

SECTION IV

LINENS AND CANDLES

- A. History of Communion Linens
- B. Explanation of Linens and Candles
- C. Care of Linens

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THE HISTORY OF COMMUNION LINENS

The use of communion linens (in ancient times was called cloths) dates back to the early centuries of the church. By the fourth century, every Christian knew that during the celebration of Holy Communion, the altar was to be covered with a white linen cloth. Symbolically, the cloths represent the members of Christ, that is, the purity and the devotion of God's Faithful. "For the fine linens are the justification of the saints." It further signified the linens in which the body of Christ was wrapped when He was laid in the tomb.

The linen traditionally required for service at Holy Communion included an Altar Fair linen cloth, a Corporal, Chalice Veil, Pall, Purificator, Lavabo Towel, and a Credence Table Cloth. Many of the clergy prefer their altar linens worked entirely in white embroidery; where color is not objected to, red, blue, green, gold, or gray, either singularly or in combination with white embroidery, may produce very beautiful results.

AN EXPLANATION OF ALTAR LINEN, OTHER LINENS AND CANDLES

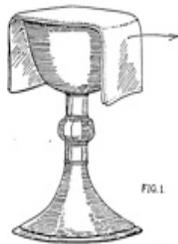
THE CHALICE

The Chalice is the most sacred instrument of the Church's worship, the Cup used at the Holy Communion, from the night of the Last Supper until now.



THE PURIFICATOR

The purificator (from the Latin "purus" (pure) and "facare" (to make) is used for wiping the vessels after the Ablutions. This is a separate piece of linen for hygiene reasons and also so that the wine residue which cannot be consumed is kept in the chalice until it is washed. This avoids any drops of consecrated wine being spilt.

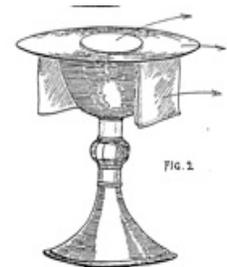


It is a towel of soft linen, about 14 inches [35 cms] square with the smallest possible hem. It may have a small cross or other emblem embroidered in white thread in one corner. It is folded in nine squares, right side out.

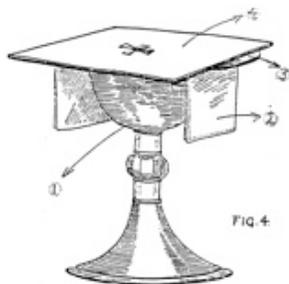
When preparing the vessels for the priest to take to the Altar, the purificator is placed over the mouth of the chalice. .

THE PATEN

The silver or gold paten [plate] is placed on top of the purificator, and the priest's wafer to be placed on the paten. This is done because this is the bread used at the elevation of the paten during the Eucharist.



THE PALL



In some churches the pall (from the Latin pallium meaning cloak) is used in place of a second corporal for covering the chalice during the service as it prevents any foreign bodies entering the chalice or paten [Explanation of a corporal follows].

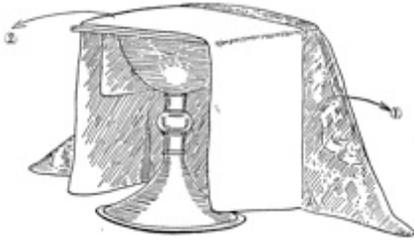
It is in the form of a stiffened fine white linen-covered square of 6 inches or large enough to cover the paten. The top side may be decorated with a linen-thread cross.

In preparing the vessels the pall is placed on the paten covering the priest's wafer.

AN EXPLANATION OF ALTAR LINEN, OTHER LINENS AND CANDLES

THE SILK VEIL

The veil (from the Latin "vela" a curtain or sail) is used for covering the chalice, paten and pall, before Consecration,



An ornamental silk veil about 22 inches [55 cms] square, of the color of the season, lined with silk or similar material. It may be ornamented with a cross in gold or silk thread in the middle. It is placed over the vessels.

THE BURSE

The burse (from the Latin meaning bursa meaning purse) Used to contain and carry the two extra corporals.



