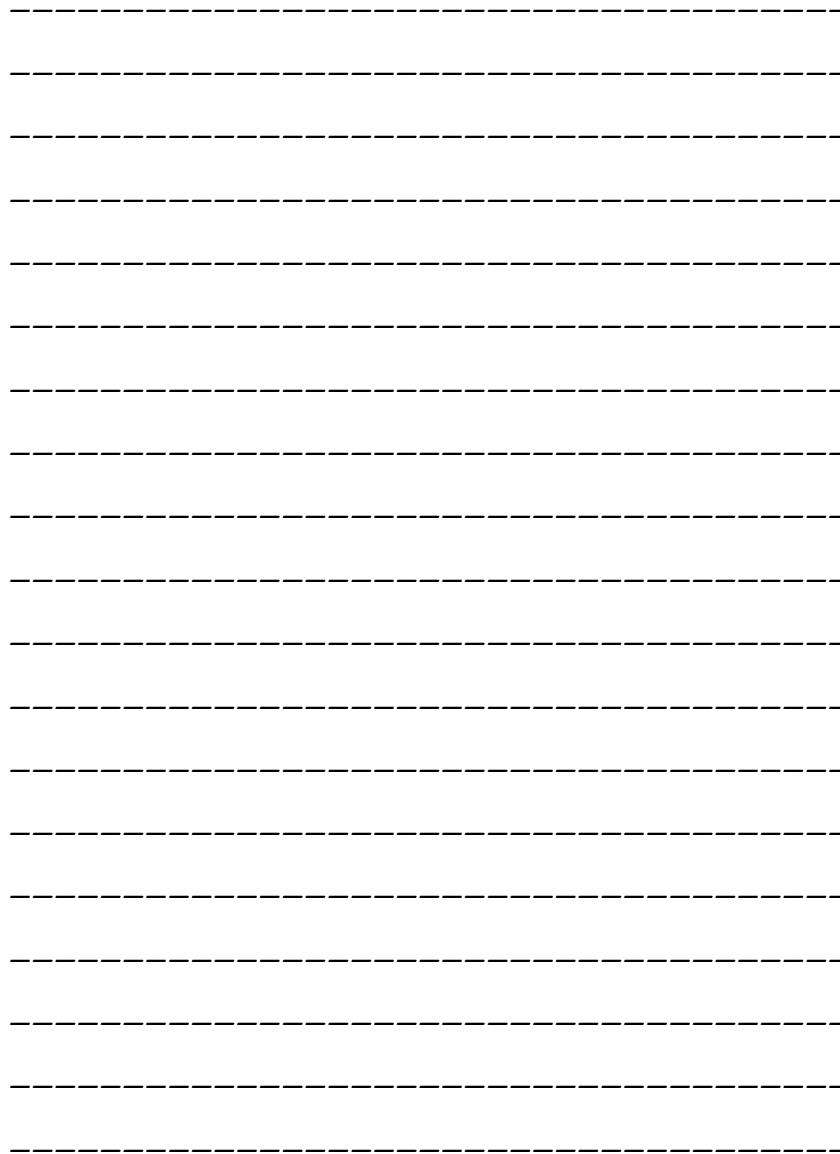


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“She makes fine linen and sells it in the marketplace” (Proverbs 31:24)

*How to
WASH,
IRON,
and
STORE
ALTAR LINENS
with tips for Palls and Lace*

A comprehensive guide for Altar Guilds.





Notes

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Table of Contents

- 4 *Description of linens used
in Holy Communion*
- 6 *Laundering Linen*
- 7 *Stain Removal*
- 10 *Ironing Linen*
- 11 *Storing Linen*
- 12 *Tips for Palls*
- 13 *Handling Lace*
- 14 *Interesting Facts*



A 12" x 12", or 12" x 18", linen with an embroidered center cross folded in thirds and placed over the chalice. Used to wipe the chalice after communion.

An 11" x 17" linen with an embroidered front cross. Used by the celebrant to dry hands before consecration of the elements.

An 18" x 18" embroidered linen that is folded in thirds and placed under the chalice.

A 7"x7" square linen with a Plexiglas insert and centered embroidery. Palls are

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Linen is the most difficult natural fiber to dye.

Linen should be stored with a natural moth repellent such as lavender.

Linen increases in strength when it is wet.

Linen for sacramental use should not be starched in fact starched linen is prone to insect damage.



placed over the chalice during the Eucharist.

Credence Linen

A custom-made, embroidered linen that covers the credence table.

Fair Linen

A custom-made embroidered linen that covers the main altar.

Amice

A linen worn as a neck cloth by the priest.

Baptismal Towel

An 11" x 17" linen embroidered with a shell.

Communion Veil

A square embroidered linen of varying size that covers the elements during the liturgy.



Laundering Linen

Linen should be washed by hand in hot water using a mild detergent. Whenever possible the small linens should be washed this way. It is often impractical to wash by hand the larger linens such as the credence and fair linens. They can be washed by machine using the gentle cycle. Any stains present must be treated as soon as possible in the sacristy.

It is extremely important that the linen be rinsed thoroughly as a soap residue is the main cause of scorches when ironing later. Never use bleach on linen because it will rot the fiber and damage the linen. Use an oxygen type cleaner instead.

Remember that linen is made from flax, a natural fiber and should be treated with care. Do not place linen in the dryer, rather



For the last 50 years, linen for Irish mills has been imported from France, Belgium and China. Flax is no longer grown in Ireland.

