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The Art of making  
altar linens  
ADJ 0738

# Nazareth Mission Circle

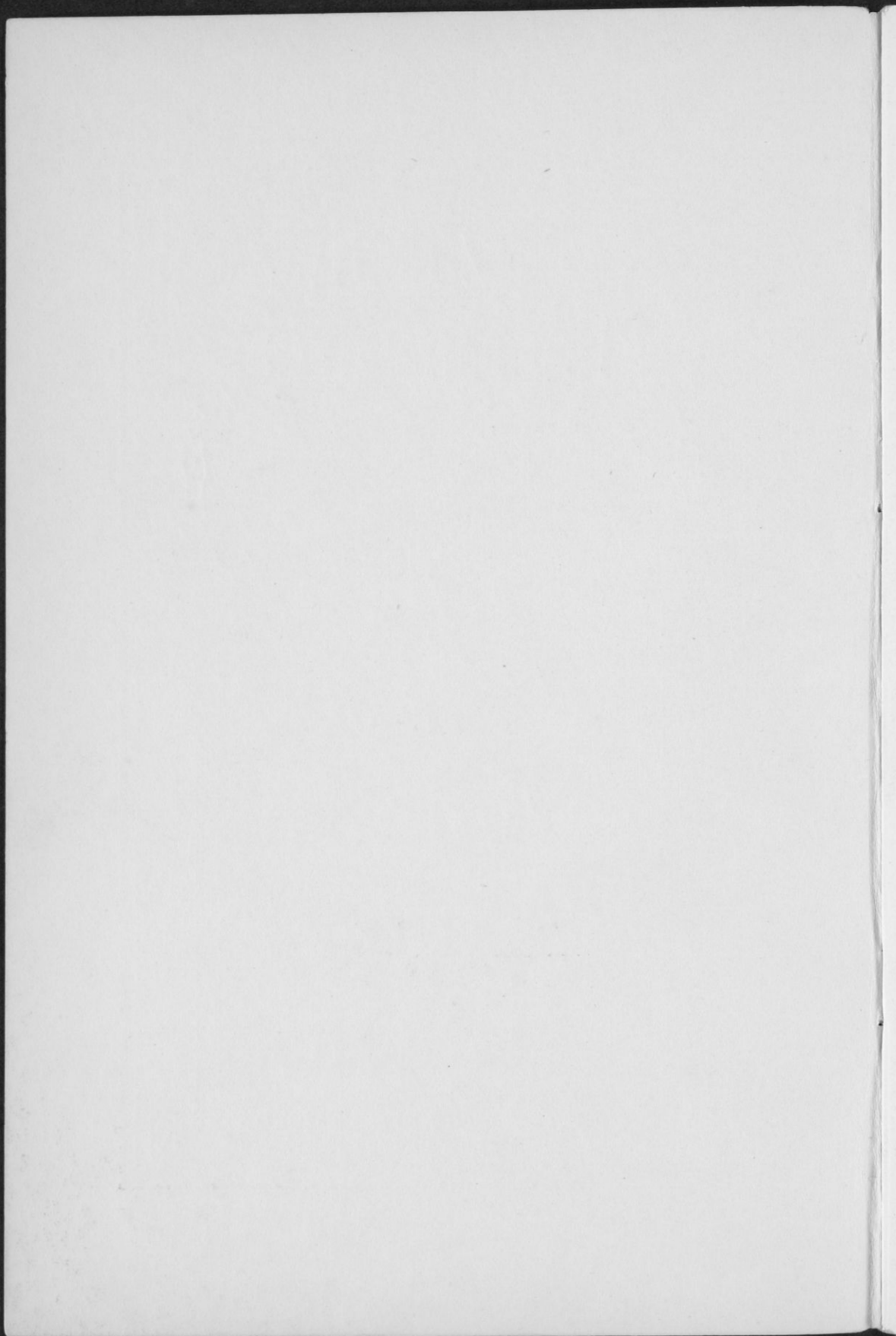


## *The* Art of Making Altar Linens



SOCIETY OF THE DIVINE WORD  
Techy, Illinois





## FOREWORD



THE NAZARETH MISSION CIRCLE is modelled along the lines of the ORDER OF SAINT VERONICA, a Society established by Our Sunday Visitor, Huntington, Indiana, and with their gracious permission and helpful co-operation.

