

The Fourth Sunday of Lent – 3/14/2010

The Vestments of a Catholic Minister (Priest).

The word vestments comes from Latin, it simply means clothing. Today it is generally used to represent the garments that are worn by the ministers of religion in the performance of their sacred duties. Catholic vestments that priests wear for mass are sacramental. That means that they are set apart and blessed by the church to excite good thoughts and to increase devotion in those who see and those who use them. They are the uniform of the priest when he is on sacred duty, while he is exercising the functions of his ministry and using the sacred powers which he received at the ordination.

The mass vestments were originally ordinary garments of the ancient Roman world. They have not changed much. The priest vested for mass is a wonderful witness to the historical continuity of the Catholic Church with the primitive Church of Rome.

1. ALB.

Long white linen garment symbolizing innocence and purity which covers the entire body. “Alba” is Latin for “White.”

Vesting Prayer: “Make me white, O Lord, and cleanse my heart; that being made white in Blood of the lamb I may deserve an eternal reward.”

2. AMICE.

It is a rectangular piece of cloth with an embroidered cross that is wrapped round the neck, shoulders and breast. It is representative of the garment of the fool that the Roman soldiers placed over our Lord as they blindfolded, mocked and struck him. The priest kisses the cross before placing it over his shoulders.

Vesting Prayer: “Place, O Lord, on my head the helmet of salvation, that so I may resist the assaults of the devil.”

3. THE STOLE.

It goes back to the 4th Century. It is a long piece of vestment worn around the neck and hanging down on both sides in front. In the Roman world it was worn by the judges and the clerics, it is the symbol of the priests’ apostolic authority (Office) and ability to forgive sins.

Vesting Prayer: “Restore to me O, Lord, the state of immortality which I lost through the sin of my first parents and although unworthy to approach Thy Sacred Mysteries, may I deserve nevertheless eternal joy.”

The Fourth Sunday of Lent – 3/14/2010 (cont'd)

4. THE CINCTURE.

Tied around the waist over the alb to hold it (and sometimes the stole) in place. Made of braided linen or wool, it represents priestly chastity.

Vesting Prayer: “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.”

5. CHASUBLE.

The word chasuble is derived from the Latin “Casula” or “little house” because it was at times literally used as a shelter by clergy. Traditionally chasubles were required to have a large cross on the back to signify the yolk of service to our Lord. Chasubles of the past were very large, heavy and ornamented, which is why altar boys used to help the priest to support it during mass. Later on we also had very small ones.

Vesting Prayer: “O Lord, who has said “My yolk is sweet and my burden light”, grant that I may so carry it as to merit thy Grace.”

COLORS.

1. WHITE: Alternate with Gold. It symbolizes purity, innocence, rejoicing and light. Worn during certain periods throughout Christmas and Easter seasons, also on feasts of our Lord, Blessed Virgin Mary, non-Martyred saints, and conversion of St.Paul, St.John, and The Apostle etc. Also during ceremonies like weddings, baptisms and burials (esp of children) and certain feasts of the church.

RED: It is symbolic of blood and fire and is worn during feasts of His precious blood. It is representative of the Holy Spirit and worn on Pentecost, feasts of martyrs, Evangelists and Apostles.

GREEN: The color of nature, denoting the hope of eternal life. Worn on days that there is no feast or solemnity celebrated, and out side seasons of Lent, Advent and when there isn't any ceremony like wedding, funeral etc. *Normal days.*

GOLD: Substitutes or can replace green, red, and white for added solemnity. Gold denotes majesty and splendor.

VIOLET: Symbolizes sorrow and penance. Violet is worn during Lent and Advent, certain Masses, the blessing of ashes, and other penitential occasions.

ROSE: It indicates joy and is sometimes worn during penitential season on the 3rd Sunday of Advent and 4th Sunday of Lent. It magnifies the austerity during penitential season.

BLACK: Black representative of mourning and death. It is worn on Good Friday and Masses for the dead.