

Introduction

Every year on the Solemnity of St Peter and St Paul, newly appointed archbishops from throughout the world converge on the great Basilica of St Peter in Rome to gather around the Holy Father and receive from him the pallium.

Who, according to current Church Law, is the recipient of the pallium? The recipient is, with the sole exception of the Dean of the Sacred College of Cardinals, always a metropolitan archbishop. Not all archbishops are metropolitans. A metropolitan, or a metropolitan archbishop, is himself the bishop of a diocese. A metropolitan is always an archbishop. There are many other archbishops who are not bishops of extant dioceses but rather hold titular sees – they are accorded the name of an ancient see, that no longer functions as a diocese, in recognition of their work for the Church, for example in the Holy See's diplomatic service or the Roman Curia. These archbishops are not metropolitans and are not given the right to wear the pallium, even if they had been granted one in a previous appointment. Throughout the pamphlet I shall refer to the recipient of the pallium as a metropolitan archbishop, or simply, yet correctly, refer to him as a metropolitan.

There have been, and still are, other forms of pallium apart from the one worn for so long in the Roman Rite. The pallium used by the Oriental Churches, called the *omophorion*, is made of a longer and wider cloth, marked by four red crosses. In the Oriental Churches in communion with Rome this is given by the Patriarchs to their metropolitans and bishops once the Patriarchs themselves have received the Latin pallium described above from the Roman Pontiff. The prayer recited whilst putting on the great omophorion expresses the symbolism of the garment:

You have taken upon your shoulders, O Christ, our nature that had gone astray; you have lifted it up onto your shoulders and have offered it to God the Father.

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