

# PUTTING ON CHRIST

## A BASIC GUIDE TO VESTURE FOR CLERGY SERVING IN THE ECCLESIA APOSTOLICA DIVINORUM MYSTERIORUM

THE MOST REVD. ANDREW LINLEY, O.C.R.



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## PART I – THE MASS

### INTRODUCTION

The Liberal Catholic tradition is one of religious liberty, so I am reluctant to dictate to the clergy what, exactly, they should be wearing during the liturgy, and how, exactly, they should wear it. Nonetheless, since our church unites around the Liturgy of the Liberal Catholic Church, which is a strongly traditional, and rather prosaic, form of worship, I feel that it is proper that I offer some guidance in this area. Indeed, in an age when old-established traditions of practical liturgics have fallen into widespread disuse in the mainstream churches - where the traditional forms of worship have been replaced almost entirely by simpler, more participatory, and less mystical, modern forms - it seems very necessary that our clergy be given support and encouragement to ensure the continued observation of these traditions within our communion. This guide is intended primarily for a priest preparing to celebrate a Low Mass, which is the most common form of liturgical celebration used in our church.

### A NOTE ON STYLES, INTERPRETATION AND THE LIBERAL CATHOLIC LITURGICAL IDIOM

The components of a Low Mass set (not all of which are always used) are the maniple, stole, chasuble, burse and veil. The latter two are not vestments but paraments, and so fall outside the context of this article. The stole and chasuble are invariable components of a Low Mass set, but may vary greatly in style, and within mainstream liturgical denominations one may find voluminous modern gothic, mediaeval-style semi-gothic, or Tridentine-style Latin vestments in parallel usage. Here, however, we are concerned with vesture in the Liberal Catholic tradition; a tradition which has its own peculiarities, which largely stem from +C.W. Leadbeater's theosophical interpretation of the Mass, which led him, in *The Science of the Sacraments*, to recommend a particular style of vesture according to its perceived ability to channel the flow of spiritual energy during the course of the celebration. This style was what is often called today the semi-gothic. This is a nineteenth- and twentieth-century revival of the style of vesture which was, with some slight regional variation, universal in the Western church throughout the mediaeval period. It is characterised by a chasuble of medium length, broadly oval in shape when opened out and laid flat, most commonly with orphreys (decorative bands) forming a Y shape at the front and back, sometimes with a

medallion bearing some well-known symbol on the back, at the intersection of the orphreys. The stole and maniple are usually fairly narrow, and may be slightly flared at the ends.

Now, our church does not require its members to be theosophists, and indeed few of us are; it therefore follows that few of us are likely to interpret the Mass, and its flow of spiritual energies through the vestments, in quite the same, quasi-scientific, manner as +Leadbeater. However, the semi-gothic style does still seem most appropriate in a Liberal Catholic context, and I feel moved to commend it strongly to our clergy, for the following reasons. Firstly, it retains much of the grace of the full gothic vestments currently in fashion in the Church of Rome and elsewhere, without the heat and inconvenience often experienced when wearing them during celebration. Secondly, it is the only style of vesture with a historical link to the Liberal Catholic tradition. Thirdly, since our liturgy is very much a traditional one, in both language and form, derived from the old Latin Mass of the Roman Church, it would be unidiomatic to celebrate it wearing vestments in a modern style, especially since modern vestments are intended to be seen from the front by the congregation at a contemporary liturgy celebrated by a priest facing them; at a Liberal Catholic Mass, only the back of the chasuble is seen by the congregation most of the time.

At this point, I must confess to a strong dislike of Latin, or ‘fiddleback’ vestments, which, though often beautifully embroidered, lack entirely the grace and flow of both of the full- and semi-gothic shapes – indeed, the chasubles are often stiffened to take embroidered decoration to the extent that they resemble ornate sandwich boards. More seriously, the style carries overtones, for many, of the Roman Church during its Ultramontane period, the dogmatic excesses of which gave birth to the Free Catholic Movement in the first place.

