

INSTRUCTIONS FOR LAUNDERING ALTAR LINENS

WHAT YOU WILL NEED

Your own washer and dryer.

An ironing board and iron. It's easier to work with a full sized ironing board, but a smaller, table top ironing board is sufficient. You don't need any special features with your iron. The iron only needs to heat to a linen setting, usually the hottest setting.

A container large enough to hold all of the purificators and corporals to presoak these items. I use two small, square dish washing tubs, placing one in each side of my kitchen sink.

A drying rack for air drying the linens after they've been ironed. The drying rack should be able to hold up to thirty folded purificators, each about four inches wide.

WHAT TO COLLECT FROM THE CHURCH

Hand towels: small, white towels used to dry the priest's hands during Mass. The hand towels are washed after each use.

Purificators: small, white cloths, the size of a handkerchief, that are used to wipe the Precious Blood and any other soils from the rim of the chalice during Mass. The purificators are laundered after each use.

Corporals: larger, white cloths, placed on the altar prior to Consecration of the bread and wine, to protect against any loss of crumbs or drops of the Precious Body and Blood during Mass. Corporals are laundered only if visibly soiled. The priests use two at a time. If you find more than two or three corporals in the hamper, please let me or one of the priests know. Occasionally, a new sacristan or extraordinary minister of Holy Communion will mistakenly place the corporals into the hamper too often.

Dish towels, dish cloths: that are used to wash and dry the vessels after each Mass.

Where

You'll find the linens in the west sacristy (the room to the left, behind the Tabernacle). Inside the sacristy, there is a small closet to the right of the sink. In the closet, there will be a number of items stored on the shelves. There is a rod on the left wall of the closet, where purificators are hung to dry after Mass. There is also a small, covered hamper that contains the dry purificators, hand towels and linens from the previous week.

You will find several bright green, reusable grocery bags folded and stored on the shelf. These bags have a smiley face and pro-life message on them and are labelled along the top edge for use in laundering the altar linens. I would like to have one inside the hamper to collect the linens as they are gathered into the hamper. This will make it easier for those who, like me, have a difficult time bending down low to get things from the bottom of the hamper. If we keep one of the bags inside the hamper, we should be able to just pick up the bag by its handles and carry it away, of course placing another into the hamper in its place.

There are enough bags to have one or two at someone's with the weeks linens' to be laundered, one in the hamper and one or two still on the shelf. If you don't find our bright green bags on the closet shelf, let me know so I can find where they've gone.

Collect all of the items from the rod and hamper in one or two of our bright green grocery bags or your own container. Please also collect the wet dish cloths and dish towels at the sink. I recommend keeping the wet dish cloths and towels in a bag or container separate from the linens, to avoid possible mold if you won't be able to launder the linens until later in the week. Set out one clean dish cloth at the sink and hang three clean dish towels on the rod on the left side of the sink cabinet. Clean dish towels and cloths are kept in the cabinet under the sink.

When

You may collect the linens after the Mass that you normally attend. We ask that you return them the following week, also after the Mass that you normally attend. If you need more time, that's not a problem. Bring them back to the church or to the parish office as soon as you have them ready. If you find that will not be able to get the linens done within two weeks, let me know. It's never a problem for me to pick them up and take care of them for you.

SEPARATE AND PRESOAK PURIFICATORS AND CORPORALS

My preference is to first, separate the hand towels, dish cloths and dish towels from the purificators and corporals. The hand towels, dish cloth and towels can be set aside until you've finished the next two steps.

Remember with whom you are working!

The linens need to be presoaked to allow all crumbs and remnants of the Precious Body and Blood of Christ to dissolve into the water. During the presoak and removal of the linens from the presoak water, you need to be very careful not to spill or splash this water around, because it contains the Precious Body and Blood of Christ. Because this is the True Presence of Christ this water must be handled carefully and disposed of properly. DO NOT allow this water to spill, splash around or run down any household drain!



Place the purificators and corporals together in your container to presoak. Fill the container with water, hot, warm or cold, whichever you prefer. Allow the linens to soak for at least ten minutes. The purple stains will disappear if the linens are allowed to soak for 90 minutes or more. If you aren't able to allow them to soak for this long, you can remove the purple stains at a later step. After the presoak, remove and wring as much water as possible out of each linen, being very careful to let the water fall back into the container, not run down a drain. Place the linens into another container. At this point, I place them into one side of my kitchen sink.

After all of the linens have been removed from the water, this water **must** be taken and poured out onto the ground outside. Regardless of rain, snow, ice or other weather, this water **must** be poured out onto the ground outside.

You do not have to be overly scrupulous about the drops of water than will remain in the container or the small amount of water that remains in each of the linens. Once the Precious Body and Blood of Christ have dissolved into the water and you have taken good care to wring each linen and discard the larger volume of water, your conscience may be clear as to how you might handle the small amounts of water that remain.

PRETREAT STAINS ON EACH OF THE PURIFICATORS

After presoaking, each of the purificators must be examined, by holding it up to good light to look for lipstick or other stains. If there are no stains, the linen may be set aside. For this step, I place the linens and corporals in one side of my kitchen sink and place each into the other side after it has been examined. If you find stains, please apply a bit of laundry soap to the stain and rub it in. I keep a small container of laundry soap under my kitchen sink and pour a little bit into the cap to set at the edge of the sink. I have a small toothbrush that I use exclusively for this task, dipping it into the soap in the cap and using it to rub the soap into each stain. The corporals should also be examined for any stains or soil. If any of the purificators or corporals still show purple stains or dark areas from the Precious Blood at this point, you may soak them again in water with a bit of bleach, or add bleach as you would during the normal wash cycle in your washing machine. If you soak in bleach at this step, this water can be allowed to run down the drain of your kitchen or other sink. The first presoak is important. After that, you are simply working with laundry that you can handle as you do any of your own laundry.