The single donation of a gift for the Altar of God constitutes one a member of THE NAZARETH MISSION CIRCLE. Members share in the fruits of the Altars where their gifts are in use. Send all donations to

SAINT MARY'S MISSION HOUSE.  
Care of THE NAZARETH MISSION CIRCLE,  
TECHNY, ILLIONIS



Order from us, at 25c each,

THE ART OF MAKING ALTAR LINENS  
THE ART OF MAKING ALTAR LACES

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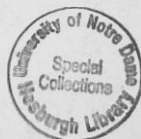
## Introduction



OUR NAZARETH CUPBOARD, installed in the parlor of St. Mary's Mission House, Techny, Ill., is the center of supply—for altar linens of every description, for altar laces, for vestments (both for priests and servers), and even for the sacred vessels and utensils appertaining to the altar—for all missions of the Society of the Divine Word that receive aid through the American Province of the Congregation. Not that the CUPBOARD itself is sufficient to retain our full supply of articles waiting to be sent out on the missions (we have a separate receiving room for this), but that it is rather a prominent and inviting receptacle for the exhibition of the work of our lady friends, the country over, who are constantly contributing to the needs of our mission altars. Please remember that these altars are set up, here and there, all over our vast mission territories of South Shantung, South-east Honan, and West Kansu, in China; in Niigata and Negoya, in Japan; in Abra, Manila, Zambales, in the Philippines; in the Little Sunda Islands; in Central and East New Guinea; in Paraguay, Brazil, and other South American mission centers.

Guests at St. Mary's are always invited to visit the NAZARETH CUPBOARD, to inspect the fine needle-work and the simpler cloths made ready for the altar. Moreover, more ambitious persons, or leaders of mission clubs, are often glad to scrutinize closely the many vestments shown,—surplices, albs, cassocks, stoles, chasubles, copes, and the rest,—with the intention of carrying out some of these more pretentious labors for mission needs.

We consider that the NAZARETH CUPBOARD, even in name, is suggestive of the spirit in which this work is brought forth for the sake of the "Lord of The Missions," even as our Blessed Mother wrought,—quietly, patiently, unobtrusively, devotedly,—in all ways in which it was given to her to serve in forwarding the great MISSION of her SON and LORD.



## The Finger-towel



*Let Him be crucified. And Pilate seeing that he prevailed nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, taking water washed his hands before the people, saying: I am innocent of the blood of this just man; look you to it.—Matt. XXVII, 24.*

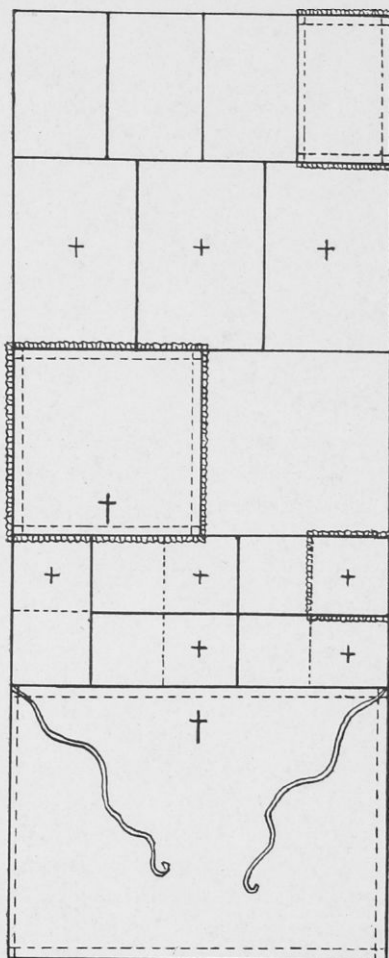
Partly in commemoration of the incident described by the above text, the priest when saying Mass washes his hands and dries them on a finger-towel. Have you ever thought how many finger-towels are needed for the countless Masses said daily? Are you willing to give a few linens to the Prisoner of the Tabernacle?

Two and one-half yards of linen, thirty-six inches wide, will make fifteen pieces of small linens without one inch of waste by following these directions: Purchase a medium grade of linen (it must be ALL LINEN for the service of the Altar) neither a heavy nor a flimsy texture is desired, and to eliminate waste, ask the saleslady to cut it according to a drawn thread.

Shrink the goods—uniform measurements can be secured only after shrinkage—and iron while still very damp. Measure fourteen inches along the selvage and cut across to the other selvage by pulling a thread. This small piece is now divided into four parts, each measuring fourteen inches by nine inches.