### VESTING: A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

The brief process of vesting is made neater, tidier, and more graceful if the vestments are laid out on top of each other on a flat surface, such as a large table, in the order in which they will be put on. In small mediaeval churches without sacristies, it was common practice for the priest to vest on the altar itself, and this is perfectly acceptable in a private oratory. The vestments may be laid out in the following order. The chasuble is placed face down, with the lower half of the back turned up (so that the lining is visible) in order to make it easier to put it over the head; then on top of the folded chasuble from left to right are placed the maniple, stole and girdle, laid out in such a way as to spell IHS; on top of these is laid the alb, face down and turned back at the base, similarly to the chasuble; on top of this, finally, is spread the amice (see

Alb/amice below). Some clergy like to say special prayers while vesting - a laudable practice - and these may be found in various missals and devotional books.

### ALB/AMICE

These are the white garments which are worn under the Mass vestments, and take two principal forms. The first is the traditional combination of alb and amice. The amice is a rectangular piece of cloth (almost always pure cotton), with cloth tapes attached to two corners. It may bear an embroidered cross on the same side as the tapes, which may be kissed as a sign of devotion before putting on the amice. This is done by placing it around the neck and upon the shoulders with the tapes hanging down in front of you, crossing the tapes over your chest and around your waist, and tying them in a bow in front, which draws the amice around the neck in graceful folds. The edges are then tucked into the clerical collar all round, so as not to expose the collar at any point. The alb is then simply pulled on over the head, leaving none of the street-clothes exposed. Occasionally, one might come across the apparelled amice, a very attractive mediaeval fashion, once very popular among Liberal Catholic clergy, and still fairly common in Anglican cathedrals. This is simply a larger amice with a strip of coloured or embroidered silk along the upper edge, but is somewhat more difficult to wear, since it must first be placed over the head like a hood, the alb put on, and then the amice pushed back over it, and laying gathered in folds around the neck, with the apparel around the outside. There is also much variation in the style of the alb, which may bear apparels at the hem or the cuffs, or be decorated with lace (especially in the case of prelates), may be box-pleated or gathered, and may have either a square or round neckband. My purely personal preference for a priest's alb is a generously cut, unadorned cotton alb, gathered into a round neckband. I should add that it is assumed that the alb and amice be worn over the cassock— the alb can look somewhat baggy and deflated when worn over a shirt and trousers.

The second type of white garment worn under Mass vestments is the cassock-alb, a modern attempt to combine the functions of the cassock and the alb for greater convenience. Certainly, it is quicker and easier to put on, and is especially convenient at private celebrations of the Mass and when travelling. It is not, however, without its disadvantages, and should be chosen with care. The fact that it combines the function of the cassock and the alb necessitates that it must be made of somewhat heavier cloth than the alb; this in turn requires a cut less full than that of the alb, resulting in a less graceful appearance. The matters of fastening and neckline are also important to the function and aesthetic merit of the cassock-alb. Zip-fronted cassock-albs are popular, but a zip up the front of a sacred vestment is somehow unseemly, smacking somewhat of the desire for convenience over beauty, a desire which surely has no place in the sacred vestments. There are also cassock-albs

available with wrap-around collars, and which are buttoned like a double-breasted cassock. These are certainly more pleasing than the zipped option, and have the great advantage of hiding the clerical collar as completely as an amice, but are, in the end, little more than double-breasted cassocks.

My preference is for the style of cassock-alb that is pulled on over the head, generously cut, has wide sleeves and that features a monastic style ‘capuche’ (a vestigial cowl). This garment is graceful in appearance, and has the advantage that the capuche forms a high collar at the front, which helps to hide one’s street-clothes. This is important, since, as the title of this article implies, the priest at the Eucharist is representing our Lord Christ, putting the Christ on over the clothing and jewellery which s/he normally wears, and which is representative of his or her personality, in order, symbolically, to become the Christ. This is why the vestments should cover entirely the priest’s clothes and jewellery. In putting on the above-mentioned style of cassock-alb, the capuche is turned up until the chasuble has been put on, when it is rolled down over the neckline of the chasuble. If the clerical collar is still visible, an amice should be worn under the cassock-alb. Incidentally, it is perhaps worth pointing out that the clerical collar is a modern invention and is not part of the Eucharistic vesture of a priest; neither is the pectoral cross (episcopal or otherwise). Both should be hidden during the Mass.

