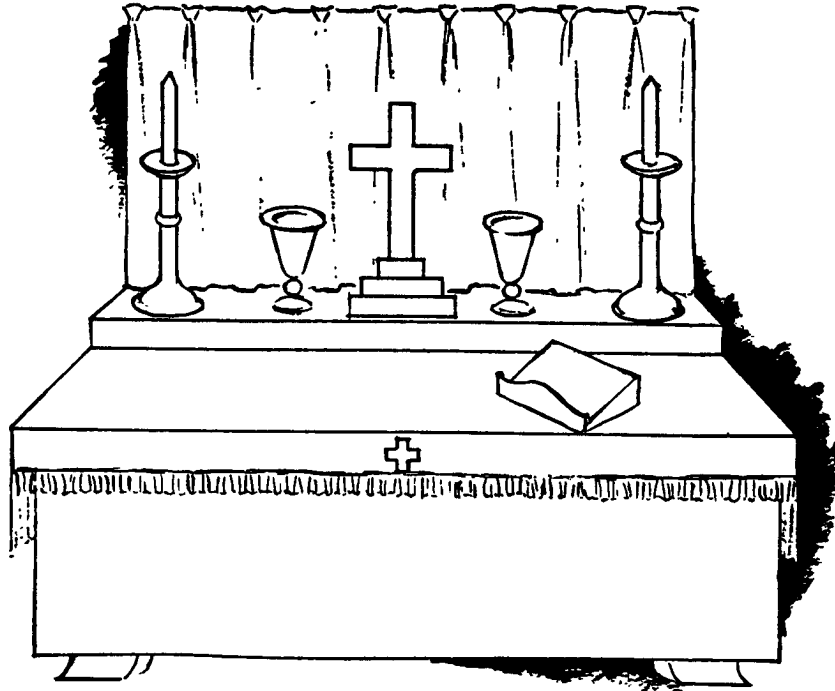


# Altar Guild Manual



Adapted from the booklet  
"Altar Guild Notes," by  
Constance Murray Ribble,  
1952.

Reprinted under the auspices of  
The Orthodox Anglican Communion®  
2002

## A Prayer

For use when serving at the Altar:

GRANT, O Lord, we beseech Thee, that we may handle holy things with reverence and godly fear, and perform our work with such faithfulness and devotion that it may rise with acceptance before Thee and obtain Thy blessing; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

## Duties

Following is a list of duties that the Altar Guild member performs when on duty:

### I. (When the service is Morning or Evening Prayer):

1. Dust the Chancel and see that the floor is clean.
2. Arrange the flowers in the vases on the re-table. (Don't have too many or have them too tightly arranged in the vases.)
3. Be sure the hangings are the proper seasonal color.
4. Place the Fair Linen on the Altar. See that it is absolutely clean.
5. Find the lessons in the Old and New Testaments.
6. Place the Alms Basins on the Credence table—never on the Altar.

### II. (When the service is the Holy Communion):

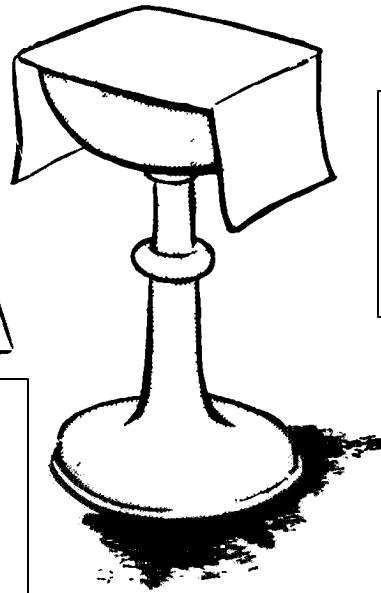
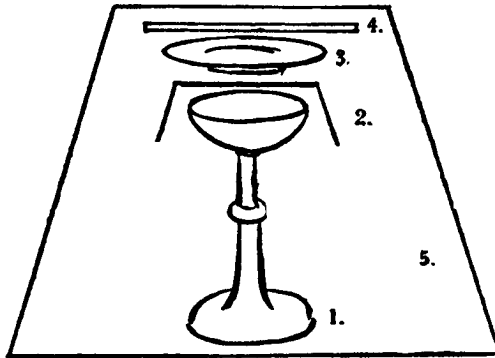
1. Dust the Chancel and see that the floor is clean.
2. Arrange flowers as for Morning or Evening Prayer.
3. Have the proper seasonal colors in the Church.
4. Place the Alms Basins on the Credence table, preferably on the underneath shelf. (If you do not have a double shelf, it is better to get a small stool and set the Alms Basins on that rather than to put them on the Altar.)
5. Have the priest's surplice clean and pressed, laid out with the proper stole in his vesting room. The Book of Common Prayer always distinguishes between the priest, minister, and Bishop. A lay reader can be a minister, for instance, or a deacon. All priests are ministers but not all ministers are priests. Read the rubrics!
6. Find the proper day in the Altar Book.



THE CHALICE

7. Put the water, wafers and wine on the Credence table. DO NOT COVER WITH A CLOTH.

8. If candles are used, see that they are clean and free from excess wax. Candle wax is easily removed by pouring boiling water on the brass and then rubbing immediately with old newspapers. This should be done out-of-doors or the wax will stop up the plumbing. NEVER TRY TO FORCE WAX OFF WITH AN INSTRUMENT, IT WILL ONLY SCRATCH THE BRASS OR SILVER. It is a good plan to use bobeches—they protect the candlestick and the linen and are very inexpensive from Meunch-Kruezer, Syracuse, New York. They are something like six for a dollar. They are little round guards that go around the candle at the base of the candle and catch any drip.



The Chalice with the purificator folded over the top. Next comes the paten.

