

Liturgical Vessels, Linens Vestments & Colors

LITURGICAL VESSELS

Chalice:



The consecrated gold or gilded silver cup used to hold the Precious Blood. Only priests or deacons are allowed to touch the Chalice (though sacristans may in the course of their duties). Pewter Chalices are "okay" for use during times of persecution but, even then, the inside of the bowl must be gilded. When Mass begins, the Chalice is covered by the folded purificator and the pall.

Paten:



The consecrated gold or gilded silver plate on which the Sacred Host is laid. Only priests or deacons are allowed to touch the Paten (though sacristans may in the course of their duties). A communion Paten has a handle and is held under the chin of one receiving the Eucharist so that in case Host is dropped, it won't fall to the floor.

Ciborium:



A chalice-shaped vessel with a lid used to hold consecrated Hosts for distribution during the communion of the faithful. It can be made of any material as long as the inside is gilded. It is kept in the tabernacle between Masses, covered with a white veil (which can be decorated with precious metals).

Cruets:



These vessels hold the water and wine before Consecration.

Monstrance (Ostensorium or Ostensory)



A gold or silver vessels often in a sunburst shape, with a clear glass area, called a "luna" for viewing the Sacrament. The Host is kept in place inside the crystal or glass frame by a crescent shaped gold or silver gilded clip called a "lunette". The monstrance is used during Benedictions and processions, etc., for adoration by the faithful. It doesn't require a blessing but it should be blessed.

Aspersory and Aspergillum (or "Aspergill")



The Aspersory is a container for holding Holy Water. The Aspergillum is a stick shaped implement with holes in it to dip in the Aspersory and catch the Holy Water for sprinkling the people and things. Because of Leviticus 14:49-52, Numbers 19: 18, Psalm 50:9, etc.' the aspergillum used to contain crushed Biblical Hyssop (*Origanum syriacum*) to catch the water, but nowadays a small sponge is more often used.

Thurible (or "Censer") and Boat



A thurible is the incense burner used at Mass. It hangs from chains so it can be swung to incense people and things. The boat is where the incense is stored until it is placed in the thurible.

Pyx:



A small container, also called a custodia, used to carry the Sacred Host when taking it to the sick and homebound. It is made of the same material as the Ciborium - gilt on the inside.

ALTAR LINENS

Chalice Veil:



Small silk cloth, of the same color as the priest's vestments (Chasuble), used to cover the Chalice. The veil conceals the Chalice and Paten up to the Offertory and after Communion but is not always used.

Putificator (or "Mundatory" or "Purificatory"):



Rectangular piece of linen or hemp used to wipe the Chalice before the Offertory and after Communion, the priest's lips and fingers. It requires no special blessing.

Pall:



A blessed, stiff square piece of linen (or plastic), sometimes decorated with a Cross or other embroidery, used to cover the Chalice to prevent impurities from falling into it. If it is embroidered or made of silk, the side touching the Chalice must still be made of linen.

Another type of pall is the cloth used to cover coffins at Requiem Masses.

Finger Towels:

These maybe made of any material (preferably linen) and are used at the Lavabo and after Communion.

Corporal:



A blessed square linen cloth which is spread out by the priest in the middle of the Altar. From the Catholic Encyclopedia, "after it (the corporal) is washed, bleached and ironed, it is folded into 3 equal parts, both in its length and its width, i.e. the anterior part is folded over the middle; then the posterior part is turned down over the anterior part, after this the part at the priest's right is folded over the middle and finally the part at the priest's left is folded over these.

THE MASS VESTMENTS

The Mass Vestments were originally ordinary garments of the ancient Roman world. Although the fashions of dress changed with the passing centuries, the priest continued to wear at the altar the ancient Roman costumes of his predecessors.

Thus the priest, vested for mass, is a wonderful witness to the historical continuity of the Catholic Church with the primitive Church of Rome, founded by the Prince of the Apostles. In the order in which the priest puts them on the Mass Vestments are:

The Alb: A long white linen garment reaching to the feet. The alb symbolizes the innocence and purity that should adorn the soul of the priest who ascends the altar.

The Cincture: The chord used as a belt to gird the alb. It symbolizes the virtues of chastity and continence required of the priest.

The Stole: Roman magistrates wore a long scarf when engaged in their official duties, just as our judges wear a court gown. 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. When placing the Stole about his neck, in vesting for Mass, the priest begs God to give him on the last day the "Garment of Immortality" that was forfeited by our sinful first parents.

The Chasuble: The outer vestment put on over the others. Originally this was a very full garment, shaped like a bell and reaching almost to the feet all the way round. During a bad artistic period, the 18th and 19th century especially, the Chasuble suffered much from a process of shortening and stiffening. Today there is a return to the historical or beautiful, ample, nicely draping Chasubles. The Chasuble symbolizes the virtue of charity and the yolk of unselfish service for the Lord, which the priest assumes at ordination.

LITURGICAL COLORS:

White: The symbol of innocence and triumph.(Apoc. 3, 5) It is used on all feasts of the joyful and glorious mysteries of our Lord's life (eg. Christmas & Easter), on the feast of our Blessed Mother, on the feasts of Angels and all Saints who were not Martyrs.

Red: The color of blood, is used on all feasts of our Lord's Cross and Passion, on the feasts of the Apostles and of all Martyrs. Red is also used on Pentecost and in Masses of the Holy Spirit, in memory of the tongues of fire of the First Pentecost.

Purple: A symbol of penance and expiation. It is used during the Penitential seasons of Advent, Septuagesima and Lent, and on fast days and vigils.

Green: The color of budding and living vegetation, it is the symbol of hope. It is used on the Sundays after Epiphany and after Pentecost.

Old Rose: This color is permitted, in place of purple, on the third Sunday of Advent (Gaudete) and on the fourth Sunday of Lent (laetare), when the church tempers the sadness of the Penitential seasons with an invitation to rejoice in the goodness of God our Saviour.

Gold: Vestments made of real cloth of Gold are permitted in place of White, Green and Red Vestments.

Black: The color of death and mourning. It is used for the services of Good Friday and the Masses for the Faithful Departed.