

Who Keeps the Altar Linens Lovely?

Once a month, parishioner France Bark experiences a soothing time of reflection while listening to classical music. No, she's not sitting beside a backyard pool, nor visiting a mesmerizing masseuse. She is wielding a household iron, serving as one of the parish's nine altar linen volunteers.

"I look forward to ironing," says France (who, like many females born in France during WWII, was named after the country). "I've always loved to iron. You can think about a lot of things, such as for Whom I'm doing it."

Seven years ago, after responding to a request in the bulletin for altar linen servers, France learned what that ministry entails.

Near the end of the week during which she serves, France picks up at the STA sacristy a bag of used altar linens. These include the corporals, which catch any crumbs from the host, the purificators used to wipe the Communion cups, finger towels, and occasionally small table linens.

At home, France rinses each piece in water that must be discarded into the garden---not down a drain. If France finds a stain, such as lipstick wiped from the Communion cups (ladies, please blot lipstick prior to receiving Communion), she erases it by rubbing with strong soap. She then puts the linens in the washing machine, but doesn't add fabric softener, as the linens should be somewhat stiff when clean. The linens are partially dried on the "no heat" setting, and then they're ready for France's favorite step.

Once the ironing is done, France takes the pieces back to the sacristy and places them in the appropriate drawers. She will have from 30 to 60 pieces, depending on how many Masses, weddings and funerals were celebrated at the church that week.

Every three months, France creates a rotating schedule for herself and the four other volunteers at STA, Marci Ariagno, Shirley Deschamps, Bea Peterson and Carmen Schembri. Regarding her fellow volunteers, France says, "The devotion of the people who do this is remarkable. I find it amazing. They're so willing to pitch in or do something extra."

Volunteers pitching in at SAG include Joan Copenhagen and Juliane Dorward.

Becky Rea is the new altar linen volunteer at OLR, having been passed the mantle from Clare Mynderse, who served in that capacity for more than 50 years. Clare began by helping Laurie Vavuris wash the linens at St. Aloysius. "I did it while working as a nurse at Stanford," says Clare. "It was something I could do at night when the children were in bed."

Currently Clare does the tablecloths for S.O.U.P., and still helps care for OLR's large altar cloths. She happens to share the same name as one of the patron saints of laundresses, Clare of Assisi.

Another patron saint of those who care for linens is Hunna, c. 7th C., daughter of the duke of Alsace, in France.

Our Altar Linen

Ministers



Clare Mynderse & friend



France Bark

Carmen
Schembri

Shirley
Deschamps

Becky Rea

Joan
Copenhagen

Marci
Ariagano

Juliane
Dorward

Bea
Peterson