

The Importance and History of Priest Vestments - A historic overview brought to you by MDS Church Supplies

Los Angeles, California Jul 13, 2022 ([IssueWire.com](https://www.issuewire.com)) - For Mass, a priest vestment consists of three to five items: alb, stole, chasuble, amice, and cincture.

The base layer is an alb, a white robe that reaches to the ankles. A priest stole, a small strip of cloth worn over the neck and resting on the priest's shoulders, is worn over the alb.

Finally, because it is the most noticeable of the priest vestments, the priest wears a chasuble, which is usually constructed of good cloth and likely embellished with decoration.

This article will outline the Importance and History of Priest Vestments. Our Team at MDS Church Supplies is happy to share this article with you.

For over eight decades MDS has strived to provide the highest quality for all products we make. We make our own priest vestments, stoles, paraments, banners, mass linens, clergy shirts, and a host of other Christian products. From textiles, embroideries, leather, and wood to our brass products, design and quality are of utmost importance. Our soft Rosary and Pyx cases to prayer book covers and Bible covers are made of supple leathers. MDS designs and makes an extensive range of clergy collars. Merging age-old traditions of hand embroideries with classic hand-woven fabrics to create easy care, comfortable masterpieces including priest garments and priest robes.

There are two more items that are optional. The priest amice, which is worn beneath the alb and across the shoulders, and the cincture, which is a robe worn over the alb that acts as a belt by keeping the alb gathered and in place.

The priest may wear the amice if the alb does not completely cover the priest's ordinary attire at the neck and to help keep the alb clean. Labadie added that if the alb is adjusted in this fashion, the priest may choose not to wear the belt-like cincture.

Priest vestments have been worn by priests since the early centuries of the Church, and are an offshoot of Greco-Roman culture, in which those with important positions in the community — often government and judicial leaders — were identifiable by the coverings they wore.

As Christianity developed and was accepted throughout the Roman Empire, it became feasible to designate specific priest garments as liturgical.

If you've ever attended Mass, you've probably noticed how the priest vestments change with the seasons. It's probable that you've wondered why the change occurred and what the various colors indicate. Simply put, each piece of a priest's garment and color has a different meaning and inspires us to learn more about what is happening during the liturgy.

Priest vestments worn for liturgies in the early Church were the same as the clothing worn in everyday life by Greek and Roman civilizations in the 4th century. When the priest robes worn in Church today no longer matched popular fashion, they became distinctive. Priests and ministers wear this specific form of priest clothing as a mark of Christianity's history and background all over the world.

A Closer Examination of Today's Traditional Priest Vestments

The amice, alb, cincture, stole, and chasuble is the current traditional priest garments.

The Amice

This optional component is a rectangular fabric draped over the shoulders under the alb. Over the priest's street clothes, the fabric is tucked in around the neck and tied around the waist with two cloth ribbons. It is not a required item, but it has practical applications. It can be used as a scarf to keep the priest's neck warm in the winter, and it can also be used to protect valuable embroidered pieces from sweat and body oils.

The Alb

The alb, worn over the amice, represents the newly baptized's clothing, as well as the purity of soul required for Mass and the garment in which Pilate clothed Christ.

The Cincture

This cord is used to gather the alb at the waist and serves as a belt. It is usually white, although it can also be a different color according to the day or liturgical season. Funerals may be dressed in white, violet, or black.

The Stole

A long, narrow strip of cloth worn around the priest's neck and down his front, generally over his alb. The stole is a very important item since it denotes the state of the ordained office. The stole, like the cincture, can be the color of the day or the liturgical season.

The Chasuble

This is the outermost and final piece of the vesture, and it is the day's or liturgical season's color. The chasuble's traditional connotation is that it represents charity, which covers a multitude of sins.

These priest robes serve to remind us of the mission that all priests have. Pope Benedict spoke of how the priesthood and its priest vestments represent a sort of putting on Christ, speaking and acting "in persona Christi," when reflecting on the priesthood and its priest vestments. The vestments have a specific value for priests; they are clothes of love that symbolize their unique mission and identity in Christ. They are a reflection of their self-gift, obedience, and unique relationship with God. They serve as reminders of who they are and how they must let go of all worldly ties, laying down their lives in order to act in Christ's name.

Each of the priest vestments listed above plays an important role in the celebration of the mass. MDS Church Supplies is your one-stop shop for priest vestments, clergy clothing, and priest clothes.

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