Lay a one-fourth inch hem all around the towel, being sure to have the raw edges well lapped in. Sew by machine or by hand, fastening corners with care—if it frays the poor missionary cannot take the proverbial stitch in time. These towels may have a neat little edge of val or hand-made lace about one-half inch wide on each end (not all around, but trimmed like the towels in your linen closet). Many priests prefer them plain. Directions for laundering them are given later.

With every stitch sew in a prayer, make every step an act of love, fold into the linen that petition for which your heart has yearned so long—and you will learn that Jesus can withstand no request which comes to Him tucked away in a little offering to relieve His Sacramental poverty.



Two and one-half yards of linen 36 inches wide will cut:

4 finger-towels .....	14x9
3 purificators .....	18x12
2 corporals .....	18x18
5 pall covers.....	14x7
1 amice .....	36x remainder

## The Purificator



*But Peter rising up, ran to the sepulchre, and stooping down, he saw the linen cloths laid by themselves; and went away wondering in himself at that which was come to pass.—Luke XXIV, 12.*

The purificator represents the other cloths that were used at the interment of Christ. The purificator is a linen napkin which the priest uses to wipe the Chalice, also his lips and fingers, after the Communion of the Precious Blood, and at the ablutions.

To make, measure eighteen inches along the selvage, cut according to a drawn thread, divide into three pieces each measuring eighteen by twelve inches. Turn hems, measuring slightly less than one-half inch, around the four sides. No trimming need be used on purificators.

Three styles of crosses are used in marking Altar linens: The Saint Andrew cross is a square cross composed of sixteen little cross-stitches and is used on palls, pall covers, and purificators. The Latin cross has the head and arms identical with the above, but stands on a stem of seven cross-stitches, and is used on the amice and the corporal. The purificator is folded carefully to find the central thread of the length and creased sharply, folded to find the central thread of the width, creased or marked lightly with a pencil. Cross-stitch in red fast color Turkey cotton, counting three or five threads of linen for each tiny cross-stitch according to the accompanying design. Three threads within your stitch will make a very small cross, five threads a larger one, but much depends on the weave of the fabric. The third way to work the crosses is to trace one of the designs in this book on your linen by means of carbon paper, and embroider it with white floss.





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## The Corporal



*Joseph of Arimathea, a noble counsellor, who was also himself looking for the kingdom of God, came and went in bodily to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus.—Mark XV, 43.*

*And Joseph buying fine linens, and taking him down, wrapped him up in the fine linens, and laid him in a sepulchre which was hewn out of a rock.—Mark XV, 46.*

The corporal represents the shroud which was wrapped about the sacred remains of our Redeemer when, in the gathering gloom, His faithful few laid the body in the sepulchre. The corporal, which is a little napkin, is placed over the Altar cloths, upon which the Body (in Latin, *corpus*) of Our Lord is laid during the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, whence comes its name corporal. It is also upon the corporal the sacred vessels must always be placed when they contain the Holy Eucharist.

To make, measure 18 inches along the selvage of your linen, cut along a drawn thread to the other selvage, then split this piece to make two squares 18x18 inches. Turn one-half inch hems all around the corporal and sew by machine or by hand. It is permissible to put a neat lace—val or a lace of similar daintiness—all around the edge, which trimming should not be more than one-half inch wide and fulled sufficiently when turning the corners to allow for a tiny fullness and also for shrinkage.

When a cross has been made on the corporal, it will be finished.



## The Pall



*And very early in the morning, the first day of the week, they come to the sepulchre, the sun being now risen. And they said to one another: Who shall roll us back the stone from the door of the sepulchre? And looking, they saw the stone rolled back. For it was very great.—Mark XVI, 2-4.*

The pall represents His tomb. It is a small square of linen, into which is slipped a piece of cardboard, 6x6 inches, to make it stiff and firm. It is used to cover the chalice during Mass.

