



## Use of Vestments

### What vestments for our 'real' ministry?



As a dispersed church we tend to serve outside of church buildings. As chaplains, or street pastors it would be absurd to wear liturgical vestments as we conduct ministry, yet it is important to be recognisable as Christian Ministers in every setting. In the street we are likely to need hi-viz jackets that say 'Street Pastor' on the back for example, as well as our clerical collar being clearly visible. As a hospital chaplain, we need secular clothing, but we must wear our clerical collar, clearly visible to show that it is Christ we are serving as we serve others. Railway or

Police chaplains will have hi-viz clothing provided, and it is the wearing of the clerical collar that conveys the servitude of the wearer in the Name of Christ.

### What vestments for visiting another denominations church as a preacher?

Sometimes we will be visiting a church or congregation of another denomination as a visiting preacher or at invitation for a civil event like Remembrance Sunday or a Remembrance Parade in the open or a public place.

In such circumstances, we would not be able to wear our liturgical Mass vestments in the correct manner even if we wanted to. Secular clothing like a suit with a clerical shirt and collar is most likely to be fine for these situations, but a Geneva gown and stole worn over the secular clothes conveys that extra 'importance' and respect of the event and our taking part in it. Liturgical colours are not appropriate here, especially as different denominations have different approaches to the Christian year and different liturgical colours!



## What vestments for outdoors?



This is going to depend on the circumstances: for celebrating matrimony on a beach, say; it will be expected that the priest wears obviously 'religious' clothes. If the family have asked for a 'catholic' service then the priest will wear vestments suitable for the situation. If the minister has been asked to say prayers at a war memorial or memorial of a notable accident say, then the people are much more likely be non-religious, or if they are, they will be from a number of differing backgrounds. We need to be mindful too, that 'modern' Christians are less likely to see the need of vestments and will much more likely value a tee-shirt that says 'Jesus Loves you'.

It is pointless for us to force our denominations vestments on them, but then again, we need to respect our history, our charism and our calling from Christ. A Geneva gown with a stole over secular clothing but with a clerical shirt and collar is going to be the most respectful and pragmatic vestments in these circumstances.

## What vestments for celebration at our own or high altars?

This is where we use vestments to enhance the praise we offer to Christ at the altar. The Liberal Catholic Mass, celebrated in correct form and with the correct vestments is a sublime recreation of the Resurrection and Living Bread in all time and in our hearts. It is like a theatrical performance - in the best sense of that description - where we practice, rehearse, and regularly 'dance' with Our Lord. Always trying to improve, so we can get closer to God, but it is Christ who is perfect; not us. Correct Vestments, liturgical colours and calendar help us in this. And for those less inclined to think this way: Alleluia! The breaking of bread and sharing of wine wearing the vestment of an open heart is equally efficacious, such is the Grace and Mercy of Our Lord!



## What vestments for synod?

For OCAC's Principal Service, vestments will be worn. This note is to guide those buying or borrowing vestments for the synod. It is equally valuable for obtaining vestments for your ministry more generally.

If buying vestments, it is usually better to purchase vestments online, in synthetic fabrics and often made in the Far East or China. They are not expensive and links to some sites

selling them are at the bottom of this document. As a dispersed church your vestments will be transported in cases, folded and unfolded, subjected to pressures that vestments used in only one church building and stored nicely in the Vestry are never subjected to. Also, as they'll be used in different venues they need to be able to be cleaned easily and ironing kept to a minimum or preferably not required at all. We should be mindful that after a long journey in a small case, they need to look like they are not all creased up when we get them out and use them. We can't guarantee the use of a vestry and the availability of an ironing board and iron especially when we visit outdoor or secular events. Although inexpensive to buy they last quite well and when they do need replacing its less of a problem than expensive or hand made items. The lightweight fabrics are also cooler in summer!

For those on limited budgets we will lend vestments for the day. Also we encourage those that out grow or renew their vestments to pass the spare ones on to someone in the church that might need it: nobody should worry.

Also please do not worry about having the best vestments there or if a slight detail is liturgically incorrect. You are important, the vestments less so.

**In Minor Orders one may wear:**

- a) Black, Brown or dark coloured Cassock. White surplice may be worn over the cassock.
  - b) White alb and cinture.
  - c) or a black Geneva gown may be worn over secular clothing
- A small Pectoral Cross of wood or church badge may be worn.  
Those in a Religious Order may wear the habit of the order.