ALB  
SYMBOL OF PURITY



The alb is the long white, robe-like vestment worn by all clerics at liturgical celebrations (celebrant, con-celebrant, deacon, or acolyte). The alb (from Latin word *alba*, meaning “white”) can be traced to the ancient Roman alb worn under a cloak or tunic; its color symbolizes purity and its form recalls that described in Ezekiel 28:4. As he puts on his alb, s/he prays:

*Purify me, O Lord, and cleanse my heart; that, being made white in the Blood of the Lamb, I may come to eternal joy. Latin version: Dealba me, Domine, et munda cor meum; ut, in sanguine Agni dealbatus, gaudiis perfruaire sempiternis.*

## AMICE SYMBOL OF THE HELMET OF SALVATION



The amice is a rectangular piece of white linen with two strings at the upper corners which a cleric uses underneath his alb to cover the neck so that the Roman collar of the cassock is hidden. The word amice comes from the Latin *amicire*, meaning “to cover” and, because the heads of criminals condemned to death were covered in linen, the amice recalls the humiliation which was put upon Christ. As he puts on the amice, the priest kisses the Cross on the Amice and prays:

*Place upon me, O Lord, the helmet of salvation, that I may overcome the assaults of the devil. Latin version: Impone, Domine, capiti meo galeam salutis, ad expugnandos diabolicos incursus.*

## GIRDLE (SOMETIMES ‘ROPE-CINCTURE’)

The girdle is simply a length of rope, usually white but sometimes in a liturgical colour, with a tassel at each end. It is worn around the waist over the alb or cassock-alb, in order to gather and control it, and to secure the stole. There are no absolute rules about how the girdle is worn, but a pleasing and convenient effect is obtained if it is tied in such a manner that the tassels hang down close to the hips on either side. My own method for tying the girdle is this: double it over lengthwise, so that the tassels hang together; place the doubled girdle around the waist, passing the tassels through the loop formed by doubling the girdle over, and pull it fairly tight around the waist, with the tassels hanging down together in front of you. Now take both tassels and create another loop by passing them up to your right, behind the belt formed by the girdle against your waist and down through the resulting loop, to make a simple knot. The tassels are once again hanging together in front of you. Take each tasselled end in turn, and wind it a couple of times behind and over the girdle near your hip, and back through the resulting loop. Now you have a tassel hanging at each hip, and a bow of rope between the central knot and the knot at each hip. The stole can then be placed through this bow on each side and the bow tightened to hold it in place by pulling on the tassel.

## CINCTURE SYMBOL OF CHASTITY



The cincture ties the alb at the waist. As the priest ties it, s/he prays:  
*Gird me, O Lord, with the girdle of purity, and extinguish in me all evil desires, that the virtue of chastity may abide in me. Latin version: Praecinge me, Domine, cingulo puritatis, et exstingue in lumbis meis humorem libidinis; ut maneat in me virtus continentia et castitatis.*

## MANIPLE

This is a band of cloth, usually around two feet in length, which forms part of a traditional Low Mass set, and matches the stole in colour and ornamentation. It forms a loop at one end, and has a fringe at the other. It is worn on the left arm, a few inches above the hand, simply by passing the hand through the loop. Most maniples are now made with an additional loop of elastic inside to secure them to the arm, though in the past buttons, and some-times pins, were used. The maniple can be a distraction, owing to its tendency to catch and brush against the Eucharistic vessels and paraments, and its use is entirely optional in our communion.

## MANIPLE SYMBOL OF THE ACCEPTANCE OF SUFFERING



The maniple is a narrow strip of linen, of the same color as the chasuble, suspended from the left forearm so that it falls equally on both sides of the arm.