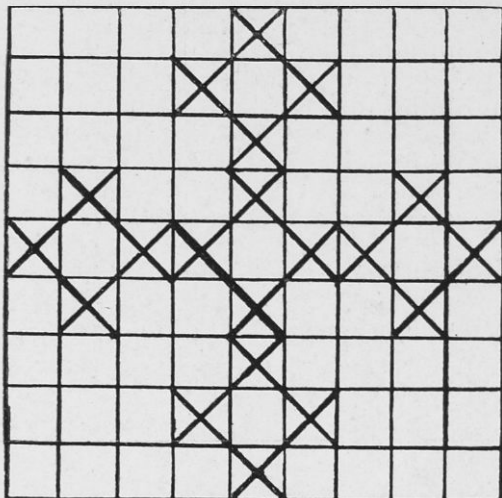
The white cardboard, cut 6x6 inches, can be procured at any printing shop. To make the under cover of the pall, double linen along the dotted line as shown in the diagram, machine-stitch one side, fit on cardboard, and mark where second seam is to go to make a snug fit; seam; turn right side out and fit on cardboard. Linen should fit without a wrinkle, and so tightly that the slip must be worked on slowly. If it does fit like this, remove it, place cross in center, launder, fit on cardboard, turn raw edges in and sew on in such a manner that it can be removed for washing when it becomes soiled.

To make outer cover proceed as above, fitting the slip over the linen covered cardboard. This edge is hemmed to come exactly to the edge of the cardboard. Put a dainty edge or tatting around the four sides. Place a cross in the center, the St. Andrew's cross in red, or a fancy design which should be done in white floss.



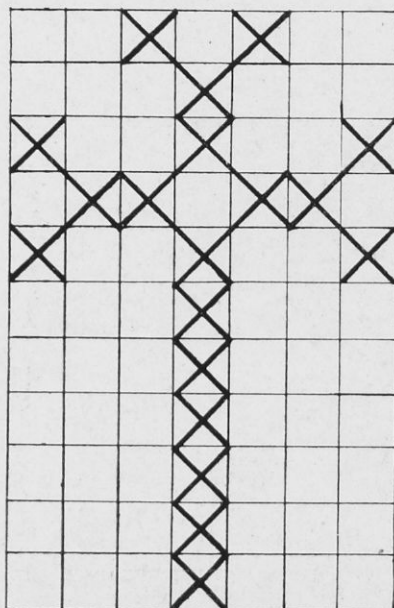
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ST. ANDREW'S CROSS



These crosses are magnified to show details. The cross is neatest when either three or five threads of the linen are counted for each cross-stitch. The odd number is required because the central threads of the goods are creased along the length and along the width to serve as guides for your needle.