LAUNDERING THE LINENS AND TOWELS

Once you have completed the presoak and put soap onto any stains, the purificators and corporals can be combined with the hand towels, dish cloths and dish towels. All of the laundry can then be washed in your washing machine, just as you would do your own laundry, using hot, warm or cold water.

At the end of the wash cycle, the hand towels, dish cloths and towels may all be placed into the dryer. The purificators and corporals are taken directly from the washer to be ironed while still wet. After drying, the hand towels, dish cloths and towels are folded in any way that you like to fold such items. They can be placed back into the same bags or container you used to bring them home.

IRONING PURIFICATORS AND CORPORALS

Initial placement of purificators and corporals on the ironing board

Face up, hem is hidden.



Looking at the edge of the purificator, you will see the stitched hem. Place the purificator flat onto the ironing board so that the hem is visible on top of the fabric, face down. When the purificator is folded, the hem will be hidden on the inside.

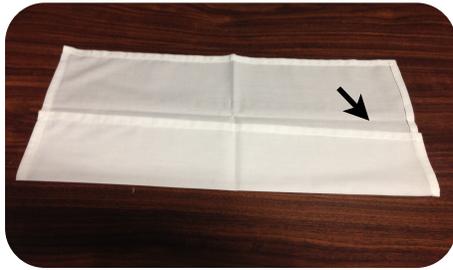
Looking at the edge of the corporal, place it flat on the ironing board so the seam is hidden below the fabric, face up. When the corporal is folded, it will appear to be inside out, with the hem visible on the outside. When the corporal is unfolded again on the altar, the hem will be hidden below the fabric of the corporal as it lies on the altar.

Face down, hem is visible.

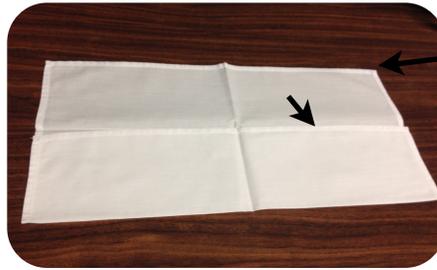
Ironing Purificators (see illustrations on the next page)

Place the purificator flat onto the ironing board, **face down**. Iron out all of the wrinkles and creases. The moisture from washing will provide steam and make this step easier than if the purificator were dry. If your washer spins out most of the water, you may want to add water to the purificators before ironing. More moisture makes ironing more effective. The purificators may also lose moisture as they wait to be ironed. They will iron more easily if you rewet them. Once the purificator is ironed flat, fold opposite edges inward lengthwise, folding the linen into equal thirds. Try to fold so that each edge lines up with the fold that you are making, as shown in the pictures on the next page. Iron these folds into crisp creases. Then fold the corporal in half, neatly aligning the ends. Iron this crease firmly into place. Set the purificator aside, stacking them as you go, or place the purificator directly onto your drying rack to dry overnight, or for at least an hour or so to be sure they are completely dry.

Aligning edges of purificators inside folds



Here, the edge of the cloth does not align well with the crease.



Here, the edge of the cloth aligns well with the crease.

Similarly, align this edge with the opposite edge when you fold it over. The goal is to fold into equal thirds.



Folding purificators

The purificators are folded as in the images above. First, folding lengthwise into even thirds. Then folding in half. When done, all of the hems should be hidden inside the folds.

Ironing Corporals

Place the corporal flat onto the ironing board, **face up**. Iron out all of the wrinkles and creases. As with the purificators, moisture from washing will provide steam and make this step easier than if the corporal were dry. Rewet as needed. Once the corporal is wrinkle free, fold it lengthwise in thirds. Try to fold so that each edge lines up with the fold that you are making, as with the purificators above. Iron these folds into crisp creases. The corporals are made of thicker fabric, so be sure to go over these creases several times to iron them in very well. Then fold the corporal again into equal thirds, neatly aligning the edges with creases as you did with the previous folds. Iron these creases firmly into place. It helps to partially unfold and iron one crease at a time.



Note that the corporal is folded into equal thirds, twice. This creates nine squares when the corporal is unfolded. Purificators have only six squares when unfolded.



corporal

purificator

Set the corporal aside, stacking them as you go, or place the corporal directly onto your drying rack to dry overnight, or for at least an hour or so to be sure they are completely dry.

DRY PURIFICATORS AND CORPORALS

Place all of the purificators onto your drying rack, laying each across the rod, wire or string of your rack where the purificator is folded in half. Line them up side by side. If you run out of room, you can lay purificators on top of one another in two layers.

If there are corporals, similarly, place them onto your hanging rack, laying each across the rod, wire or string of your rack at one of the points where the corporal is folded. The corporals do not need to be fully opened when they are hanged to dry. I leave them folded into thirds, hanging them over one of the last two folds that I made. Line them up side by side if possible. If you run out of room, you can lay corporals on top of one another or on top of purificators in two layers.

The goal is to allow each linen to completely dry before returning to a container or bag, so don't layer them too deep. Allow plenty of time for the linens to dry completely, so there won't be any risk of mold once they are placed in the drawer in the sacristy.

GATHER EVERYTHING UP

Once the linens are all dry, carefully remove them from your drying rack, neatly refolding each. They can be placed back into the same bags or container you used to bring them home.