It is to remind the cleric that he must patiently bear the cares and sorrows of this earthly life in the service of God and for Heavenly reward. The Bishop puts on the maniple at the Altar after the Confiteor; other clerics put it on in the sacristy before the service. As the cleric puts on the maniple, s/he kisses the Cross on the maniple and prays:

*Grant, O Lord, that I may so bear the maniple of weeping and sorrow, that I may receive the reward for my labors with rejoicing. Latin version: Merear, Domine, portare manipulum fletus et doloris; ut cum exultatione recipiam mercedem laboris.*

## STOLE

The stole is perhaps the most familiar of priestly vestments. In a Low Mass set it will match the chasuble and maniple, though there is no objection to using vestments from different sets together – indeed, mediaeval usage frequently involved combining vestments from sets of different colours, as well as of different vintage. In our communion, the ancient tradition is followed that a priest wears his or her stole crossed over the chest when vested for Mass. This requires a relatively narrow stole, no more than about four inches wide, and ideally narrower. Modern-style stoles are usually far too wide and wrongly shaped for this purpose. Once crossed, the ends are secured by the girdle (see above). Many stoles have an embroidered cross at the back of the neck, and it is common practice to kiss this before putting on the stole, as a sign of devotion. This cross should sit centrally at the back of the neck, so that the ends of the stole hang side-by-side under the chasuble. The popular contemporary practice of wearing a very wide stole over a chasuble (a so-called ‘overlay stole’) does not suit our style of worship, and runs contrary to all historical practice.

## STOLE SYMBOL OF THE CLERICAL OFFICE, IMMORTALITY, AND THE YOKE OF CHRIST



The stole, matching the liturgical color, is a long, scarf-like vestment worn over the alb and under the dalmatic/chasuble. The priest wears the stole

around his neck so that it hangs equally down his chest in front or forms an X-shaped Cross; the deacon wears his stole over the left shoulder and tied at his right side; the Bishop wears his stole so that it hangs equally down his chest. As he puts on the stole, the priest kisses the Cross on the stole and prays:

*Restore unto me, O Lord, the stole of immortality, which was lost through the guilt of our first parents: and, although I am unworthy to approach Your sacred Mysteries, nevertheless grant unto me eternal joy. Latin version: Redde mihi, Domine, stolam immortalitatis, quam perdidit in praevaricatione primi parentis: et, quamvis indignus accedo ad tuum sacrum mysterium, merear tamen gaudium sempiternum.*

## CHASUBLE

The final and most important component of a Low Mass set should be put on with care the right way round! It sounds strange, but I have seen a few priests wearing chasubles back-to-front. With a semi-gothic chasuble, there is usually a medallion on the back to clarify the situation. It is worth checking in a mirror that the chasuble is straight and balanced on the shoulders, without the neckband being pulled too low at the front, and that the stole is still straight and has not ridden up the back of the neck. When you are satisfied that you are neatly and correctly vested, you may begin the celebration.

## CHASUBLE OR COPE



For the Eucharistic Liturgy: Chasuble The chasuble, also matching the liturgical color, is is the long, often ornate, sleeveless poncho-like garment worn by priests and bishops over the alb and stole during the sacrifice of the Mass. As s/he puts on the chasuble, s/he prays:

*O Lord, Who said: My yoke is easy and My burden light: grant that I may bear it well and follow after You with thanksgiving. Amen. Latin version: Domine, qui dixisti: Iugum meam suave est et onus meum leve: fac, ut istud portare sic valeam, quod consequar tuam gratiam. Amen.*

For non-Eucharistic Liturgy: Cope The cope is a large mantle worn by clerics (including deacons) at some liturgical celebrations (but not at the Mass) -- for example, during Processions and Benedictions of the Blessed Sacrament. It matches the color of the liturgy and is worn in the same way as the chasuble or dalmatic.

Deacon for the Eucharistic Liturgy: Dalmatic Instead of a chasuble as a priest wears, the deacon wears the sleeved dalmatic, also matching the liturgical color, over his alb and stole. Bishops also wear a dalmatic at major solemn feasts and ordinations. It symbolizes charity, justice, and the sufferings of Christ. As he puts on the dalmatic, the deacon or bishop prays:

*Lord, endow me with the garment of salvation, the vestment of joy, and with the dalmatic of justice ever encompass me.*

## PART II: OFFICES AND OCCASIONAL SERVICES

### INTRODUCTION

The first Part in this series was intended to give guidance to the priest on the matter of Eucharistic vesture. This second and final Part is a brief guide to vesture for all of the other services not involving the Eucharist found in the Liturgy According to the Use of the Liberal Catholic Church. I will begin by discussing general points of style to be considered when choosing items of vesture for these services, and move on to examine the combinations of vestments required for each of the services.