LATIN CROSS



## The Amice

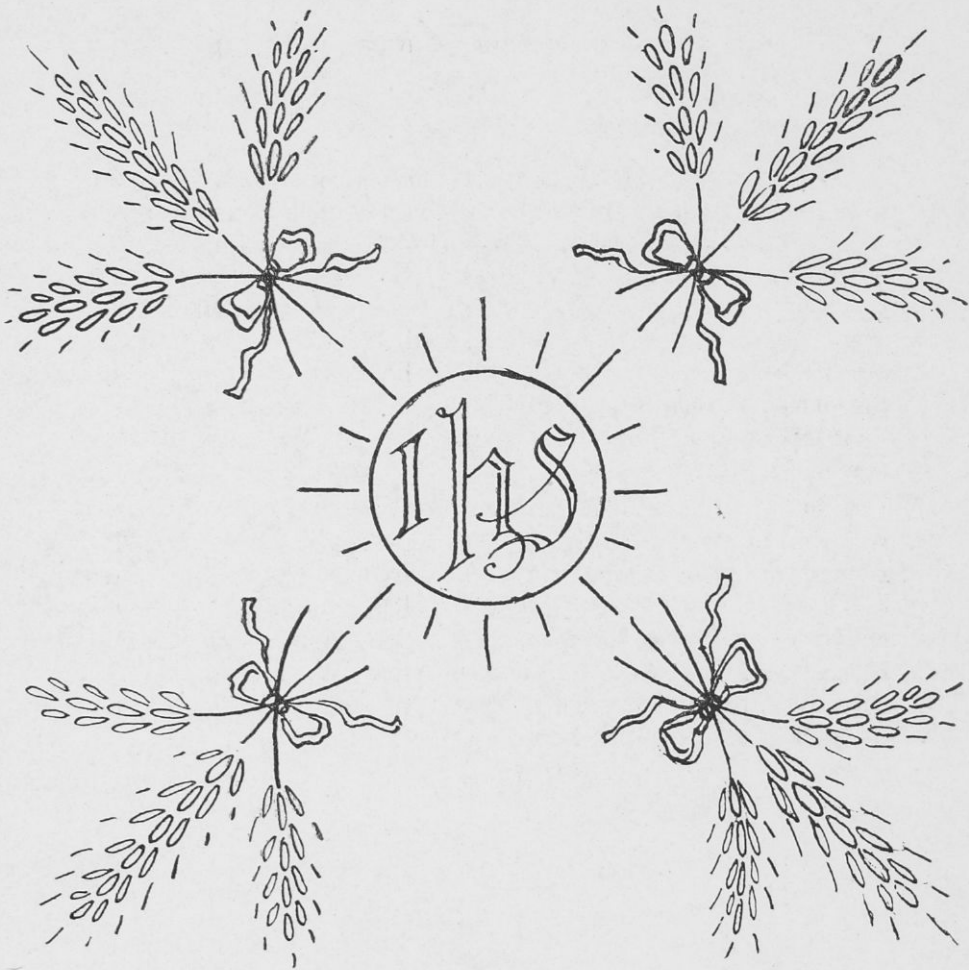


*And some began to spit on him, and to cover his face, and to buffet him, and to say unto him: Prophecy: and the servants struck him with the palms of their hands.—Mark XIV, 65.*

The amice which the priest places around his neck and over his shoulders, represents the linen cloth wherewith in the house of Caiphas the Jews covered Christ's countenance, bidding Him in mockery: Prophecy to us, who it is that struck thee? Formerly it was worn upon the head, the Church using it as an image of the helmet of salvation which St. Paul wishes every Christian to be armed with. It is for this reason that the priest, before laying the amice over his shoulders, puts it upon his head, saying: "Place upon my head, O Lord, the helmet of salvation".

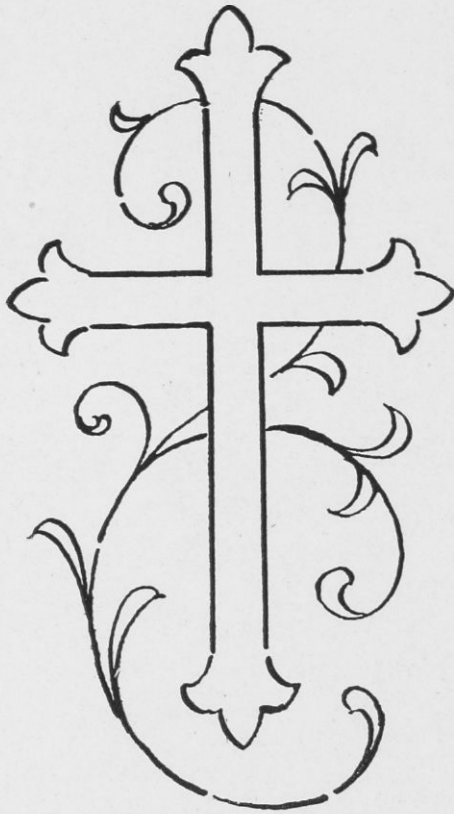
The remainder of your two and one-half yards of linen will give one amice 36x26 or less according to shrinkage. Put a one-inch hem around the four sides. A linen tape, *about one-half inch wide and forty-five inches long* should be sewed on *each* upper corner, so that the length of garment goes across the shoulders. It is not necessary to place a cross on the amice, but in case you do, put it at the center of the back an inch or so below the hem.





FANCY DESIGN FOR A PALL COVER

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ROMAN CROSS  
SUITABLE FOR A STOLE

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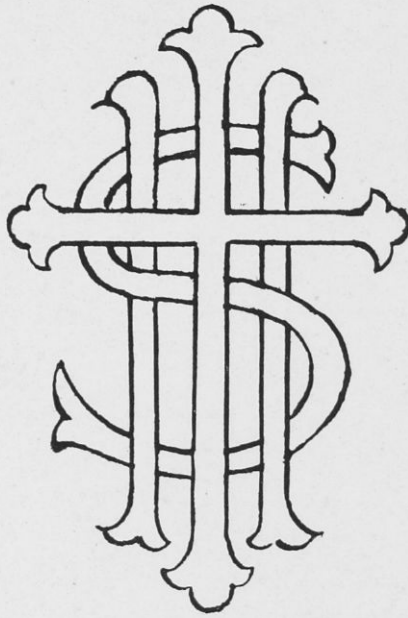


