

Caring for Sacred Linens

Purifying:

Any sacred linen (usually purificator, corporal, and credence table cover) which has come into contact with the sacred species **MUST** be purified before being washed in a washing machine. If there is spillage on an altar cloth, the area must also be purified. There are two ways to do this:

1. Rinse the linen with plain water in a Sacarium- which is usually located in the sacristy and labeled as such. This is a small sink whose drainage goes directly into the ground.
2. Rinse the linen in a bucket of plain water. Empty the water on the ground outside. The principle is that the Blood and/or Body of the Lord goes directly into the earth rather than into a sewage system.

After the linens are purified they may be treated and washed in the washing machine.

Stains:

We have found that ZOUT works for most stains including the following: wine, rust, scuff marks, holy oil, charcoal, burnt match tips, ink, pencil, lipstick, perspiration, etc.

After putting some ZOUT on the linen, rub it in the fabric with your fingernail, then wash by washing machine soon after.

Be sure to purify those sacred linens that need to be purified in the sacarium first before applying ZOUT.

Two kinds of stains need a different sort of process:

A. Human blood must be washed with **COLD** water only. Usually a good bar of white soap will succeed. If blood stains are washed with warm or hot water, they will set and not come out.

B. Wax is a big problem. The best bet is to take the altar cloth or other sacred linen to a trusted cleaners. Dry cleaning fluid usually works. If this is not possible, these are the steps to follow:

1. **IRON** the wax off first by placing brown paper bags both under and over the wax. The hot iron will draw most of the wax out of the material into the paper.
2. There will still be a grease type stain left on the material. You can attack it with boiling hot water dropped onto the stain from a height. THORO, a dry cleaning fluid, working liquid soap into the stain, or Wax-Away may help.

Ironing and Folding:

A small mangle iron is the best for ironing. Otherwise, a hand iron will work fine.

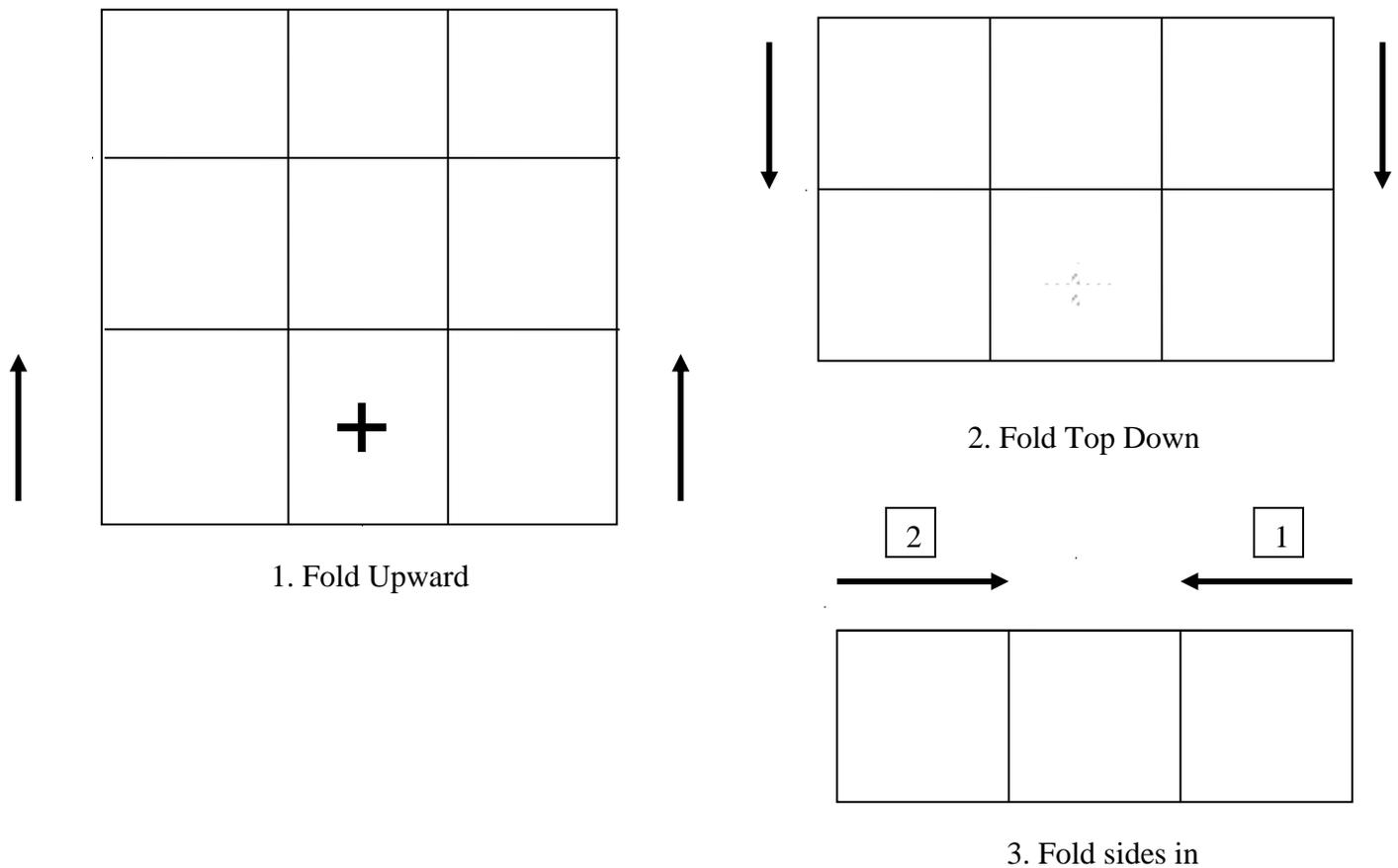
Corporal:

This is a large square sacred linen which is always placed under the sacred species i.e., on the altar during Mass, before the tabernacle, etc.

The corporal may be starched with spray starch or other kind. The reason is to keep the sacred species from penetrating the material.

It is folded into nine squares by thirds: the bottom third is folded upwards first, then the top third is folded down. After this then the left or right third is folded inwards in any order. (Diagram shows right first and then left side.)

If there is a cross on the corporal it is usually in the bottom center, located closest to the priest as he stands to offer Mass. Sometimes the cross is in the center.



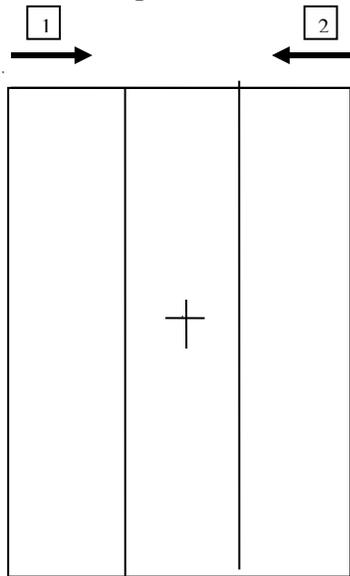
Purificator:

This is a rectangle shape with a cross in the middle.

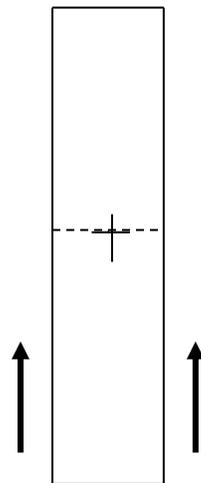
It should be ironed WITHOUT starch. The reason for this is so that the linen can absorb the consecrated blood.

There are different ways to fold this. Our preferred way is the following:

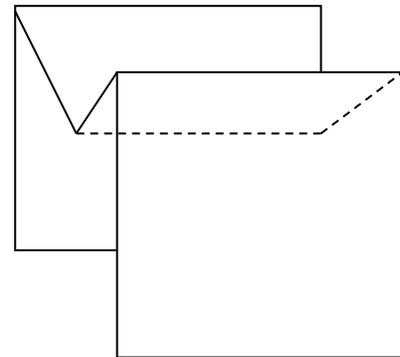
1. With the cross side face down, fold the long side left and right into the center with the right side of the material on the outside center.
2. Turn the folded purificator over so that the cross is facing you. Fold the material, from the bottom to the top in half so the cross is inside and invisible to you.
3. Take two fingers and place them on the folded edge which the cross is under. Then fold the top part of the material back over your two fingers.
4. Turn the purificator over and do the same with the other side.
5. It will now be in the shape of an M with the cross at the center of the dip at the top of the M. This will allow the purificator to sit inside a chalice with the cross in the center of the cup of the chalice.



1. Fold sides in



2. Fold with cross inside



3. Fold with cross in center of the "M"

Finger towel:

This is usually a rectangle piece of linen without a cross on it. However, sometimes there are crosses down at a corner of the material.

The finger towel should not be starched so that it can absorb the water with which the priest washes his hands during Mass.

There is no exact way to fold a finger towel. Usually it is folded lengthwise first so that it can drape easily over the alter server's arm. Often four lengthwise folds are made, in half and then in quarters, with a final fold in half widthwise. You should experiment with which is the best way, given the particular shape and size of the finger towels.

Note:

If you are not ready to iron the linens after washing, they may be rolled in a white towel, put inside a plastic bag and stored in a refrigerator up to one week without mildewing. The only help – if you do have mildew on a linen – is to soak the linens in bleach solution before washing again.