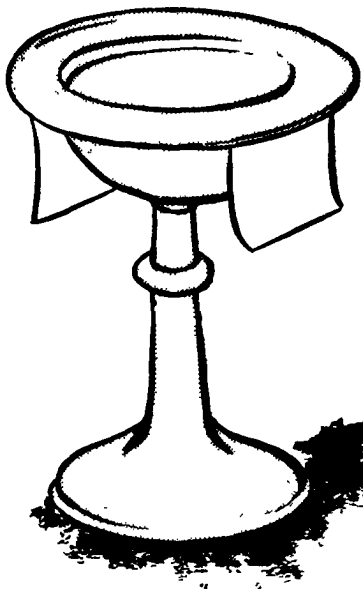
- Vested Vessels
1. Chalice
  2. Purificator
  3. Paten (place Priest's wafer in this if used)
  4. Pall
  5. Chalice Veil (same material as the hangings)
- The Burse (containing extra purificators and Post-Communion Veil) is set on top of the veiled vessels.

9. Put hymn numbers up and name of Sunday if you have the set.

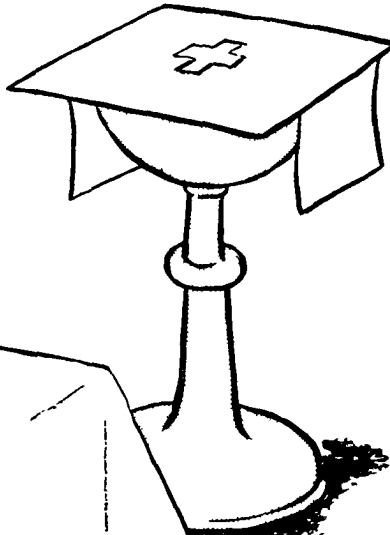
10. Be sure the silver is immaculately clean, not a spot on it anywhere. Use glass wax.

11. Be sure the linens are perfectly fresh and well laundered.

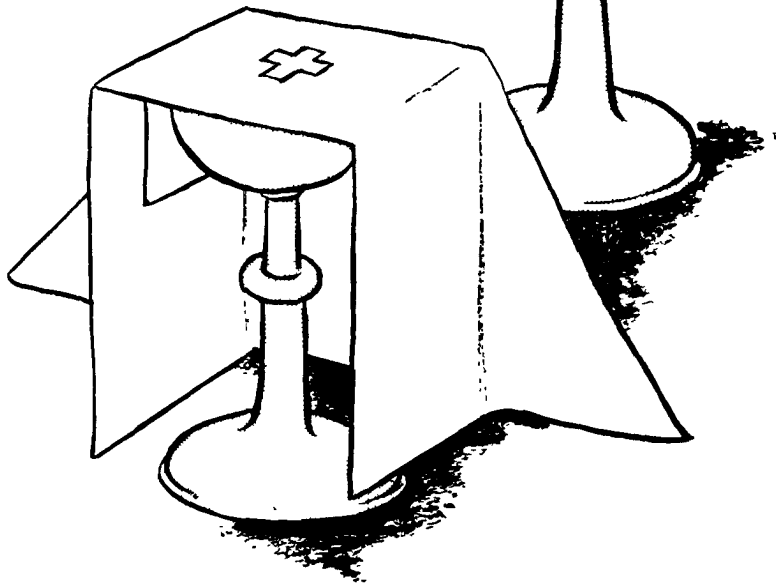
12. Lastly, vest the vessels on the Altar. (See diagrams.)



The Chalice with the paten placed over the purificator. If a large Priest's wafer is used, place in the paten.



The Chalice, purificator and paten covered with the pall. Next comes the Chalice Veil and the Burse, as shown in the lower diagram.



Rear view of vested vessels when Chalice Veil is not completely unfolded. The Burse, containing the white post-communion veil and extra purificators is now ready to be placed on top and the vessels will be ready for the service of Holy Communion or the Lord's Supper. The Chalice Veil can be completely unfolded if desired, but some Priests prefer it as shown in the diagram as it is more easily removed.

## A Plain Altar

1. Put on the fair linen.

2. Place corporal on the Altar, letting it come just to the edge or perhaps a fraction over the edge, say  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch. (Some priests prefer to place the corporal on themselves. It should then be placed in the burse with the other linen.)

3. Set the chalice in the center of the corporal.

4. Place a purificator over the Chalice.

5. Put the paten (bread plate) on the Chalice over the purificator.

6. If a priest's wafer is used, (a large wafer) put one in the paten.

7. Over this place the pall.

8. Cover this with Chalice veil.

9. On this, place the burse containing the extra purificators and the post-communion veil

10. Be sure there is sufficient wine in the flagon or cruet on the credence table.

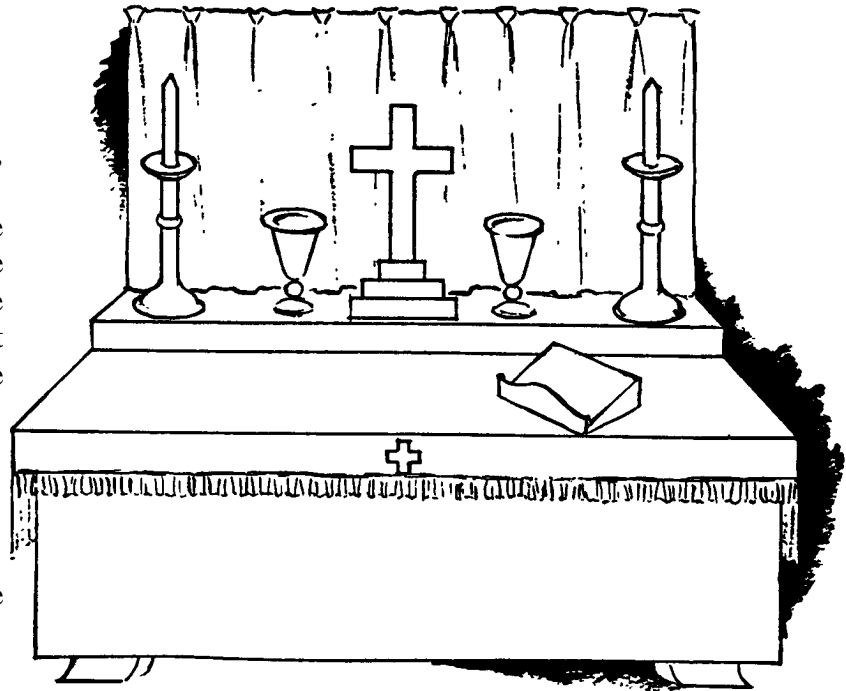
11 Put a cruet of water on the credence table.

