

## ***What Are We Wearing and Why?***

We came to the end of the Liturgy of the Word last week with the General Intercessions, or Prayers of the Faithful. Before we move into the Liturgy of the Eucharist we will redirect our attention from the specific parts of the Mass to the vestments the ministers of the altar {priest, deacon, servers} commonly wear during Mass: ***alb, cassock and surplice*** (this week), ***stole and chasuble*** (next week). The alb is the white, floor length robe always worn by priests and deacons, and by the altar servers at Holy Cross. The word *alb* comes from the Latin word for white (as in ‘albumen’ – the white of an egg, ‘albino’ – an all white bird or animal). It originated with the long linen tunic commonly worn by the Romans in daily life. It is the oldest liturgical vestment, and was adopted liturgically very early by Christians in connection with the significance of Baptism by which we are clothed anew in Christ. Part of the Rite of Baptism involves the clothing of the newly baptized with a white garment.

The ***cassock*** is the long black robe worn by servers at St. Mary’s, and was formerly the universal everyday clothing of the clergy. The cassock too has its origins in the tunic that was commonly worn in ancient Rome as part of the daily wardrobe. Our English word ‘cassock’ comes from an old French word for ‘a long coat’. The ***surplice*** is the shorter white garment worn over the cassock by servers at St. Mary’s, and is essentially simply a shortened version of the alb. Its name comes from the Latin compound word *superpellice*, meaning literally “*over the hides*”, referring to the fact that its wearers formerly put it on over the fur garments (hides) worn in church during divine services as a protection against the cold.

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](mailto:tkautza@saintmaryhc.org)