WHEAT D  
FOR EMBROIDERING



T DESIGN  
RING A FANCY PALL

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MONOGRAM

ALTAR CLOTH CENTER

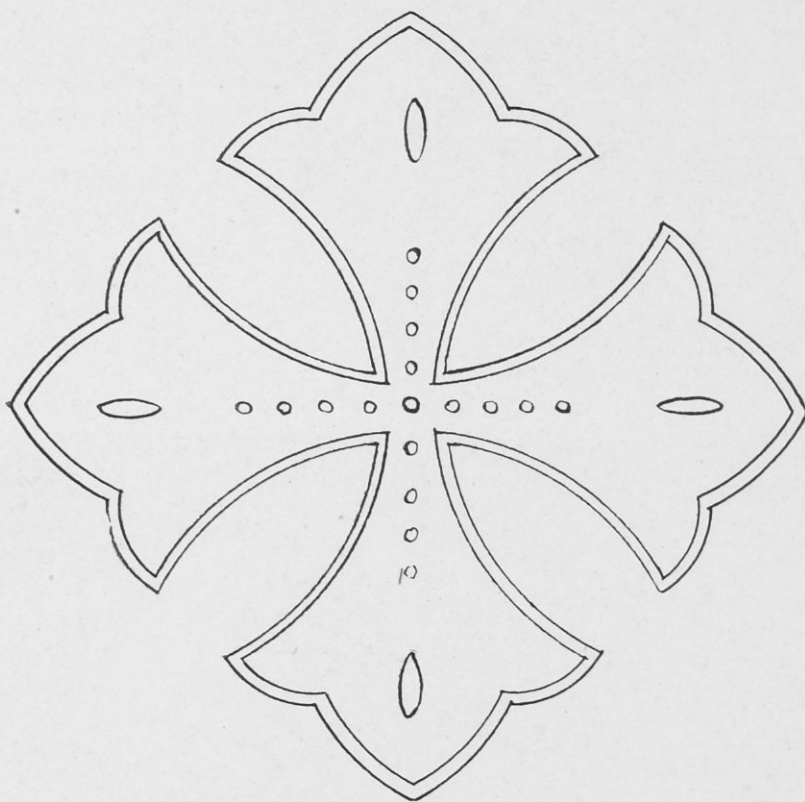
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WHEAT AND GRAPE DESIGN  
FOR THREE PANEL CIBORIUM OR FOR  
TABERNACLE HANGINGS

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CROSS FOR PALL

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## The Altar Cloths



The Altar cloths which the Church prescribes for the celebration of the Mass should be three in number. The upper cloth should extend over each side of the Altar to the platform below. Make only the large Altar cloth.

The Altar table is usually 40 inches from the floor. The table top of the Mission Altars measures 5 feet 6 inches in length, and from the Tabernacle to the front of the Altar is 18 inches. Perhaps the greatest need of the little Mission church is Altar cloths. These articles are not received as often as the smaller pieces, due, of course, to the greater cost of the larger pieces.

To make an Altar cloth from 3 yards of 36-inch linen, take a 7-inch strip off one side (this strip can be cut into pieces 7x14 for palls) put a 2-inch hem on the ends, the front and the back of the cloth. By having the hems identical, the front and the back are changeable, thus distributing the wear caused by the rubbing of the chasuble. It will be seen that the least amount which can be used for an upper cloth is 3 yards, while 3½ or 4 yards give a nicer length. Lace may be sewed across the front and the ends if desired, and a smaller hem turned at the back.



## Laundering the Altar Linens



In laundering the linens for the service of the Altar, care should be taken to use suitable utensils and immaculate ironing-board covers. Do not starch the linens, but iron them while they are very, very damp, first on the right side to bring out the gloss, then on the wrong side to make them perfect, then fold.

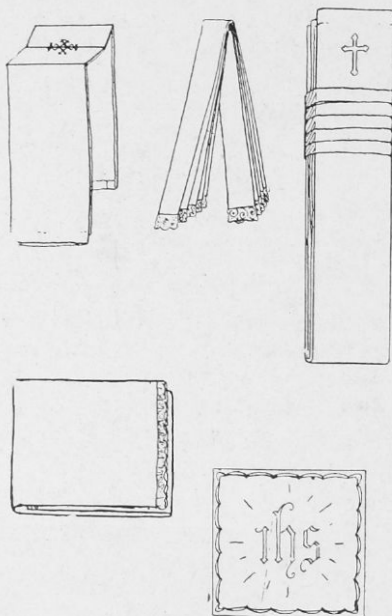
Purificators are folded in thirds along the length; place end hems together so cross will be folded inside; crease; now

turn the right sides out again, and fold down within one inch of the center. This will make the purificator look like the letter M with long outer lines. The little two-inch indentation fits into the chalice. Pall covers are ironed without folding. The corporal is the ONLY piece of linen which is folded inside out, this being done to protect any sacred Particles that might cling to the linen. Lay the corporal right side up with the cross nearest to you; fold the front third of the linen away from you; fold the back third of the linen toward you, over this; fold the third nearest the right hand across toward the left, and the left hand third over this.