There are ten different types of linen.

Linen is harvested by pulling the plant along with the root. It is never cut.

Linen shrinks less than cotton.

Linen is the least elastic of all the natural fibers making it especially good for artists canvases.

Linseed oil, an artists medium, is derived from linen.

Linen is stronger than both cotton and wool. Only silk is stronger than linen.



lifespan. The fair linen is preferably washed by hand, but such is not always possible. A good alternative is to spot treat the linen, put it into a very large washable clothes bag, and then wash on the gentle cycle. Then spread it on a rack to dry overnight.

The lace ends of a fair linen should not be ironed directly. Place a piece of an old cotton sheet on top of the lace, then spray mist and iron. If the lace is ironed without the sheet as a barrier, the tip of the iron will catch and tear it. It only takes a second and it's ruined.

Interesting facts about Linen

Linen is a completely natural fabric which is derived from the Flax plant and has been used since ancient times as burial shrouds. The Bible states that Christ was buried in a clean linen cloth.



leave the linen to dry naturally over a clothes line or hang over a drying rack.

At the end of its lifespan linen, should be burned and not merely discarded.

Stain Removal

Stains should be treated promptly in the sacristy whenever possible.

Lipstick

Lipstick is a grease-based stain and should be treated in the following manner. Firstly, rub the stained area with glycerin this action loosens the grease Then apply a liquid shampoo and rub in gently. Wait about 15 minutes, then rinse. If the stain is still present, boiling water can be poured over the area to knock out the remainder of the stain.



Mildew

Treat this stain immediately, as it is difficult to remove. First apply a paste of soap and chalk (calcium carbonate) and rub in for a few seconds; then rinse thoroughly. It helps to dry this kind of stain in the sun. If the stain remains a further measure can be taken by mixing a paste of salt and lemon juice. Rub in for a few seconds; then rinse and place in the sun.

Wax

Wax is a stain that can often be successfully removed. Put the linen in the fridge until the wax has really hardened; then scrape off the excess with a knife. After most of the wax has been removed, put the linen between plain brown paper. Using a warm iron skim over the area. The wax will melt and be absorbed by the paper. To finish, pour boiling water through the area and sponge with a little alcohol. Wash as normal.



if needed before washing in very hot water and it can even be scrubbed lightly as the pall is lined. Leave the pall hanging in a mesh lingerie bag or left out in the sun propped up on a window ledge and it will dry nicely. The drying action shrinks the linen to fit the pall and you end up with a nice crisp looking pall. To prevent fraying at the edges, the Plexiglas has been sanded smooth and the pall is lined. Both of these precautions will help to extend the life of the pall as they are notorious for fraying at the edges.

Palls must be finished by hand with whip stitch.

Handling Lace

The lace attached to the fair linen is made from 100% cotton. It is delicate and intricate and must be treated with care to prolong it's



moisture will be trapped and damage the fabric. Do not store linen in any kind of cedar or aromatic chest, as the oil vapor from the wood will penetrate and damage the fiber. Linen should be stored with a lavender sachet, which is a natural moth-and-insect repellent. If your linens contain holes, then moths are the likely culprit.

Both Fair Linens and Credence Linens should be stored rolled. They can be put on an empty roller easily obtained from a fabric store. Be sure to cover the roller with cotton or tissue paper as such will prevent any acids in the cardboard from spoiling the linen.

Tips for Palls

The insert in modern palls is made from unbreakable Plexiglas which is not removed from the pall itself. Pall should be spot treated



Wine

Red wine is a tough stain. Soak the linen immediately in cold water. After a few minutes rub in a drop or two of glycerin; then rinse with cold water. After the cold water apply a little vinegar and mild detergent. Wait fifteen minutes and rinse again. If the stain is still present, then use a small amount of salt paste with a little club soda. If those exhaustive measures do not remove the stain, then I'm afraid you will never will.

Scorches

You can prevent scorching by rinsing the linen thoroughly. When linen contains a soap residue it will scorch upon ironing.

If a scorch does happen cut an onion and rub into the affected area and wait for one hour (set the timer) before completing a normal washing. Drying in the sun naturally bleaches the linen and helps to remove the scorch.



Grass

A grass stain is easy to treat. Apply a little rubbing alcohol or peroxide; then wash as normal.

Ironing Linen

Linen should be ironed on the hottest setting when it is still slightly damp, as such takes all of the hard work out of the ironing. After the linens have been skimmed over with a very hot iron, they should be left to dry over a rack. The next day they will iron up beautifully crisp.

If the linen has dried a little too long, it should be spray misted. If the linen is too dry and badly creased, then it can be misted down and left in a plastic bag in the fridge overnight. This will relax the linen fibers and make ironing easier the next day.



Ironing should be done with the grain. If ironing is done against the grain the fabric will stretch and pull out of shape.

Always iron embroidery into towel it makes the embroidery pop up nicely.

Never iron in a fold, as this will wear the linen excessively and create damage and tearing along the fold line. Instead, place in a fold gently with the fingertips.

Storing Linen

Linen has to be stored carefully as it is easily subject to damage.

Linen should be stored in a cupboard that has plenty of air circulation, as linen is subject to mildew. It should be stored away from direct heat and direct sun, and must never be left in a damp plastic bag for prolonged periods, as