

The Chasuble, Dalmatic & Stole

In addition to the alb, the basic baptismal vestment for the ministers of the altar, three other vestments are worn by priests and deacons during liturgical celebrations, the *chasuble*, the *stole*, and the *dalmatic*. Both priests and deacons always wear a stole at Mass; priests always wear a chasuble (except in the summer when it's really, really hot!), and deacons sometimes wear a dalmatic.

The stole is the band of colored cloth worn around the neck with two long narrow panels hanging down in front. The color of the stole corresponds to the symbolic liturgical color of the day or season. White is the basic baptismal color, signifying the glory of God, joy, and our new life in Christ. It is used regularly during the Easter and Christmas seasons. Green is used during Ordinary Time and symbolizes life, growth, and hope. Violet, symbolizing sorrow and repentance, is used during Lent and Advent. Red, as the color of both blood and fire, symbolizes both the sacrifice of martyrdom and the Holy Spirit. It is used on Passion Sunday, Good Friday, Pentecost, and for other celebrations of the martyrs and the Holy Spirit. As with the alb, the stole had its origin in an article of everyday clothing in the early days of the Church, which developed over the centuries into the specialized vestment we have today.

The chasuble too is an adaptation of the secular attire commonly worn throughout the Roman Empire in the early Christian centuries into a priestly garment used exclusively at Mass. The priest in discharging his sacred functions at the altar was dressed as in civil life, but the custom probably grew up of reserving for this purpose garments that were newer and cleaner than those used in his daily activities, and out of this gradually developed the conception of special liturgical attire. It consists of an oblong or circular piece of cloth with a hole in the center that fits over the priest's head, and can be decorated in a wide variety of ways. It was like a little house, a *casula* in Latin, from which our English word *chasuble* comes. The color of the chasuble, like that of the stole, corresponds to the symbolic liturgical color of the day or season being celebrated.

Please let us know what else about our faith tradition you'd like to find out more about. Contact our Council for Catechesis at tkautza@saintmaryhc.org