

What is the pallium?



Many of you have recently learned that the Apostolic Nuncio of Canada will be imposing the pallium on me during a Eucharistic liturgy at the Cathedral on November 24 at 2:00 pm.

But what exactly is the pallium? What does the pallium represent, and why is the Apostolic Nuncio imposing it on me instead of the Pope, who simply blessed and presented them to all the world's new archbishops at a Eucharistic celebration held on June 29? After a brief Internet search, I found a short article published on July 6, 2022 by Mgr Vincent Jordy, Archbishop of Tours, which I hope will answer all your questions.

Presentation and imposition of the pallium

Every year, Pope Francis presents palliums to new metropolitan archbishops who have been elevated to this rank during the year, during the celebration of Mass on the Solemnity of Saints Peter and Paul the Apostles. Monsignor Vincent Jordy, Archbishop of Tours, explains what the presentation of a pallium is all about.

What is the conferring of a pallium? What does it involve? What is its purpose?

The presentation of a pallium is the liturgical gesture by which a metropolitan archbishop receives a distinctive sign, which he wears during solemn celebrations in his diocese, and which he may wear during celebrations in the other dioceses of his province. The pallium, which has been used in the Church since the 6th century, is worn on the chasuble around the neck. It's a piece of white cloth marked with five black crosses. The wool used to make them comes from lambs blessed by the Pope on Saint Agnes Day. Before being handed over to the

archbishops on the feast of St. Peter and St. Paul, the pallium is placed at the Confession of Peter in St. Peter's, Rome. The pallium is the symbol of close communion between the Pope and the archbishops. Pope Benedict XVI has also emphasized that it evokes the yoke of Christ.

What does it mean? Is it a sign of authority and communion?

The liturgical formula for the imposition of the pallium speaks for itself: "Receive the pallium taken from the tomb of Peter ... so that you may wear it as a sign of your authority as metropolitan ... may it be for you a symbol of unity, a witness to your communion with the Apostolic See, a bond of charity and a stimulus to your fortitude". Authority, unity, communion, a bond of charity and fortitude - these are the richness of this symbolism.

How does this ceremony unfold?

There are several possible situations. In principle, the new archbishop who receives the pallium can receive it on the day of his ordination or installation in his cathedral. However, this is not always possible, as the pallium is presented privately to the new metropolitan in Rome on June 29, the feast of St. Peter and St. Paul. The celebration can therefore take place at another time, when the Apostolic Nuncio will impose it on the archbishop's shoulders during a solemn celebration. The archbishop receives the pallium on his knees, after professing the faith and taking a special oath of obedience to the faith of the Church and to the successor of Peter.

Can you tell us why pallium ceremonies are no longer held in Rome, but at territorial level in the dioceses?

It was Pope Francis who, at the beginning of 2015, made the choice to change the procedure for handing over the pallium. Previously it was handed over by the Pope at St. Peter's in Rome on St. Peter and St. Paul's Day. Now, on this occasion, archbishops receive the pallium privately from the Pope. The imposition of the pallium is then carried out in the archbishop's cathedral, in the midst of the people entrusted to him by the Apostolic Nuncio. The presence of the other bishops of the Province at this celebration is also a strong sign of unity and concern to work for the good of the Church and the faithful.



Most Reverend Guy Desrochers, C.Ss.R. Archbishop of Moncton