

The stole, rope girdle and the cincture



Stole

Roman magistrates wore a long scarf when engaged in their official duties, just as our judges wear a court gown. Whenever a priest celebrates Mass or administers the Sacraments, he wears the stole as a sign that he is occupied with an official priestly duty. A priest may kiss the cross that is centre back before he puts it on and again when he takes it off.

Modern stoles are usually the appropriate colour for the season. Only ordained clergy wear a stole. A deacon can also wear a stole, but it is customary for a deacon to wear it over the left shoulder, tied at the waist on the right side, so that the stole hangs diagonally across the chest. A stole can be worn over an alb, or over a cassock.

Girdle and Cincture

The rope girdle is tied around the waist over the alb or robe. It may take the colour for the season.

There is a particular method of tying a rope girdle which involves many loops.

The rope girdle can also be called a cincture, but in modern times the cincture usually refers to the wide coloured cloth sash belt worn over the alb or the cassock. Archbishops wear a purple cincture usually over a black cassock.

Many priests these days do not wear either a cincture or a rope girdle. However, deacons and senior altar servers often wear rope girdles to secure their robes.