12. Place the bread box containing the wafers or bread on the credence table.

13. Have a plain linen cover on the credence table itself. It may hang down slightly over either end, but not in front. **DO NOT COVER THE ELEMENTS ON THE CREDENCE TABLE.**

14. Find the lesson for the day in the Altar Book. This is most important.

15. See that the alms basins are available. If you do not have room on the credence table on the second shelf, then place the alms basins on a small stool or on the chancel step. Do not place them on the Altar.



## Duties After Service

### I. (When Morning or Evening Prayer):

1. Remove flowers, wash the vases and put them away. If heavy brass vases are used with liners, remove the liners and leave the vases on the re-table if you like. **NEVER LEAVE FLOWERS ON THE ALTAR AFTER A SERVICE AND NEVER LEAVE WATER IN THE VASES.** The flowers may be sent to the sick or shut-ins. but they should not be used just as a pretty bouquet in anyone's home.
2. Put the Alms Basons away, or leave them on the credence table if they are wood. The brass or silver ones should be put in flannel bags to keep them clean.
3. Take care that no dead leaves or flower petals are lying on the floor and that the Chancel is straight and clean.
4. Put the dust covers on the hangings, or put them away. If put away, be sure that no folds come where there is embroidery and that the fringe isn't mussed in laying them away.

### II. (When the Holy Communion):

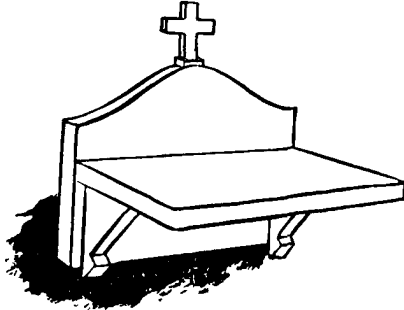
1. The same duties as above should be carried out with the addition of the following: Carefully remove the vessels to the workroom or sacristy. They should be rinsed and polished before putting away. If in the country where there is no water in the church, **DO NOT LEAVE THEM UNWASHED UNTIL LATER. TAKE THEM HOME AND WASH THEM THOROUGHLY AND POLISH.** This applies to everything that is used—the chalice, paten, flagon or cruets. Any linens that may be even slightly soiled must be washed. Wine stains in the *glass* cruets may easily be removed by putting in a little sand, about half a cup of water and a tablespoon or so of bleach. Let stand for about thirty minutes, then swish around until clean. Rinse and drain **UPSIDE DOWN**. The silver and glass should be kept in plain cotton flannel bags with a drawstring at the top. Each piece should have its own bag.

The almost “unforgivable sin” in Altar Guild work is the habit that some workers have of waiting too long to start their duties, and the congregation is assembling while they are still bustling around the Chancel. It is most distracting to see work going on while we are waiting for the service to begin. There are times, even, when the service has to be delayed while some duties are completed. A hostess' waiting to clean her parlor until her guests come is no worse than God's housekeeper waiting to prepare His house until the worshipper comes. Everything should be in readiness at least 20 minutes before the service is scheduled.

No chancel work should be entered into hurriedly and out-of-breath. We should have time to kneel and offer our efforts to Almighty God and thank Him that we have the opportunity of knowing and serving Him.

## Properties

The following, if practical, should be in every church and can be purchased or made for a very nominal sum:



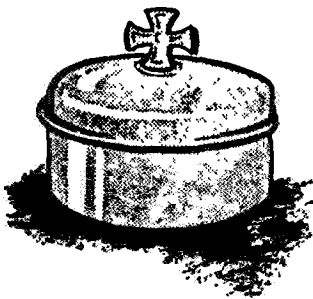
The Credence Table

There should be a credence table or shelf in the sanctuary near the altar. It is on the Epistie side of the chancel. It can be made by almost anyone as it can be very simple. It should have a small cross at the top and may be made with a double shelf so that the alms basons can be placed in the underneath shelf on Sundays when there is a celebration of the Holy Communion. The size of the credence table or shelf depends upon the size of the Communion vessels and the alms basons. Generally speaking, one 12 x 18 inches or 10 x 15 is sufficiently large.

The credence table is very important. It holds the alms basons, which should not be left on the Altar during the week. The Altar is not a place to lay things, it is not an ordinary table, it is essentially the place where “this our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving” is offered, and it should be used for nothing else.

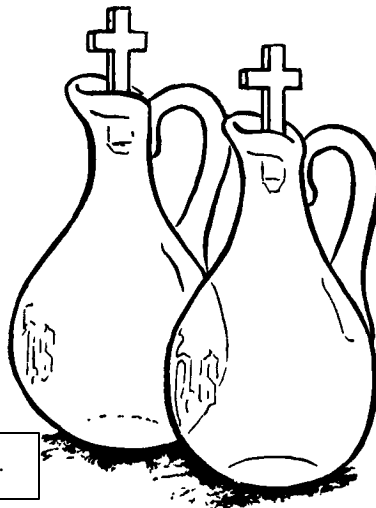
The Book of Common Prayer provides that only the bread and wine for the Holy Communion and the alms basons with the alms of the people shall be on the Holy Table. We assume the Book of Common Prayer itself (or the Altar Service Book) belongs there also.