Lay the amice with the cross face down and the tree of the cross running the length of the ironingboard. Bring the side hems to meet at the cross; crease edges; bring these edges to meet at the cross; crease edges and lap each side beyond the center of the amice about one-third; fold bottom hem up to top hem; wind tapes neatly around the amice, the narrow way, and fasten them by tucking them under their own windings.

The finger-towels may be folded once along the length and once across the width, but the "fan-fold" opens easier to the priest's hand, if there is but one server and he places the finger-towel over his arm whilst holding the cruet and the bowl. Fold lengthwise wrong side out and iron a crease in the center; open out face up, and make wrong side of hems meet this crease; iron edges; turn face down and bring these creases to meet on the central crease; fold hems back to meet the central crease; double along length; bring end hems together and the finger-towel is fan-shaped with the right side of the hems out. (The process is easy to remember if you notice that you always iron the wrong side of the linen, except at the final turning of the lengthwise hems).

In laundering Altar cloths for the Missions, they should be starched, ironed and *folded*. Please note that *the Altar cloth is the only article which requires starch*, and it should be very stiff.



VIEW OF PURIFICATOR, FINGER-TOWEL, AMICE, CORPORAL,  
AND PALL CORRECTLY FOLDED.

It is very important to fold the linens properly, because the corporal must fit into the Mass burse and the purificator must hang over the chalice.

Let us make our little offerings to Him as exquisitely beautiful as lies in our power; we expect, and receive, perfection in His great gifts to us.

## The Mission Box



Let us peep into a "Nazareth" box as it goes forth to a little Chapel on its errand of love. A stout box, tissue-lined, is carefully packed with Altar linens, one dozen of each kind being wrapped in tissue paper. The original intention was to send thirty-three pieces, in honor of the years Christ spent upon earth. We learned, however, that the priests whom we wish to assist have three, five, ten or even twenty Missions under their charge. So to the Central Station we send one large box—but not as large as is needed for the work the missionary father is doing.

Several Altar cloths, more amices, palls, and corporals, a dozen purificators and finger-towels usually go into the box. Sometimes we tuck in hand towels, a stand cover, or perhaps an Altar frontal; in another box we add the extras in the form of a few sick-call towels, a stole collar, and rejoice if able to pack an alb, a surplice or a cincture.

We have received marvelous laces woven under Italian skies; handiwork from the Canal Zone; drawn work from the West Indies. Our first box was forwarded to China, as we knew the desperate need there.

Each box contains a card reading:

**Nazareth Mission Circle**

Society of the Divine Word

TECHNY, ILLINOIS

These linens are donated  
out of the surplus in our

**NAZARETH CUPBOARD**

Kindly give the generous donors a Memento when these  
articles are first used in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

Rev. Bruno Hagspiel, S. U. A.

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THE JOY THAT MISSION BOXES BRING.



(Extracts from letters of Mission Priests.)

“Praise God for this idea of the NAZARETH MISSION CIRCLE. The demand on our Society from the foreign field is so great that we can in no wise supply sufficient linens.”



“May heaven’s choicest blessings be daily showered upon the members, noble and thoughtful souls as they are. I shall try to show myself grateful and every morning will I remember them at the Holy Sacrifice.”



“The kind offer of help through the NAZARETH MISSION CIRCLE is the first letter of the kind that I have ever received. I am isolated here; the nearest priest is eighty miles away and my next priestly neighbor is only one hundred and forty miles off. The desire of my heart is to get a central boarding school where the children could at least be prepared for First Holy Communion, but unless God is good to me, I shall not live to see this realized, as my once robust constitution is fast breaking under the drag and the draw of my Missions, six in number.”



