

Tridentine Community News

June 25, 2006

Vestments

If you have been attending a Tridentine Mass for a while, you have surely noticed that a greater variety of vestments is used than is typically seen at a Novus Ordo Mass. Today we will examine what they are, as well as their symbolism.



AMICE

The base garment that a priest wears is the black cassock, or robe. This is the same type of robe that altar servers wear. Over the shoulders of the cassock, a priest wears an amice, a white hood-like garment that symbolizes the helmet of salvation.



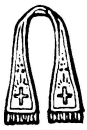
ALB

Over the cassock, he wears an alb, a white outer garment that signifies purity of conscience. (Altar servers wear a white surplice over their cassocks.)



GIRDLE

Around the waist, he wears a girdle, also known as a cincture, a cord which functions as a sort of belt and represents modesty and purity.



STOLE

The stole is the long strip of cloth worn around the neck and crossed across the chest. It represents the Yoke of Christ. In the Novus Ordo, one often sees the stole uncrossed and worn outside the chasuble, but in the Tridentine Mass, it is worn underneath.



MANIPLE.

Unique to the Tridentine Mass is the maniple, a short strip of cloth, similar to a shorter stole, worn over the left arm. The maniple is a sign of subservience to the Lord, in much the same way that the cloth that a waiter in a formal restaurant wears over his arm represents his readiness to serve his patrons. The maniple is worn during Mass, but is removed for the Homily. During the Homily, the priest is teaching the people, therefore the symbol of subservience is temporarily taken off. The maniple was made optional in the Novus Ordo; one generally only sees a maniple worn today at the most elaborate of Novus Ordo Masses, such as at St. Agnes Church in St. Paul, MN.

The biretta is the distinctive hat worn by the priest, deacon, and subdeacon as they enter and depart the sanctuary. Subdeacons, deacons, and priests wear black birettas; bishops purple; and cardinals red.

A clear distinction is made between what a priest wears during the Mass, as opposed to before and after the Mass. The Asperges, or sprinkling with Holy Water, is technically outside of Mass (before Mass) in the Tridentine rite. (In the Novus Ordo, the Asperges is one of the options for the Penitential Rite, and is therefore

considered to be within the Mass.) Similarly, if Benediction or a procession is to follow Mass, that is considered to be external to the Mass, as well.



COPE

For these reasons, the priest wears a cope, an ornate cloak with a small cape on top, draped over the shoulders and fastened with a clasp under the neck, for the Asperges and any post-Mass services. When holding the monstrance with the Blessed Sacrament during Benediction and processions, the priest wears a humeral veil like a shawl over his shoulders and hands.



THE HUMERAL VEIL.

The chasuble is the principal vestment of the priest during Mass. It symbolizes the purple cloak Our Lord wore while being crowned with thorns; the priest is acting *in persona Christi*. If there was an Asperges before Mass, the priest removes his cope



CHASUBLE



Priest in Amice



Priest in Alb



Priest adjusting the Cincture



Priest putting Maniple on left arm



Priest with the Stole



Priest in Chasuble is now completely Vested

and puts on his maniple and chasuble before Mass begins. Most chasubles one sees today are “Gothic”, or poncho-like. Gothic vestments used for a Tridentine Mass are typically more ornate than their Novus Ordo counterparts. When most people think of the vestment of a priest in a Tridentine Mass, they typically recall a “Roman”, or “fiddleback”, chasuble, so named because the front side of the vestment resembles the shape of a string instrument. The back side is squared-off.

In a Solemn High Mass, two additional sacred ministers assist the priest: A deacon is the principal assistant; in place of a chasuble, he wears a shorter dalmatic. A subdeacon is the second assistant; he wears a tunicle, which is a slightly less ornate dalmatic. The subdeacon does not wear a stole. Ideally, the chasuble, dalmatic, and tunicle are of a matched set.



DALMATIC

Liturgical Colors

The chasuble, dalmatic, and tunicle, and their accompanying stoles and maniples, come in a variety of colors to suit the liturgical season. Violet is used during Advent and Lent as a sign of penance. Rose, or pink, is used on Gaudete Sunday in Advent and Laetare Sunday in Lent, to signify a break from the penitential season. Red is used for Pentecost and Feasts of Martyrs, to symbolize fire and bloodshed, respectively. Black is used for All Souls Day and Requiem Masses. White is used during joyful seasons such as Christmas and Easter. Green, the Church’s “generic” color, is used on Sundays after Epiphany and Sundays after Pentecost. The rubrics allow gold vestments to be used in place of green, white, or red at any time, as a sign of solemnity. In practice, one usually sees gold during seasons when white is specified.