The wine, water and the bread or wafers are placed on the credence table before the service of Holy Communion, unless, following the example of the primitive Church, they are brought up from the congregation and presented to the priest by representatives of the people. They are “these thy holy gifts which we now offer unto thee,” and the priest places these elements on the Altar before the Prayer for the Whole State of Christ’s Church.

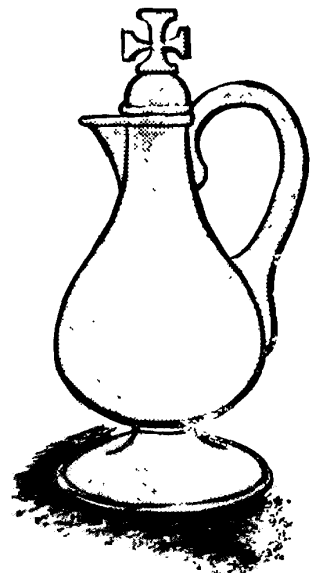


A Bread Box. A Ciborium may also be used. A ciborium looks like a chalice, but with a lid.

Cruets can be of glass or silver.



A silver Flagon.



## Linens:

The correct linens which can be made by anyone are as follows:

(Measurements in inches)

1. Purificators, 12" x 12".
2. Corporal, 18"x 18" or 21"x 21".
3. Post Communion Veil, 24"x 24".
4. Fair Linen—exact width of Altar with 18" drop on either end.
5. Pall 8"x 8".

## Purificators

The purificators are made of fine linen birdseye or a good quality firm linen. They are hemmed with the tiniest hem. If embroidered, the cross should be small and placed in the direct center. It can be put on by a very fine chainstitch, which while quite easy to make, is most effective. Purificators are folded in nine squares, right side out. Each church should try to have at least six.

## Corporal

The corporal is made of firm linen, not too heavy, with an half-inch or quarter-inch hem. There is no embroidery on this piece unless a small cross (about an inch and a half tall) is put in the direct center *front*. *No piece of linen should be embroidered so that the cross comes in the center of the linen except the purificators.* This is for a very practical reason. Embroidery in the center of a piece of linen used on the Altar may cause the Chalice to be upset as it is pushed against the embroidery, however small. The corporal is folded in nine squares. The corners are mitered when hemmed.

## Post Communion Veil

The Post Communion Veil is usually 24" by 24" with a half or three-quarter inch hem, the corners being mitered. The embroidery on this piece of linen should come in the direct center front also. A simple cross or IHS done in chain-stitch is all that is necessary. It is not the embroidery on our linens that makes them look beautiful, but the way in which they are laundered. Nothing is sadder looking than a lovely piece of embroidery badly laundered. The rule of common sense must apply to the measurements of the Post Communion veil and pall. If the chalice is 8" high, the pall should be 8" square and the veil 24", so that it folds into 8" squares. If the chalice is 9" high, then pall should be 9" square and the veil 27" square, and so forth. Some churches have very old silver that is odd sizes and they have to make their Chalice veil and pall to fit what they have.

## The Fair Linen

The Fair Linen should be made with an inch hem all around, the corners mitered. It may be embroidered with five crosses, one in each corner and one in the center *front*, about two inches from the hem. Do not use linen too fine for your fair linen. It will muss much more quickly than a firm quality and it will not wear so well. DO NOT USE HEMSTITCHING ON ANY LINENS. In the first place, it is not practical as the hemstitching wears out before the rest of the cloth, and in the second place, the linen should be “a whole cloth”. The Fair Linen is never folded. It is rolled on a roll of newspapers covered with a white cloth of some kind.

“In past years it has been the custom in many of our rural churches to use white hangings whenever the Holy Communion was to be celebrated; regardless of the season of the Church Year. This custom started about forty or fifty years ago, when colored hangings to mark the seasons of the Church year first began to be used in Virginia. At that time it was customary in many country churches to have the Holy Communion four times a year. Perhaps the reason that white hangings grew into favor was because that Sacrament was being marked as the high point of holy joy of the Christian’s faith.

“This custom is dying out now in most places because of the more frequent celebrations; and rightly so, because the Church urges her children to come to the Holy Communion in every season of the Church year, and under all the conditions of life; in times of sorrow and fear as well as in the days of rejoicing and happiness. Each time it is celebrated it should emphasize the teaching of the season, or the purpose for which it is held. In the purple of Advent and Lent, when the main theme of worship is sorrow for sin, or the green of Epiphany and Trinitytide, as the color emblematic of spiritual growth; in the white or rejoicing at Christmas and Easter, or the red of Whitsuntide and the days of the Martyrs, the color for the celebration of the Sacrament should carry to a higher point the teaching of the season.

“The same rule should hold true also in the other great sacrament, Holy Baptism; and in the sacramental acts of Confirmation and a Christian funeral. All these things are part of the common everyday life of a Christian community, and the color of the season should be used in the church hangings.

“There are, however, two sacramental acts when, for special reasons, white hangings are generally used. One is the wedding of a young maiden, and the other is the ordination of a man to the sacred ministry, whether as deacon, priest or bishop. Both these are times of general community interest and rejoicing. The use of white hangings upon these occasions wins general approval as being most fitting.

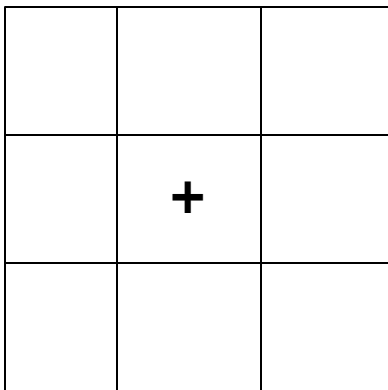
“As regards Confirmation and Ordination, there is a custom in some churches of stressing on these days the invocation of the Holy Spirit, and making use of the red hanging of Whitsuntide. Certainly there can be no criticism of that color at such a service.” Comments by Revd G. MacLaren Brydon, D.D.