### CASSOCK

The cassock is not, in fact, a vestment at all, but is historically the basic item of street clothing of a priest, or any secular person in major Holy Orders (religious tend to substitute for it the habit of their order). As an everyday garment, it has largely fallen into desuetude, with clergy of mainstream denominations tending either to go about their daily business wearing the clergy shirt with secular clothes, or abandoning clerical attire altogether. The cassock remains, however, the basis for all combinations of vesture featuring the surplice, and this is its relevance to this article.

In terms of style, the cassock varies widely. The earliest form of cassock is double-breasted, wrapping around the body and fastening at the hip and the neck. This style remains popular in the Anglican Communion, and survives in the Roman Catholic Church as the habit of members of the Oratory of St Philip Neri. While often instinctively (and quite mistakenly) rejected by Catholics as 'Protestant', the double-breasted cassock is a comfortable and practical garment for everyday use, its overlapping fronts allowing ease of movement when walking.

Somewhat less practical, but more widely favoured in Catholic circles, the single-breasted cassock fastens at the front with a vertical row of buttons. Usually there are around 30 buttons, but the exact number generally depends upon the height of the wearer (cassocks should usually be made-to-measure). Among Anglicans, however, the 39-button cassock remains common, each button representing one of the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion of the Church of England. This multitude of buttons can make donning a single-breasted cassock a rather laborious task. The single-breasted cassock may also be adorned, in the case of those in major orders, with a shoulder-cape and cuffs, which latter may be covered in silk, as may the buttons. A cassock with these refinements is sometimes called by the French term *soutane*, and is often further adorned, in the case of prelates, with red buttons and piping. These

features give the single-breasted cassock something of the appearance of military uniform; a fact probably not lost upon the Roman Church when it adopted this style during the Tridentine period.

Though the cassock is nowadays generally black for non-prelates, it may be of any colour: in mediaeval times russet brown seems to have been common, and one occasionally still sees Anglican or Methodist clergy wearing grey or blue cassocks, while white cassocks are allowed to Roman Catholic clergy in the tropics. The original Liberal Catholic Church had a tradition of clergy wearing violet or blue-purple single-breasted cassocks, with the exception of bishops (who wore rose-purple as in the Roman Church), thus avoiding the wearing of black which was forbidden as carrying negative connotations.

In our communion, I would suggest that secular clergy below the order of bishop, and without the status of monsignor, wear a black or violet cassock (though any colour other than rose-purple is permissible), in either the single- or double-breasted style, according to preference. It should be of sufficient length to reach to, or close to, the tops of the shoes when standing. For the sake of comfort, unless one can afford the luxury of summer- and winter-weight cassocks, the cloth should be of light or medium weight, so that the wearer is not too hot when wearing vestments over the cassock. Polyester is best avoided, since it tends not to breathe and generates large amounts of static electricity during wear, though mixes of natural and synthetic fibres can be very practical. My own preference, for aesthetic reasons, is for one hundred percent wool.

The cassock looks smartest when bound at the waist with a cincture – a strip of cloth a few inches wide, with a fringed fall which hangs in front of the wearer’s left leg. A shoulder-cape may be worn, but should be detachable in order that a surplice or alb can be worn over the cassock. The shoulder cape is not to be worn over the surplice – a fairly common error which seems to arise from confusion of the shoulder-cape of the cassock with a bishop’s mozetta, which is somewhat similar to a shoulder-cape, but is worn over the rochet (a bishop’s version of the surplice), in choir. Religious may substitute the habit of their order for the cassock.