“I had just returned from one of my missionary trips when I found the excellent parcel of Altar linens, sent me through the NAZARETH MISSION CIRCLE. Although I felt so tired and hungry and the stove was awaiting the match to start the supper cooking, I was so anxious to see what St. Joseph had sent me I could not wait, but had to find out what was in that box. You will never know, dear Father, what consolation you sent me after my long, weary trip. How did you know I wanted just the very things you sent me? May God reward our good benefactors and my dear colored children will often pray for these generous souls.”

## Just Between Stitches



Aside from the foregoing linens which are needed for the Altar (if a fabric other than linen is used for palls, purificators, and corporals, they cannot be used in the Mass) one may donate hand towels for the sacristy. These may be plain huck towels, and should have a loop of tape sewed on, for if the sacristy has only a nail on which to hang these, the tape will prevent rust spots from eating the damp towel.

Stand covers for the credence table are most acceptable gifts. A cincture, the cord which binds the alb, represents the cord wherewith Christ was bound in the Garden of Olives. This beautiful white rope is easily made by those who are handy with a crochet hook.

A lace frontal 6, 8, or 10 inches wide by 2½ yards long makes a nice gift for the decoration of the Altar. When any lace is washed for the first time, do not use indigo; the lace will absorb it and turn blue.

As the needs of the sacristy are so many and rigid economy must be practised so generally, it is surprising that the manufacturers of vestments do not make an extra front for the chasuble, as the front of this vestment wears out while the rest of the set is still quite serviceable.

Never waste a bit of linen; it is too precious. Stole protectors and sick-call towels may be made from small pieces. The making of the red crosses is greatly simplified by tacking a little square of scrim in the exact center of the linen. See that the threads of the scrim parallel with the weave of the linen and then cross-stitch the scrim. When the design is finished the scrim can be pulled out. This method gives evenness and rapidity.

A ciborium cover made of satin, in red and white—the colors of the Blessed Sacrament—is a beautiful gift, as it veils the vessel holding the Sacred Hosts. The cover may be made from small pieces, embroidered or painted, and offers to convent girls who have learned to paint and do lovely handiwork a fertile field for charity.



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## Over the Sewing Basket

As you thread your needle for this work so delightful, this need so urgent, perhaps you would like to know about others who are sewing for the Friend Who never fails us.

Although the NAZARETH MISSION CIRCLE was established but recently (1922), it has hundreds of members; members in South America, Panama, Ireland, Canada, and in every state in the Union. The youngest member was a two-weeks-old babe; the eldest, a lady over ninety-one, and her hemstitching and tatting were wonderful. As far as we know, the lady who has made the greatest number of Altar linens—but let her tell you her own story

“For many, many years, I have planned my housework, all of which I do myself, in such a way that each day has one hour or more to devote to Altar linens. I arise at 6:45, hear Mass, and set my house in order. Then I cut linen and when tired standing, sit at the machine until time to get my lunch. In the afternoon, I take some hand-sewing and call on poor or sick friends. If they are able, they, too, sew; if not, perhaps they donate a spool of thread, a bit of lace, some linen, or money. I have never asked for a donation, but when I talk about the poor little Altars in the Mission chapels, they generally try to help.

“Sometimes I invite friends to my home for a little sewing party. In company or alone, this is my greatest delight and as I work I sing: ‘Holy God we Praise Thy Name.’ Each month I send a box of Altar linens, varying in number from thirty-five to fifty pieces; always some of these are Altar cloths—as that is the greatest need of the Missions.

“God has blessed me with good health, and although I am seventy-five years of age, when I lack linen, I do extra work to make money to buy some more. I have made over three thousand eight hundred pieces for the Mission Altars.

Only at your special request have I given you the above outline of my work, hoping that it may encourage others to sew for our Blessed Lord in His Tabernacle Home.

“Asking you, therefore, not to publish my name, I remain,

“Very sincerely,

“\_\_\_\_\_”

## The Seamstress of Nazareth



Teach us your art, for Mother dear,  
Your gentle hands once made  
Those swaddling clothes the Christ-Child wore  
When in the manger laid.

You hemmed cloths for the frugal meal  
With which you were content—  
Because of His Presence Divine  
'Twas like a Sacrament.

You sewed the fleecy coverlets  
Upon His lowly bed  
Where moonbeams made a halo bright  
Around His curly head.

You made those garments, which when touched,  
Cured many as He passed;  
And those the Roman soldiers took  
When jeering lots they cast.

Teach us to fashion Altar cloths  
And all small linens bring,  
Required for the sacrifice  
Of our Sacramental King.

—Troella V. Mills.