## The Pall

The pall is an 8-by-8-inch square. It is covered with linen, embroidered in the exact center with some design. This also can be done in a chain-stitch. If the pall is of aluminum, cover it first with some other linen so that the gray of the aluminum will not show through. It is covered, sewed on securely, and then it can be washed as is. The linen never needs to be removed to be washed but it will dry beautifully, without a wrinkle, and the embroidery will stand out much better than it often does when ironed. Wash with plain soap and water, using the hand. **DO NOT USE A BRUSH.** This will ruin the embroidery on the pall. If wine is spilled on the pall use a weak solution of bleach. The wine stain will come out almost instantly. This applies to other linens, too. Pat the pall with a clean towel to remove surplus water, then stand on end to dry on the towel.

## Baptismal Towels

Baptismal towels can be made of birdseye or of plain linen. A simple cross can be worked in one end, in the center front. They are usually about 12 by 6 inches and are folded in 9 squares also. The baptismal towel is folded over the side of the Font for a Baptism. If preferred, the words “Holy Baptism” can be worked in the end.



A purificator—showing correct manner of folding and the correct position for the embroidery. This is the only piece of linen with the cross in the direct center. No piece of linen is ever folded in quarters.

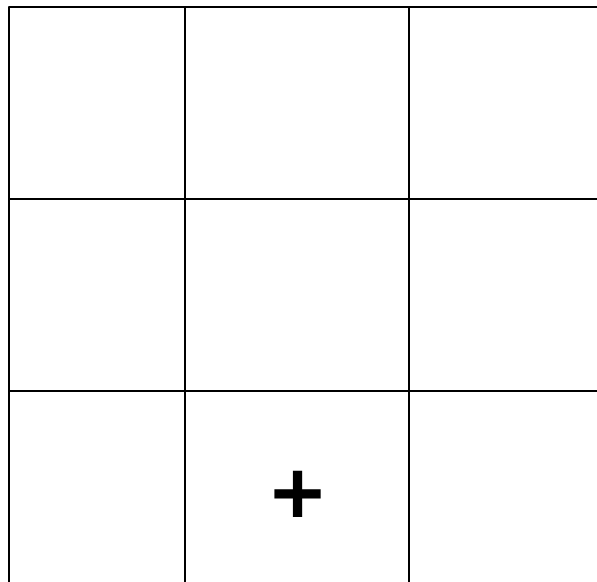


Diagram showing the correct way to fold the Post-Communion Veil and the Chalice Veil. Note the position of the cross on these two pieces. The corporal is also folded as this diagram and the embroidery placed similarly—the embroidery facing up when unfolded.

## Uses of the Linens

### Purificators

The purificators are used to wipe the lip of the Chalice after the faithful have communicated, A purificator should be placed over the chalice when vesting the vessels for the Holy Communion. It is folded lengthwise over the Chalice under the paten. An extra one or two should be placed in the burse. After a service, the purificator is rinsed in clear water which is poured directly upon the ground. The purificator is then taken home and given a thorough washing and ironing.

### Corporal

The corporal is placed in the burse to be put on the Altar by the priest, or if he prefers, it is placed on the Altar by the Altar Guild member. It goes under the Chalice, being placed in the center of the Fair Linen. It may come just exactly to the edge of the *mensa* (top of the altar) or it may come just a fraction over, but it should never hang over. It should not come over more than half an inch beyond the edge of the Altar. Originally the Corporal was a large linen cloth that was put upon the Altar and then brought over to cover the Chalice. Much later, for convenience, this large cloth was made into two, the second one becoming our Chalice Veil of today. The Chalice Veil is used solely to cover the Chalice and should not be confused with the Post-Communion Veil. As the name corporal suggests, this cloth, symbolizing one of the linen cloths wrapped about our Lord's body in the tomb, was originally called the *corporas* cloth.

### Post Communion Veil

The post communion veil is used as the Book of Common Prayer instructs on Page 83 in the rubric: "When all have communicated, the Priest shall return to the Lord's Table, and reverently place upon it what remaineth of the consecrated Elements, covering the same with a fair linen cloth." This cloth is the Post Communion Veil. It covers the remaining Elements until after the benediction when the Priest cleanses the vessels. Very often the Post Communion Veil is used as the Chalice Veil, but it is better to have a special Chalice Veil. The post communion veil is placed in the Burse with the extra purificators and the Corporal—unless, as said above, the priest asks the Altar Guild member to place the Corporal on the Altar when she vests the vessels.

### Fair Linen

The Fair Linen covers the Altar, coming just exactly to the edge of the *mensa*, not hanging over one iota, but falling over on either end about 18 inches or more, depending upon the height of the Altar. The Fair Linen can be left on the Altar at all times, but it is well to cover it with a dust cover during the week.

### Pall

The Pall is placed on the Paten when vesting the vessels for the Communion Service. It gives a neat appearance to the vested vessels not possible without it.



## Types Of Materials

Do not think that one has to have very expensive materials to make pretty hangings. Rayon materials are not expensive and wear much better than silk. After all, it is the *color* that is the important thing, for Mother Church is teaching us by the symbol of color, not by the grade of the material.

The emblems do not have to be expensive either. Simple ones can be had for a fairly reasonable amount. The orphreys can be used instead, if necessary. The trouble with most of us is that when we start thinking of hangings and linens we begin to think of St. John the Divine or the Washington Cathedral. We cannot all have elaborate hangings, but we can still have APPROPRIATE hangings for the seasons of the Church Year. We can also have the correct linens even if they do not have a single thread of embroidery on them.