It is a case made in the form of two conjoined squares of stiff card covered on the outside faces with silk to match the veil and lined on the inside with white linen. The two squares are about 9 inches (22 cm) and hinged on one side only. One outside face may be decorated with embroidery in gold or silk thread, in keeping with the silk veil, which the burse matches. It is placed on top of the veil.

THE CORPORAL

The Corporal (from the Latin "corpus", meaning "body, i.e. CHRIST) is used to spread on top of the middle of the Altar, reaching to – but not overhanging – the front edge. The Consecration of the Elements takes place on the corporal.



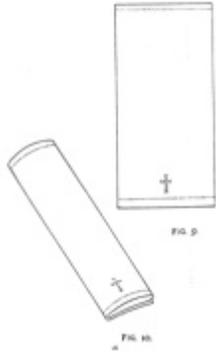
This was anciently called corporal cloth symbolizing, as its name implies, one of the linen cloths wrapped around our Lord's body in the tomb. The corporal is a sacred Altar linen.

The corporal is a cloth of fine, firm linen with about a 1/2 inch hem, and is approximately 22 inches square. It may be ornamented with a single linen- thread cross [not raised], close to the hem in the position shown in the diagram, indicating the side which lies nearest to the Celebrant. This cross also helps indicate the correct way of folding.

The corporal is folded in nine, i.e., in three and three again, making a square in such a way as to ensure the best face, which is to lie uppermost when spread on the Altar. This is folded **right side in**, in nine folds so that it cannot become soiled before or after actual use at the Altar. It insures the gathering up of particle of the Blessed Sacrament which may have fallen on it.

AN EXPLANATION OF ALTAR LINEN, OTHER LINENS AND CANDLES

LAVABO TOWEL



It is used for drying the priest's hands, after he has washed them before the Consecration. When not in use, it is kept with the lavabo bowl. The lavabo towel is made of linen, or other smooth, white absorbent material. It is about 18 inches [60 cms] long and 12 inches [30 cms] wide. It is fringed or hemmed at both ends, and may have a white thread cross embroidered in the bottom center, as shown. It is folded in two or three lengthways.

It represents the linen at the washing before the Last Supper. It is for the lavabo, or cleansing of the priest's hands during the celebration, immediately before the Prayer for Christ's Church.

CREDESCENCE CLOTH

The credence cloth is placed on the credence table where the extra chalice, lavabo bowl and towel, and cruet of water are stored before the service and is intended to make the credence table match the altar. The cover is symbolic, as is the FairLinen for the Altar, to be like the heavenly cloud from which the divine comes down to creation.

THE FRONTAL

The frontal of silk or linen hangs on the front face of the altar attached to a piece of linen which fits over the top of the Altar under the fair linen cloth. It is spread all over the altar and touching the ground all round.

FAIR LINEN CLOTH

This is a long cloth of fine linen. It is the width of the Altar, and long enough to reach to within a few inches of the ground on each side. Where a 'throw-over' frontal is used, the fair linen cloth may be similar in shape, and almost as long. It is traditional for this type of fair linen cloth to be fringed. It may have five white thread crosses to mark the corners of the Altar and one in the center. At the ends it may be ornamented with drawn thread work, or a linen fringe, or deeply hemmed (not hemstitched, so that there is not broken thread), as desired.

The solid white surface symbolizes the purity of the sacrifice and a single embroidered cross in the center reminds the celebrant -- a priest or minister -- of Christ as the object of the sacrifice.

The Altar is never left uncovered, except on Good Friday.

AN EXPLANATION OF ALTAR LINEN, OTHER LINENS AND CANDLES

OTHER LINENS (Taken from "An Altar Guild Manual by Edith Weir Perry")

THE BAPTISMAL TOWEL

One of these towels should be placed on the baptismal table. It is embroidered with a distinctive cross

THE PULPIT FALL

A square or oblong piece of silk, often decorated, which hangs from the reading desk on the pulpit. It matches the color of the season.

THE LECTERN CLOTH AND MARKERS

The lectern cloth hangs over the lectern, matching the pulpit fall.

CANDLES

Although it would sometimes appear to the contrary, candles are not decorative in liturgical celebrations. The two Altar candles represent our Lord as the Light of the World in His twofold nature, both divine and human.