**In Holy Orders; Deacons may wear:**

- a) Black or dark coloured Cassock. White surplice may be worn over the cassock, Stole of liturgical colour worn on one side to cross the heart and secured on the other side.
  - b) White alb & contrasting cinture. Stole of liturgical colour as above.
  - c) Dalmatic. It is advisable to NOT get a Dalmatic unless it is your intention to remain a deacon (permanent deacon).
  - d) Plain light coloured Chasuable (White, Cream etc) - appropriate for deacons and also useful later in the priesthood. We do not recommend Roman style.
- A small metal Pectoral Cross may be worn or church badge.

**Priests may wear:**

- a) Black or dark coloured Cassock (any colour except lilac or purple). White surplice may be worn over the cassock, Stole of liturgical colour worn on both sides to cross the heart and secured on the both sides.
  - b) White alb & contrasting cinture. Stole of liturgical colour as above.
  - c) Plain light coloured (White, Cream etc) or heavier patterned Chasuable (motifs of grapes, vine, chalice etc. etc.) We do not recommend Roman style.
- A metal Pectoral Cross may be worn or church badge.

### **Bishops may wear:**

- a) Black or dark coloured Cassock (any colour including lilac or purple). White surplice may be worn over the cassock, Stole of liturgical colour worn on both sides descending vertically.
  - b) White alb & contrasting cincture. Stole of liturgical colour as above.
  - c) Plain light coloured (White, Cream etc) or heavier patterned Chasuble (motifs of grapes, vine, chalice etc. etc.) We do not recommend Roman style.
  - d) A light coloured cope with or without hood (like a cloak) patterned as appropriate.
  - e) a matching Mitre
  - f) a zucchetto may be worn if desired (like a skull cap)
  - g) a crozier will be needed (shepherds crook) We find it best to have a simple crozier - mine is an actual shepherds crook! If metal, it will need to fold.
- A metal, or silver Pectoral Cross may be worn or church badge.

The lists above are for information: it obviously follows that we won't wear \*everything\* all at once!

### **Clerical Collars and Shirts/blouses**

Deacons and priests may wear shirts/blouses of any colour except lilac and purple. Checked, striped or patterned shirts are fine as long as the collar looks central and has a 'squared' appearance. This is especially so with dual purpose shirts/blouses. I recommend getting some dual purpose (from ordinary clothing stores, but choose the collar shape carefully) as they are handy when you have, say, finished your secular work and go straight to a church appointment afterwards, or a prayer group in the lunch break etc. Put the collar in and you are on-duty!



Tips for using an 'ordinary' shirt or blouse for a dual purpose with a clerical collar: Choose a shirt/blouse that has a button to hold the collar flaps in place. It is best when the collar 'flaps' are shorter - the closer to being parallel the better. When the collar 'strip' is in place, the visible part of the white collar needs to be as 'square' as possible. Sometimes, leaving the top button undone makes the collar strip look square, but the collar must be a long strip of fabric to stop it slipping out! Modifying the collar using a clothes alteration service can sometimes make an ordinary shirt into a dual purpose one.

The collar itself can be Roman style (full circular, but the shirt is specially made to accept it), or tunnel collar (slip in) or button backed white band that can be used in dual purpose shirts/blouses. We only wear white collars.

For dual purpose shirts, plastic or fabric collar strips can be used, but it is preferable to use longer length strip or full circular collar as the short ones don't sit well inside the shirt's collar 'space'. We recommend that everyone entitled to wear a clerical collar to wear it as often as is appropriate: it starts off conversations, and even if it doesn't; its an outward sign of Christ in us.

Clerical collars may be worn by all clergy sub-deacon and above. Sometimes dispensation is granted for those in minor orders to wear a collar and if so, it is for a specific reason and not automatic. Often a dispensation is given to all in minor orders to wear a collar if they choose when attending synod (including traveling to synod).

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**We have used these suppliers before:**

Chasubles - EU (they do much more than just chasubles!) [Chasubles24.com](http://Chasubles24.com)  
Moville Clothing (they do other clothing too like chef's gear) [movilleuniforms.com](http://movilleuniforms.com)  
Grace Supplies [church-supplies.co.uk](http://church-supplies.co.uk) (have a good range of clerical shirts/blouses)  
[Holyart.co.uk](http://Holyart.co.uk) - clergy shirts and other vestments too  
Ashington Ceremonial Gowns - choir gowns and 'Geneva' gowns for preaching

Here are some others:

[eden.co.uk](http://eden.co.uk)  
Hammond & Harper - London  
F A Dumont

Sometimes second-hand or pre-used vestments can be found on eBay or other platforms.

Please note that we are not recommending any one of these suppliers over another.