

## The Priest Prepares for Mass

The items of clothing worn by the Priest during Mass



### TARGET AUDIENCE

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#### Overview

This Object introduces students to the clothing worn by Priests during the Eucharist and the historical context of these liturgical garments, as well as an overview of the ritual of dressing.

The multimedia element is a video of the Priest dressing for the Eucharist. Each item of clothing is named as he puts them on and a short explanation is provided.

#### Teacher Background

Teachers are encouraged to review the 'Crafting the Art of Liturgy' section of the DVD Rom *Become One Body One Spirit in Christ* to deepen their understanding of the art, beauty and celebration as well as the roles of the ordained ministry and of the liturgical assembly.

In particular, the following aspects of *Become One Body One Spirit in Christ* provide entry points and context for this Learning Object:

- Within the pathway 'Liturgical Prayer' watch the video 'The Priest's Craft'. The content of the video is developed further in the excerpts taken from the essay *Presidential Prayers and Practice: Towards An Ars Celebrandi* by Canon Alan Griffiths. The excerpts can be accessed by clicking on the 'Read More' arrow, or else you can download the essay by clicking on the 'View Essay' button.

*Where appropriate, use this material with the students.*

#### Supporting Content

*This text supports the focus of the multimedia element.*

In ancient times, ministers of the liturgy wore special garments in the celebration of liturgical rites. They were fashioned near the end of the Roman era and have changed little over the centuries. This highlights the continuity of tradition within the Church.

The colours, materials and decorations used hold historical and spiritual significance. As the Priest puts on each of his vestments a special prayer for

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### Supporting Content

each vestment he puts on. The word 'vestment' is simply the Latin for 'clothing'.

The video is an introduction to the vestments worn by Priests at Mass today.

#### **Soutane**

The soutane is also known as a cassock. It is an ankle length robe and comes in a number of styles. It is most commonly black with buttons down the front. Historically it derives from the Roman tunic worn underneath the toga. In Australia, the soutane is little used except for religious ceremonies.

#### **Amice**

The amice is a white cloth with two long white ribbons attached. The ribbons are used to fasten the garment around the shoulders of the Priest.

#### **Alb and Cincture**

The alb is the long white robe worn by Priests and Deacons (The Latin for white is *alba*.) The alb may be fastened at the waist with a cincture, or belt, woven to look like a rope.

#### **Stole**

The stole – a long, narrow, scarf-like vestment – is a symbol of the priestly office. The Priest wears it around his neck whenever he is celebrating the Eucharist or any of the other sacraments. The Deacon wears his stole draped diagonally over one shoulder.

#### **Chasuble**

The chasuble is the outer garment worn specifically for the celebration of Mass and the colour of the chasuble indicates the liturgical season or feast. The word chasuble comes from the Latin word *casula* which means a little house. It was the outer garment worn by the Roman nobility. The chasuble is often beautifully decorated with Christian symbols. It is generally flowing in style.

### For Reflection and Discussion: Ideas for Use

*Select one or more of the following activities for students to complete.*

- 1 **Organise an outing for the class to visit the parish church, school chapel, Mass centre or cathedral to speak with the sacristan.**  
Visit the sacristy and ask to view the soutane, amice, alb, cincture, and chasuble.

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### For Reflection and Discussion: Ideas for Use

- 2 **Invite the students to draw a Priest wearing the garments of liturgical celebrations.**  
Draw a picture of the Priest wearing each of these. Why does he wear special clothing like this?
- 3 **Invite the Parish Priest or School Chaplain to come to talk to the class about the vestments he wears. He might bring them to show to the class.**
- 4 **Invite the students to use their drawing to learn the names of the different items of liturgical clothing and once they have had sufficient time, organise them into pairs to quiz each other or do a matching exercise of item and description.**  
Label the different items and learn the names.
- 5 **To assist the students in completing this task ensure they have access to a computer to conduct online research. Also, consult the *Glossary on Together At One Altar.***  
Search on-line for information about the different items of clothing and write a short description of each.

### Teacher Professional Development Resources

Johnstone, Pauline, 'High Fashion in the Church: The Place of Church Vestments in the History of Art from the Ninth to the Nineteenth Century', *The Catholic Historical Review*, Vol. 91, No. 4, October 2005, pp 772-774