## SURPLICE

A mediaeval development of the alb, the surplice (from Latin *superpelliceum*, ‘over the furred garment’), being looser fitting, was easier to put on over the thick fur-lined cassocks which were necessary in freezing churches, and consequently became widely used by those in minor orders, musicians, and clergy assembled ‘in choir’ (i.e. outside the sanctuary at the Eucharist, and for offices, such as Vespers, which took place in the choir stalls). It shares its

origins with the rochet, which resembles a surplice and is generally worn by prelates.

Though it may generally be described as a white cotton or synthetic garment of roughly three-quarter length, with long, relatively wide, sleeves, hanging from a neckband through which the head is passed, the surplice has evolved in such a way that the word encompasses a variety of styles. The basic mediaeval pattern has survived in wide use in the Church of England, and is sometimes described as an 'Old English surplice'. This is generously cut, reaches well below the knee, is gathered into a circular neckband, and has long and very wide sleeves, the bases of which hang down close to the hem of the garment. Rather less generous variants of this graceful garment, tending to be shorter in both the body and the sleeves, are very popular. During the Tridentine period, the Roman Church developed the mediaeval surplice into what is often called colloquially by the slang Italian term *cotta* (meaning 'cut'). This is a much shortened surplice, sometimes barely reaching below the waist, with a square neckband and short, fairly narrow sleeves. This attenuated garment, the chief merit of which was its cheapness, was often decorated with a band of lace at the base and cuffs, or bands of lace inserted into the body. +Leadbeater dismissed this garment as 'a mere travesty – a garment of ridiculous and indecorous appearance, absurdly short and edged with lace, irresistibly suggesting the skirt of a ballet-dancer'. Since the Second Vatican Council, this type of surplice has begun to grow longer once again, with wider sleeves and box pleats, rather than gathers, becoming popular.

The Liberal Catholic Church has traditionally suggested that clergy wear the mediaeval form of surplice, somewhat shortened, but always reaching below the knee, with rather smaller, pointed, sleeves, and entirely unadorned. This seems to be a perfectly sensible policy, though my own preference is for the full 'Old English' style, for its grace and simple beauty of form, and because, if one obtains a really long example, it can be worn without a cassock in very hot weather, since it covers one's street clothes entirely from the neck down. As with the cassock, I recommend buying a surplice made entirely from natural fibres, which is cool to wear and hangs well. Since the surplice ought to be generously gathered, any creases should not be too noticeable in its folds, and a cool machine wash every so often will keep it clean. Religious should wear the surplice over their habit when leading public services covered in this article.

## STOLE

The stole, one of the oldest and most widely used vestments, has already been discussed in its role among the Eucharistic vestments in my previous article. It

is worth mentioning once again, however, because the mode of its use is rather different when separated from the other Eucharistic vestments.

In the context of the services covered by this article, the stole is worn over the surplice and under the cope, where applicable (see below). A priest does not cross his or her stole when vested in the surplice, but wears it hanging straight down, without the girdle to fasten it in place. A deacon still wears the stole on the left shoulder, and loops it under the right arm (deacon's stoles, with a hook and eye attached for this purpose, can be obtained, but a narrow stole can easily be looped into a half knot under the arm). Any style of stole can be worn over the surplice, but the traditional idiom of the Liberal Catholic liturgy suggests that none of the vestments should appear aggressively modern, and the very wide stoles currently in vogue can be uncomfortable and ungainly in any case. Once again, my preference is for a stole no more than four inches in width, preferably less, and long enough to reach below the knee. It is not usual practice to wear a stole from a mass set with a surplice, since this will tend to cause it to fade and wear more quickly than the rest of the set, but I see nothing wrong in principle with doing this. A single tapestry stole might suffice for baptisms, weddings, and funerals at which white would otherwise be worn (see below), but since the stole may be the sole manifestation of the appropriate liturgical colour at some of these services, it is better that one in this colour be worn.