## Altar Hangings

The name for "Altar Hanging" is either a superfrontal or a frontal, depending upon the depth that it hangs over the edge of the altar. The superfrontal is never over 10 inches, including the fringe, but the frontal goes all the way to the floor. Most churches use only a superfrontal. Following are the directions for making a superfrontal. The frontal hangs only in the front of the Altar, not around the sides—it is a frontal!

Materials needed are:

One piece of silk the length of the altar and 6 to 10 inches deep.

Fringe, the length of the altar.

An emblem (If desired).

Galoon (If desired).

A heavy butcher linen that will go on the altar to the back and hang down in front the depth that you want your superfrontal.

In making the superfrontal you can use 36" material if you want to cover the seams with the galoon which is not expensive, and is very effective. For instance, if your altar is 72 inches long, all the 36" silk material you would need would be 20 inches, as you would cut it into two 10-inch wide strips. Then you could piece it where-ever necessary and cover the seams with galoon. THE COLORED MATERIAL DOES NOT GO ON THE TOP OF THE ALTAR, and it does not go around the ends of the altar.

First, the emblem is placed on the colored material (backed by the linen as in the burse and veil directions), the galoon or orphreys are sewed over the seams. and then the colored material is laid on the butcher linen. A tiny edge is turned under just at the edge of the altar, and the other edge is turned under at the bottom of the superfrontal. Next the fringe is laid loosely on the material so that the edge of the fringe comes just to the edge of the colored material. This makes the fringe fall better and look nicer.

The fringe is whipped on with selfcolor silk thread, not too tightly as it will pull. The butcher linen is hemmed on the sides and it is well to leave an inch hem in the linen at the back of the altar so a rod can be put through to hold it on the altar. The same rod can be used for all the hangings for the altar.

The hangings for the lectern and the pulpit are made the same way, except that they are not made over the butcher linen, but are made on a selfcolor lining. They also have an inter-lining of Indian head to make them hang better.

The colored material goes to the edge of the lectern and the pulpit. It does not cover the surface on which the Bible lies, or where the priest lays his manuscript. A heading is put in the top of the lectern hanging and also in the pulpit hanging and an ordinary shadestick can be cut to fit them. Tapes are then sewed on either end and the hanging secured with the tapes. It is better to have the surface of both the pulpit and the lectern bare.

## Making The Burse And Chalice Veil

The Burse and Chalice Veil may be made without any difficulty; only patience is required. The following materials are needed for the burse:

Four pieces of cardboard, 9"x 9".

Two pieces of silk or rayon material, 11"x 11".

Two pieces of very firm linen, 11"x 11".

Cord to go around the two sides about 2 1/3 yards.

A simple emblem that can be couched on (couching is the term used in appliquéing an emblem on with gold thread).

First, the emblem is couched on one of the silk squares over a piece of linen on the under side. In that way no strain comes on the silk, but it is supported by the linen. The linen is cut out just to fit the emblem after the couching is done, with perhaps an inch leeway all around. Take one piece of the silk and lay it over one of the cardboards. Get a heavy thread and lace the thread back and forth between the two edges of the material that is probably folded over the inside of the cardboard about an inch. When you have done those two opposite edges, do the other two, thus covering the cardboard firmly with the material. Do this same thing with the other three boards, using the linen on two and the silk on two. Now take the cord and cut off three pieces of three inches each. Sew these three pieces of cord to the *silk* on the wrong side, one in the direct

center and one about three inches from the edge of the board. Let the cord come only about an inch on the board, for the remainder of the cord has to be sewed to the other silk covered board. When the cords are sewed to the two boards they should act as hinges. there being about 3/4 of an inch space between the two boards. Now take the linen covered boards and place one of them firmly against the silk board. Take thread and needle and tack the two boards together at intervals of about three inches. Do the same with the other linen covered board. Now you have your burse practically finished. The finishing touch is put on by taking the cord and sewing it around the back and front sides of your burse all around, so as to cover up the stitches. Tuck the ends of the cord in near the hinges and you will hardly see where you began or ended. If the cord is held parallel with the edge of the burse, and the needle inserted somewhat in the side of the cord, then the cord can be pushed up and the stitches will not be visible.

The following materials are needed for the 24" Veil: (The veil should be the same size as the post communion veil.)

One 25-inch square of silk or rayon.

One 25-inch square of lining— self color or gold.

Three yards of same kind of cord as used for the burse.

One emblem—same as burse.

The emblem is couched on the silk material in the direct center front. Fold the material so that it is folded in nine 8-inch squares. In the center of the front middle square place your emblem. After the emblem is couched on, the veil is lined with the lining material, and the cord put around it just as it was on the burse, Be careful never to pull the cord too tightly, or the veil will not be smooth.

## Use Of The Burse And Veil

The burse and veil are usually made of silk, being the same color as the superfrontal and the lectern and pulpit hangings. The Burse is used to hold the extra purificators, the Post Communion Veil and the corporal. If preferred, the burse and veil may be made of gold cloth, which is glorified white, and they can be used with all the seasonal colors.

The Chalice Veil is used solely for the Chalice before the service begins. At the beginning of the Communion service proper, it is folded and laid to one side and is not put back until the end of the service, after the benediction. The Post Communion Veil is sometimes used for the Chalice Veil, but it is much better to have your church hangings complete with burse and Chalice Veil.

## Priest In Vestments

Cassock



Surplice

Stole

*Vestments* are used during a service.

*Clericals* are the round collar and street clothes.

In cold weather, out-of-doors, a priest uses a cape, and for his head uses a hood, or biretta or Canterbury Cap for covering.

## Candles

Since there is no definite “rule” in the entire Church with regard to the use of candles, it is doubtful if any one item has been more painfully abused in our churches. We can see them placed in all imaginable spots, used in all manner of numbers and generally looking odd and out of place. At the same time, there is nothing that can add more beauty or have greater symbolism than the sensible and “proper” use of lights.

