivals of the Holy Martyrs.

Green: the color of renewal and life, worn every day.

Purple: symbolizes hope and expectation. Used during Advent, Lent and Mass for the dead  
- The non-codified color of blue usually represents the Blessed Virgin Mary

4. The priest engages in [a ritual of prayers](#) as he dons each piece of the vestment before Mass, seen in the following graphic. Each piece signifies a spiritual aspect of the priesthood.  
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A stiff white collar that identifies the clergy. It is a sign of priestly consecration to the Lord

Roman Collar

Amice

A neck cloth to protect the outer garments when the alb does not cover the neck

Stole

A long "scarf" that signifies immortality. It is the mark of the priest or deacon

Alb

This is a long, white garment which symbolizes self-denial and chastity

Chasuble

The colored and decorated outer garment represents the yoke of Christ and symbolizes charity

Cincture

The long cord to cinch the alb at the waist to signify the belt of purity



## 5. Other ecclesiastical vestments:



The **cope**: a long cloak open in the front and secured at the chest. It is used for processions, and benediction of The Blessed Sacrament. It is not used during the Mass. Hence, it is not a liturgical garment but is a processional vestment. It is intended for solemn occasions and is heavily decorated.

The **humeral veil** is draped around the back and shoulders over the cope or other vestments. The center portion of the humeral veil covers the back and shoulders, and its two ends hang down in front. To prevent its falling from the shoulders, it is fastened across the breast with clasps or ribbons attached to the border.



The humeral veil is worn during Eucharistic Benediction by the priest to signify that it is not the priest who is blessing the people, but Jesus Christ, truly present under the appearance of bread. The priest's hands are covered out of reverence when holding sacred objects during liturgical ceremonies. The priest or deacon "conceals himself" with the veil, and directs everyone's attention to Jesus, making Him visibly front and center. The use of the humeral veil should be a signal to the faithful that reverent attention and veneration should be made at what is stored or transported. The tradition is a reminder of the respect and great honor due when Jesus' presence in the Eucharist is exposed.

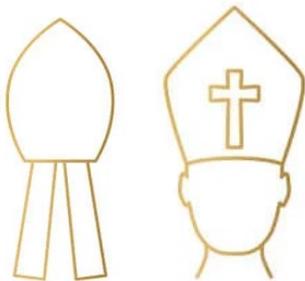
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## 6. Ecclesiastical garments worn outside liturgical celebrations



**Cassock:** a long garment with long sleeves and closely fitted in the upper torso with buttons. Its color and trim signify the ecclesiastical rank: the pope wears plain white, cardinals black with scarlet trim, archbishops and bishops black with red trim, and lesser clergy plain black. It can be worn as ordinary dress or under liturgical garments.

**Pectoral Cross:** a cross hung around the neck, centered on the chest and below the heart so that it is visible. Restricted to popes, cardinals, and bishops.



**Mitre:** worn by the Pope and bishops at Mass. It has two shield-shaped stiffened halves that face the front and back. Two fringed streamers, known as lappets, hang from the back. It represents the splendor of holiness. It does not change color depending on the liturgical calendar. Worn during entrance procession, proclamation of the readings (not the Gospel), homily, administration of the Sacrament, final blessing, and farewell procession.



**Biretta** Cardinals wear the red birretta; bishops, purple and others may wear black with or without pom-pom. It can be 3 or 4 sided.



**Zucchetto** – a cleric's skullcap. Its color represents rank: Pope, white; Cardinal red, Bishop purple, Priest, black. It is worn under the mitre and biretta or alone.



**Crozier (L)** – symbol of being the Good Shepherd of the Church and used by bishops. It is bent or curved to represent a shepherd's crook. The **Papal Ferula (R)** is the staff which the Pope uses. It is generally a long rod with a cross or crucifix on top.

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