

Priestly Vestments

Have you ever wondered to yourself on Sunday morning: ‘what is the priest wearing?’ ‘What is the meaning of all those vestments?’ ‘Do those robes even have names?’ If you have, then this edition of *Answers to Catholic Questions* is for you! Here are the names and uses of the priestly vestments you see each Sunday morning:

Amice: The first vestment the priest dons is called the amice. It is a rectangular piece of cloth worn around the neck and shoulders to cover his collar and daily garb. While putting on the amice, the priest prays: *Place upon me, O Lord, the helmet of salvation, that I may overcome the assaults of the devil.*

Alb: Next the priest puts on the alb. This is a full-length white vestment that is worn over the priest’s “street clothes” for all liturgical celebrations. This vestment’s white color recalls the priest’s (and our) baptism, where he was washed clean from sin and clothed in the white robe of holiness, being made a sharer in Christ’s threefold offices of priest, prophet, and king. While robing himself with the alb the priest prays: *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.*

Cincture: Once robed with the amice & alb, the priest ties a cincture around his waist. This long chord of either white or the day’s liturgical color acts as a belt around the alb. The cincture represents the fruit of the Spirit of self-control (cf. Galatians 5:22). While tying the cincture the priest prays: *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.*

Stole: The stole is a piece of embroidered cloth worn over both of the priest’s shoulders (or over one shoulder in the case of a deacon) and corresponds to the liturgical color of the day. The stole is a unique sign of the ordained ministry and is worn for the celebration of all sacraments. (a violet stole is always used for the sacraments of healing: reconciliation and anointing of the sick). It is worn either alone or under the chasuble during the celebration of Mass. When vesting with the stole, the priest prays: *Lord, restore the stole of immortality, which I lost through the collusion of our first parents, and, unworthy as I am to approach Thy sacred mysteries, may I yet gain eternal joy*

Chasuble: The outer-most vestment worn by the priest at Mass is called the chasuble. This vestment is made of fine cloth of the liturgical color of the day. It is often adorned with Eucharistic symbols, images and symbols of Our Lord, or of Mary, or the saints. This vestment—unlike the stole which is worn for all sacraments, whether within or outside of the Mass— is only worn for the celebration of Mass. It reminds the priest and the faithful that as Christians we are called to put on



the mantle of charity (Cf. Colossians 3:14). As the priest vests himself with the chasuble he prays: *Above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfection. 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.*

*Source: http://www.vatican.va/news_services/liturgy/details/ns_lit_doc_20100216_vestizione_en.html