On the main Altar, only two candles are necessary for the celebration of the Eucharist. Candles in processions were originally to light the way. They are seldom needed for this purpose now. When carried in a Gospel procession, they emphasize the special honor accorded to the Word of God.

If the Liturgy of the Word takes place in a part of the church away from the Altar, it is fitting that candles call attention to this area. It is traditional at the principal celebration of the Eucharist on Sundays and Holy Days to light the candles on altars that are used for Eucharists at other times. Candles for the congregation are appropriate at the Great Vigil of Easter, on Candlemas (, and at other times when their purpose is clear.

The Paschal Candle (from the Hebrew word for Passover – pasch) symbolizes the risen Christ and is lit from the Easter Vigil service through Pentecost Sunday (50 days after Easter). It is placed near the Altar on the Gospel side. It is also lit for baptisms and funerals throughout the year **The Candle represents Christ, the flame his resurrection.**

References:

An Altar Guild Manual by Edith Weir Perry

A Dictionary of the Episcopal Church by Oliver James Hart, D.D., LL.D., S.T.D.m, D.C.L., Bishop of Pennsylvania

CARE OF LINENS

General Care

Washing

Use the Piscina to rinse out any purificators with wine stains and then spray them with Wine-Away. Soak in jar next to sink with soapy water. Soaking the linen in cool water with salt or vinegar or an Efferdent tablet or stain remover as soon as possible will remove most of the wine stains. Scrubbing gently with liquid dish detergent or stain remover will remove the lipstick marks.

Church linens may be laundered in mild, unscented detergent. Fabric softeners are not advised, and bleach and bluing may damage the delicate fibers.

Never dry by machine as the heat from the dryer may damage the delicate fabric. If necessary, excess water may be removed by rolling the linen in a terry cloth towel.

Ironing

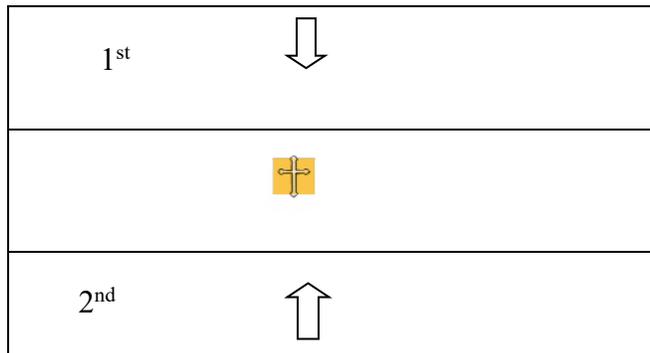
Remove them from the washer, arranging each piece flat on a large bath towel. Roll the towel from the bottom edge with the linen enclosed as you roll. Let the towel sit for about thirty minutes before removing the linen, one piece at a time, as you iron them. You may place the damp linen in the refrigerator or freezer for a few hours or overnight. The chilled fabric will iron out to a gloss and crispness that is characteristic of fine linen.

Iron first on the wrong side (with steam if you wish) then finish without steam on the right side. This will keep the edges from ruffling.

Begin ironing at the embroidered symbol stretching it out lightly with your fingers. Then iron out to the edges. The area around the symbol will iron out more smoothly.

Purificators

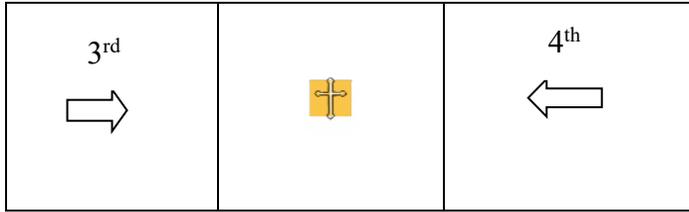
The smallest and largest (respectively) of the small linens, these are square (12"x12") and have an embroidered cross either in the center or on one hem. It is used to clean the communion cup.



Step 1

Bottom side up = Cross face down
Finger fold in thirds towards center

CARE OF LINENS



Step 2
 Cross still face down
 Finger fold in thirds towards center

Fair Linens

Arrange the damp linen in accordion pleats on a towel or sheet on the floor next to the ironing board. Iron wrong side from side to side keeping hems square. Then arrange the linen on the floor as before and repeat the process, this time ironing the right side. Make sure the linen is completely dry before rolling. Roll the linen onto a cardboard roller, "inside out", keeping slight tension as you roll to prevent wrinkles.

