

MYSTAGOGY

Putting on the White Robe

APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the OCIA

*O God,
you clothe us with dignity
as your adopted sons
and daughters.
Help us to bring that
dignity unstained
into your heavenly
kingdom.*

Recall the Easter Vigil

After being baptized, the newly initiated were given white robes to wear. To complete the “look” of their new persons in Christ, they also received a small candle lit from the Paschal candle.

Probe the Mystery

People join health clubs to gain a new lease on life. Overweight or overstressed, they work out on the treadmill or using weights, sometimes under the direction of a personal trainer they have hired. If, as a result, they lose weight or sculpt their bodies anew with a much trimmer waist and a slimmed-down look, they will need an entirely new wardrobe.

Similarly, those who come up out of the waters of Baptism are new persons. They are not the same as when they went into the waters. They have a dignity now as children of God, his adopted sons and daughters. They are heirs to an eternal inheritance along with all the saints in Heaven.

It is entirely appropriate, therefore, that having been baptized they are given a white robe, for they have now joined the ranks of those angels and saints who sing the praises of God around his holy throne. A new person, a new look, a new life!

Imagine wearing that white robe all the time, right now even. You are wearing it, although perhaps not physically! What virtues are you putting into practice in your life by which the white robe of Baptism is woven into your relationships?

Savor the Sweetness of Salvation

The entire worshiping assembly at Mass does not wear robes. Some do—for example, the servers, perhaps the cantors and the choir. There are two people, however, who do celebrate Mass with white robes on: the deacon and the priest celebrant. This white robe, called an alb (which in Latin literally means “white”), is a reminder to everyone in the assembly that we are entitled to wear the white robe of Baptism throughout our lives.

If you actually wore a white robe denoting your Baptism day in and day out, would you act any differently than you do now? How do you think people would react, seeing you in a robe?

By the white robes he means the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Saint Caesarius of Arles (commenting on Revelation 7:9),
Exposition on the Apocalypse 7.9, Homily 6.

Inspire Others

As you interact with other Christians today, address them by their correct status, hail them with the words “child of God,” and continue your conversation. They may be at first startled, but then as realization dawns, a smile may grow on their faces.