During the Middle Ages, the Western church developed a system of vesture in which a distinction was made between a priest exercising a priestly, sacramental, function (such as saying Mass, or administering baptism), and a priest merely present at such a service or leading a non-sacramental service. In the former case, the priest would wear Mass vestments if celebrating, or a stole over a surplice or alb if, for instance, baptising. In the latter case, he would wear the surplice, either alone, or with an additional garment according to local variation. He did not generally wear the stole. This usage, which is called "choir dress" (see under Surplice, above) has been preserved in the Church of England, where it may be seen most commonly at cathedral Choral Evensong, where priests will usually wear over the surplice the tippet or "preaching scarf", a black garment somewhat similar to a stole, but in fact quite unrelated, and the academic hood. The Liberal Catholic Church adopted, from the outset, the usage which is increasingly common in the Roman communion, in which a priest or deacon wears a stole whenever he or she is wearing the surplice, irrespective of whether a sacramental function is being performed. While I regret the increasing tendency for officiants at church services to wear the same vesture whatever the occasion – this decreases the richness of worship, as well as the usefulness of vesture itself as an indicator and reminder of the specific nature of the service being observed – I would suggest that for practical reasons our clergy should follow Liberal Catholic tradition and wear

the stole whenever the surplice is worn, though I would certainly have no objection to the wearing of the Anglican-style tippet and academic hood at Vespers, Prime, or Complin, or at other non-sacramental services, for that matter.

### COPE

The cope is simply an open-fronted evolution of the chasuble, available in all of the liturgical colours, and in tapestry versions. Like the Mass vestments, it may be richly embroidered. It is a festal and processional garment, used when a greater sense of solemnity is desired, but is not worn by the celebrant at Mass, except, perhaps, during the procession. It may vary slightly in design, from the gothic style which derives from mediaeval examples, with a relatively shallow, rounded hood (usually just a flap of cloth at the upper back of the garment, but originally functional), to the Tridentine with its longer, squarer hood, and a number of contemporary design variants. While any style may be worn, I would suggest that the gothic is most appropriate for our style of worship.

### BIRETTA

This rather prosaic form of headgear shares its origins with the academic trencher, or “mortar board”, and took its current form during the Tridentine era. It may only be worn by those of the order of subdeacon and above, outside the liturgy, in choir, and during offices, as well as during the procession, epistle and sermon at Mass. It should be of the same colour as the cassock, as should the pompom at its centre, and is worn so that the corner without a blade is over the left ear. It is removed by taking the foremost blade with the right hand, while the left hangs by one’s side. The biretta is always removed when genuflecting. I must confess that I am not a lover of the biretta, since it is difficult to avoid finding its appearance somewhat comical; it is also uncomfortable to wear and difficult to handle during the liturgy, and very delicate, owing to its construction from silk and card. Its use in our communion is entirely optional.

### SOME GENERAL ADVICE

The girdle should not be worn over the surplice; it is only ever worn over the alb. Clergy below the order of bishop should not wear a neck cross visibly when vested, either in the Mass vestments or the surplice. Crosses other than the episcopal pectoral cross are purely secular decorations, and even the official use of crosses by bishops is a relatively late development. It is one of the purposes of ecclesiastical vesture to hide the secular garb; it follows, then, that

secular clothing and jewellery should either be hidden, left unworn, or at least inconspicuous.

Shoes should be black or, for wear in the sanctuary, purple if a violet cassock is worn. The same rules apply to socks. Men's shoes, in particular, should be highly polished. The full, "all round" clerical collar looks best for wear with the cassock, but the tonsure-neck style also looks good. I find that the slip-in, turn-down collar, while convenient as street-wear, tends to slip down annoyingly within the cassock collar. When vesting, try to ensure that the surplice is balanced on the shoulders, rather than being pulled down low at either the front or back. Check that the stole is hanging so that the fringes at each end are side-by-side, and, if wearing the cope, that it is hanging straight and not slipping back from the shoulders. The biretta, if worn, should be on the right way round, and on the crown of the head, not pushed back in the jaunty fashion common in the Roman Church before Vatican II!

## THE SERVICES

There follows a list of services, with suggestions as to the correct vesture for each. Not all of these services will feature in the ministry of every priest; and some will take place only in private homes, in which case formal vesture may not be thought necessary. I would emphasise that this guide is not intended to be prescriptive; individual clergy are allowed reasonable discretion in selecting the appropriate vesture for the situation concerned.

