

Episcopal Symbols

Apparel and insignia of the order of bishops



CHASUBLE

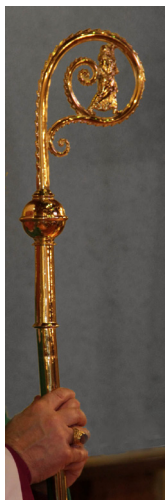
Oval shaped garment worn over an alb by priests or bishops when presiding at the Eucharist. Constructed of a variety of materials in liturgical colors, and often decorated with contrasting stripes and liturgical symbols. Based on the pluviale (Roman) or planeta (Greek), a cloak worn outdoors by men and women in ancient Greece and Rome. Like the cope and miter, it was seldom worn in the Church of England following the Reformation, until the Oxford Movement of the early 19th century.

CHIMERE

Red or black sleeveless gown worn over a rochet and a cassock. Worn at liturgical functions (except Eucharist) and civic and ecumenical ceremonies. Derived from the tabard, a blazoned cloak worn by medieval knights over their armor.

COPE

Semicircular cloak with hood shaped extension usually worn during the first half of the Eucharist and at confirmations and ordinations. Used in place of a chasuble. Derived from the Roman pluviale and first used by clergy in the 6th century. Widely used as a ceremonial choir habit in the Middle Ages.



CROSIER

Staff that symbolizes the pastoral ministry of a bishop. Carried in procession and when pronouncing episcopal blessings. Crook-shaped to resemble a shepherd's staff. First mentioned in Spanish documents in the 7th century. Two possible origins: a walking stick or the divination rod used by Roman fortune tellers.

MITER

Liturgical head gear styled as a crown in the Eastern church and as a shield in the Western church. Originally made of white linen, but later of embroidered silk which frequently was decorated with jewels and semiprecious stones. The Western miter has two peaks, front and back, and two fringed lappets that hang from the back. Worn during processions and when pronouncing episcopal blessings. Originated in the 11th century and is based on the camelaucum, an unofficial hat worn by the Pope in procession.

PECTORAL CROSS

Cross of gold, silver or other precious metal suspended on a chain and worn on the chest—usually near the pectoral muscles. Worn exclusively by bishops in the Anglican Communion but in the Roman Catholic Church worn by cardinals and abbots as well as bishops.

RING

Symbolizes the bishop's betrothal to the church. Worn on the third finger of the right hand and engraved with a signet, or bishop's seal. Usually made of gold and set with an amethyst stone. First appeared in the 7th century and came into general use by the 10th century.

ROCHET

White linen vestment similar to an alb but with balloon sleeves gathered at the wrist with red or black bands. Worn over the cassock and under a chimere.