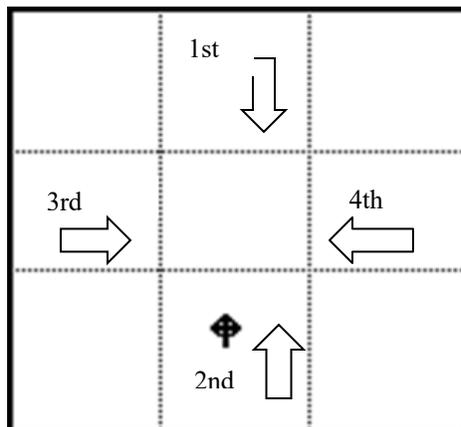
Wrap the roll in tissue paper and please write "Fair Linen" tissue paper or tape so it may be easily identified.

Corporals

Corporals have a more decorative design (matching the corresponding pall) embroidered on one hem.

Like purificators, corporals are folded into 9 equal parts. Unlike the others, however, they are folded inside out. There are two reasons: The first and most obvious is to catch any crumbs when the corporal is folded and removed to the sacristy, where crumbs should be shaken into the piscina or onto the ground outside. The second is so that, in those churches where the corporal is not placed on the Altar before the service, the priest or deacon can open it on the altar with decorum - no flipping and turning!

Iron the corporal flat and lay it out, right side up, with the embroidered symbol on the edge nearest you. Fold in thirds, inside out, folding the top third down then the bottom third up. At this point the symbol will be on top. Press creases with your fingers. Next, flip the folded linen over so the symbol is underneath (against the ironing board). Fold in thirds again: right side in (to the left) and left side to the right.

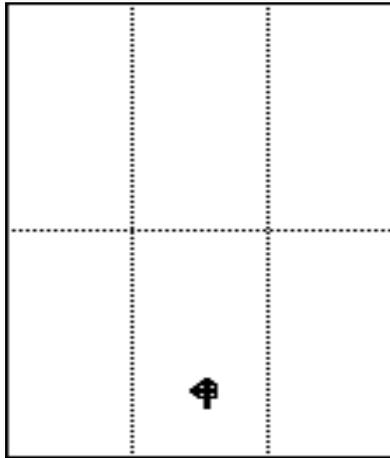


CARE OF LINENS

Lavabo and Baptismal Towels

The Lavabo Towel is presented for the celebrant's use. It is basically a finger towel used at the lavabo during the communion service. Embroidery: A 1½" cross is traditionally embroidered at the center bottom of the hem.

Lavabo and baptismal towels are the only rectangular (not square) small linens and are usually about 6" x 9". They are embroidered with a cross or a shell usually on one hemmed edge. These linens are folded into sixths, right side out. First fold into thirds lengthwise, then fold in half so that the cross or shell is on top.



Palls

Palls are square embroidered linens stretched on a piece of cardboard or plastic. It is placed over the Chalice at a celebration of the Holy Communion.

Should the pall require cleaning, if it has a plastic backing it may be washed by hand in soapy water, rinsed thoroughly and placed on top of a water glass to dry. It does not need to be ironed as the linen, in drying, will stretch itself smooth on the plastic backing.

Credence Cloths and Back Table Cloths

The Credence Cloth is used for holding the sacramental elements before and after communion celebration. The credence table is dressed with a simple cloth of white linen to match the altar cloth. Made of mid-weight linen sized to fit the table top with a drop of at least 6". Embroidery: A single 2" - 2½" embroidered motif in the center is most appropriate. It is not folded

CARE OF LINENS

Old Linens

When linens have become old and worn or damaged, they should be burned, and the ashes buried in the ground near the Church.

Helpful Tips

Wax –We have wax removal liquid. If the wax is thick enough, scrape with a blunt knife to remove excess, then use the wax remover.

Ash Residue - Apply liquid detergent to the stain and rub gently and rinse. Repeat as necessary, then rinse and wash