### BAPTISM

In traditional Liberal Catholic usage, the cassock, surplice and two stoles are required: violet and white. The service is begun in violet, and the priest changes into white after the Exorcism (violet being the liturgical colour for exorcism). In our communion, it is permissible to wear the white stole for the whole service, and this ought to be done if a modern baptismal liturgy, rather than the Liberal Catholic rite, is used for pastoral reasons. If baptism takes place during the Sunday Eucharist, the celebrant may retain the liturgical colour of the day, though it is desirable that the chasuble be removed for the baptism ceremony itself.

### MATRIMONY

A cassock, surplice and white or gold stole is worn, and the use of an appropriate cope is encouraged. If a Nuptial Eucharist is to follow, a white or gold Mass set will be required, and it would seem convenient in this case that the priest conduct the service of Holy Matrimony vested in amice, alb, stole and girdle, in readiness to put on the Mass vestments afterwards.

## ADMINISTRATION OF HOLY COMMUNION FROM THE RESERVED SACRAMENT

The priest vests in cassock, surplice and stole of the colour of the day.

### BENEDICTION OF THE MOST HOLY SACRAMENT

In the case of simple Benediction, the priest vests in cassock, surplice and white stole; if the service is solemn, a white cope is also worn. If Benediction is preceded by another service, such as Vespers, which is conducted in the colour of the day, the vestments should be changed to white between the services, with the exception that there is a Liberal Catholic tradition that Benediction may be given in red where that is the colour of the day.

### HOLY UNCTION AND COMMUNION OF THE SICK

The priest vests in the cassock, surplice and violet stole for the Unction, changing into a white stole for the Communion. Alternatively, a reversible violet/white stole may be used, and in cases of extreme urgency the priest may omit to vest altogether.

### CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

The cassock, surplice and violet stole should normally be worn, but, in cases of extreme urgency, only the cassock and stole, or the stole alone over street clothes, or no vestments at all, may be worn.

### SERVICE OF HEALING

The cassock, surplice and red stole are worn. If a Eucharist with a special intention for healing is to follow, red vestments should be used, and the priest may vest from the outset in amice, alb, stole, and girdle, adding the chasuble when appropriate.

### BLESSINGS

When a priest is required to bless Holy Water, a house, an oratory, or objects in general, he or she should normally wear cassock, surplice and stole: violet in cases where the rite of blessing involves exorcism, as in the case of Holy Water; white when exorcism is not prescribed, as in the case of a house. When blessings take place in private, the stole may be worn over street clothes.

### FORMS OF ADMISSION

Cassock, surplice, and a stole of the colour of the day are worn; when an admission takes place on an important occasion, a cope may also be worn.

### BURIAL OF THE DEAD

The basic vesture is cassock, surplice and stole: violet in the case of adults; white in the case of children. Traditionally, a “child” in this case is under seven years of age, but I would suggest that anyone under the age of sixteen may be considered a child for the purposes of a funeral liturgy. In any case, white is now commonly used in a climate where funerals are treated increasingly as services of thanksgiving for the life of the deceased, irrespective of age. In cases where families and friends are actively involved in planning the service, it is worth asking them whether they would like white (or gold) or violet vestments. Well-attended funerals are enhanced by the wearing of a cope of the appropriate colour, especially in the often gloomy surroundings of a municipal crematorium. If a Requiem Eucharist is to follow immediately, the priest will find it convenient to vest in amice, alb, stole, and girdle from the outset, simply adding the chasuble for the Eucharist.

### PRIME, COMPLIN AND VESPERS

These services are likely to be said for the most part in private, in which case the vesture worn, or the absence thereof, is a matter best left to the discretion of the clergyperson concerned. At my private daily Complin, I generally wear cassock-alb (for convenience) and stole, and light the altar candles, because I find these things to be an aid to devotion. If the short services of Prime and Complin take place in public, they may be said informally with the clergy vested in cassocks alone, or formally, with them vested in cassock, surplice and stole of the colour of the day. For a public Vespers also, cassock, surplice and stole of the colour of the day should be worn, and a cope if the service is solemn.