The following suggestions are made after a careful reading of Mr. Percy Deamer’s book, “The Parson’s Handbook.” This book was written after an exhaustive study of the services, rubrics and directives of the early Church, particularly in England at the ancient Salisbury Cathedral.

It would appear that there were always but two lights *on* the Altar, other lights being placed on standards on either side of the Altar. The lights on the Altar were lit at the Eucharist or Holy Communion always, so we have come to call these particular lights Eucharistic lights and the symbolism of their representing to us the two natures of Christ is quite ancient. (It may be well to recall the fact that the re-table or shelf back of many of our Altars is not a part of the Holy Table. The office lights and the flowers are put on this shelf.) The following suggestions only are made:

1. If two lights only are used and are burned at every service, they may be placed on the retable or placed in standards on either side of the Altar. They are not Eucharistic lights. If more than two lights are used, then the two single lights may be placed on the Altar, lit for the Holy Communion only, and the other lights lit for Morning and Evening Prayer and Occasional Offices, as well as for the Holy Communion. One of the great advantages of the general custom in the American Church of using the two Altar candles as Eucharistic lights only is the fact that they then become a constant reminder to us of the Incarnation. It is fitting that as we look at our Altars we should see the candles, Cross and flowers symbolizing respectively the Incarnation, the Atonement and the Resurrection.

2. Candles should never be used for effect. This is unspeakably bad taste and they then degenerate into mere ornaments. Our services do not require ornamentation or the theatrical effects of weird lighting.

3. Candlesticks should be of brass, good quality, simple in design. Ostentation should be avoided by all means. Candles themselves should be of good quality, bought preferably from one

of our church supply houses. Candles should contain a certain percent of real bees wax as this helps prevent excessive dripping. Glass candle holders are helpful also and are less conspicuous than the brass ones.

4. Candles should be kept perfectly clean, drippings being removed after each service. Nothing is more indicative of poor housekeeping than dirty and unkept candles. We would not use them in this condition on our own tables, and we should be even more careful of the Lord's table.

5. If candles are used in a church, a proper lighter should be used. Lighters are not expensive and their use is certainly more dignified than some of the haphazard means of lighting the candles now used. They should also be lit either by the Priest, Altar boy, or other minister, *never* by the women of the church. This is definitely not a duty of the Altar Guild member.

6. The "holy extinction of the candles" is not a part of the service. It is far better usage if the candles can be extinguished by the time the final Amen is sung or said by the choir. They can be extinguished during the singing of the last hymn or the Altar boy can come back into the church and perform this duty while the Priest is having the choir prayer for the choir.

Since there is no rubric in our Book of Common Prayer regarding the use of candles and no Canon concerning them, we must be guided by general use and common sense, as well as by ancient writing, service books and the like.

As in everything else we use in our churches they must be used as an *aid* to worship in the *beauty* of holiness.

## Veiling The Cross

It is customary in some Churches to veil the cross on Passion Sunday, Maundy Thursday and Good Friday.

This custom is quite proper and a very old one, but let us *veil* the cross, not wrap it in a bag so that it cannot be seen. The material should be so sheer that it does not obscure the cross at all. If you cannot obtain this gossamer thin material, then do not veil the cross.

The colors proper for this use are Purple for Passion Sunday, White for Maundy Thursday, and Black for Good Friday.

The veiling should be straight on the front of the cross and all folds should come in the back. The material should be so sheer that the folds can be seen through the front piece perfectly. Material two and one-half times the height of the cross should be used. It is simply put over the cross, tucked in about the foot loosely with the material falling in folds in the back. The new extremely thin nylon materials on the market now are about right for this purpose.

It is well to remember then while these things are very beautiful customs and can aid some of us in our worship, they are not essential. We must always be careful not to confuse the *symbol* with the *reality*.

## Baptism

Baptisms should, of course, be held always in the Church except in extreme emergency. See the rubric on page 273 of the Book of Common Prayer. In cases where there is private baptism, see the rubric on bottom of page 281.

The Altar Guild member should see that there is a pitcher or ewer of warm water and a baptismal towel at the font. She does *not* pour the water into the font.

The rubric on page 273 states that the priest pours the water into the font. After the service, the water, which has been “sanctified to the mystical washing away of sin”, should be poured directly on the ground. If the font is equipped with a stopper in the bottom with a pipe that leads directly to the ground, it is necessary only to remove the stopper. The font is wiped dry and left clean for the next service.

## Weddings

White Hangings are always used for weddings. The bride should get in touch with the president of the Altar Guild and discuss with her what sort of decorations she wants, the florist she is going to have, etc. It is then the duty of the Altar Guild to see that a member is on hand when the florist comes in to decorate the church so that he may be guided and conform to the customs of that particular church. Unusual indeed is the florist who does not make the Chancel look more like a forest than the Church. More often than not the altar, the central thing of the entire Church, is obscured from view if one is sitting on the side isle.

The flowers on the Altar should be arranged by the Altar Guild member. It should be borne in mind at all times that a religious ceremony is being held, that marriage is a sacrament and not a social event, a “holy estate”. Simplicity of decoration is much better taste than gaudy and showy displays, so the flowers on the Altar and the candles are enough for any wedding. Palms and ferns, if used, should be used in moderation.

## Funerals

As a rule, white hangings are used at funerals, although in some Churches black is used. It is the duty of the Altar Guild member on duty to see that the hangings are ready, the flowers on the Altar arranged and to supervise generally the preparations prior to the service.

It is greatly to be desired that there be no flowers in the church except the ones on the Altar, for the service itself is sufficiently beautiful to require nothing more. If however, funeral wreaths and sprays are brought into the Church, nothing should be placed inside the chancel rail, and the arrangement of the flowers should be as unpretentious as possible. Giving certain floral decorations special places should be avoided for with God all men are equal. Hard as it is for us to realize, the burial of the dead is one of the regular services of the Church and the simpler and more dignified the service, the better.

By all means, in this service as in all others, there should be no bustling about in the front of the Church or in the Chancel when the congregation has begun to assemble for the service.

## Flowers

Flowers should be simply arranged, there being not too many in a vase. Two vases for the average sized church are enough. Flowers should not be put in vases and set around in odd spots in the chancel, nor should they ever be put in the font. The font is not a flower holder and should not be used for such. Flowers are symbols of the resurrection and they help us in our worship if we are not distracted by the strange arrangement of them in the vases and the unusual places they are placed in the church.

Of course, more flowers can be used at Christmas and Easter, but even then we should be temperate in our decorations.

Masses of flowers at weddings and funerals are not to be desired. By no means should anything go inside the sanctuary rail, and great care should be taken that the Altar is never obscured from view from any point in the Church. The beauty of the service is certainly commensurate with the simplicity of decoration in this and every case.

Try to remember always—and try to get others to realize—that a Christian service is to be held, not a flower show.

## Laundering Church Linens

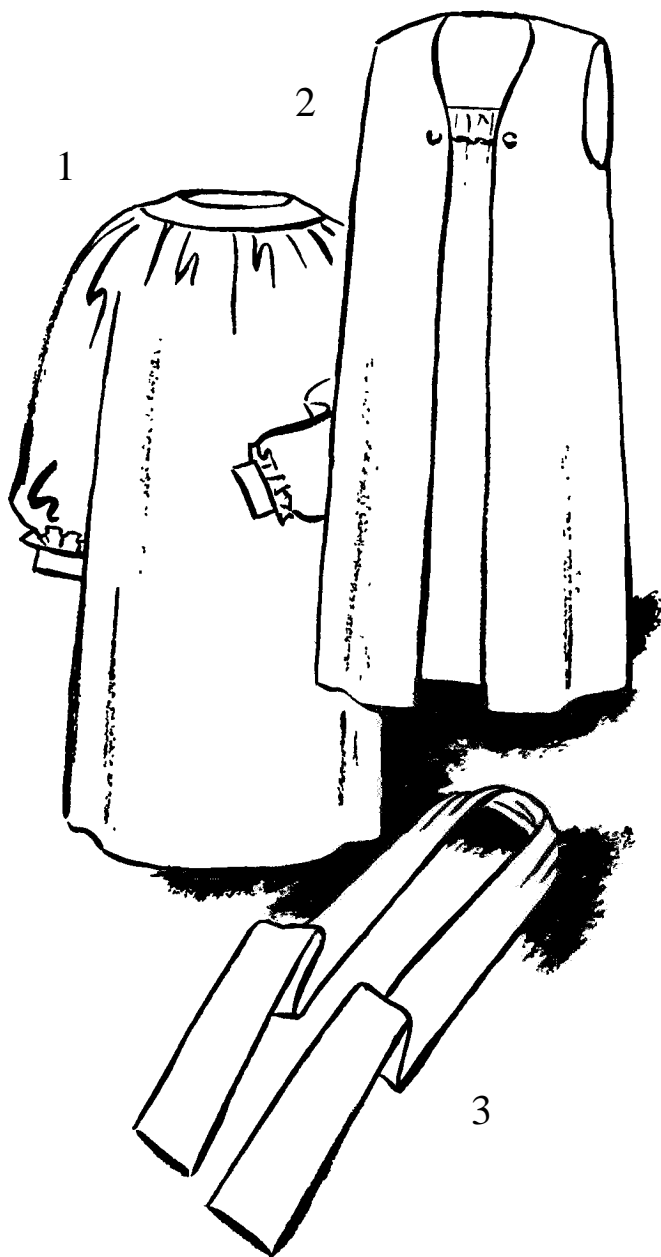
Last but not least, we come to the last important point of how to launder the linens that are used on the Altar.

Never use starch in anything. The linens can be kept spotlessly clean and white if a small amount of bleach is used in the water in which they are soaked for a little while. Particularly is this true of the Purificators that are so apt to have wine stains or lipstick on them. After soaking in the bleach, the linens should be washed in hot water, using plenty of soap and then thoroughly rinsed. Blueing can be used to keep them from getting yellow or gray.

A good rule to follow is to wash and care for the Altar linens in exactly the same way one cares for the best table linen. Some people object to using bleach on the Purificators as it may shorten the life. However, it is much better to have the Purificators white and spotless, lasting a shorter time, than to have them last longer looking gray and stained and grubby.

After washing and drying, the linen should be sprinkled quite well and left to *give* for several hours. Use a hot iron, but be careful that it is not hot enough to scorch. Iron the linens on the wrong side and fold as shown above. The fair linen should be rolled and not folded. When ironing the fair linen, do not pull the edges as that will stretch them and make the fair linen ruffle when put on the Altar. The center should be pulled and the edges smoothed.

When linen wears out, do not discard to the rag-bag, but reverently burn it. This applies to old



Episcopal Vesture

1. Rochet (made of fine linen)
2. Chimere (made of red or black silk)
3. Tippet (made of black silk)

A cassock may also be worn by the Bishop.

and worn-out hangings, vestments, and whatever is used in God's house.

The linens should be washed by members of the Altar Guild and NEVER given out to a laundry or laundress. This phase of the work of the Altar Guild should be done to the glory of God just as surely as any other of the duties. If some member of the Guild is a particularly good laundress, she may discreetly take linens from time to time and give them a washing after her own heart, but let her not forget that even a poor laundress who does the work to the glory of God, *really*, has done a better service in God's sight than the good laundress who "just can't stand to see such linen"!

Washing and ironing the linens can be such fun and is so rewarding. Snowy linens without spot or blemish are a joy to see. If at first you have difficulty being a good laundress, just keep trying. Do not forget that linens lying about for a long time also get soiled and need doing over.

One last word: keep your linens immaculate!