

On Pins and Needles



**Caring for
and Making
Eucharistic Linens**

By Muriel Eaton



ANGLICAN DIOCESE MONTREAL

THANKS TO...

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FOREWORD

When I heard that Muriel was writing a manual on sewing Eucharistic linens, I thought that she was the perfect person to do so. As it turns out I was right! Detail oriented and passionate about the process, she has created a thorough, yet accessible guide to creating or repairing the lovely and valuable linens that so many churches need. She also shows us how to care for and maintain those pieces we have inherited and thus honor the work of those who have come before us. I hope that this inspires some of you to get involved in this ministry. I think that you will find it mutually beneficial for your parish – and yourself.

I thank Muriel for her efforts on behalf of her parish and our whole diocese.

The Right Rev'd Mary Irwin-Gibson

+ Mary

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

I was educated at a catholic convent school in Paris from kindergarten to “baccalauréat” although my parents did not attend church at all. I enjoyed the company of the sisters and insisted I wanted to stay with them while my siblings were transferring to public schools. It was there that I was taught the ABCs of drawn-thread hems. The sessions did not last very long, but I was inoculated nevertheless. At home, my mother was a pretty good, if mostly utilitarian, seamstress who managed for years to have all five of us dressed in the same “matelot” style for family parties. One of my sisters also has a long career in haute couture in Paris. She dabbles in decorative needlework as well.



We spent vacations with our grandparents somewhere in “la France profonde” where Mamie taught me knitting, tapestry and other embroidery skills. She was a very devout person who broadened my fascination with church traditions.

Fast forward over fifty years, during which time I did all kinds of needlework in my spare time, but no liturgical linens. I also became an Anglican (Episcopalian) when I got married in the US. When I moved to Canada in 2004, I joined St. George’s Church in downtown Montreal, through the choir.

Back in 2016, Rev’d Steven Mackison (our Rector) heard that I was handy with textiles and asked me to repair various heavy paraments. I restored a few altar frontals and the likes, but I do not think I am good enough to say much about them. However, since I volunteered to make new linens to replace old ones and found that to be a passion, I feel more at ease to explain how they are constructed. There are, I am sure, many schools for this type of work, but I can only talk about what I know, so this little manual is certainly not complete. The hope is that you’ll take some inspiration from it and add your own input.

If you have any questions or comments, please don’t hesitate to contact me: altarlinens@gmail.com.

WHY LINENS?

Eucharistic linens are a small market and quite expensive. The supply companies have to make a profit, of course, but a lot of churches cannot afford their prices. A sumptuary expense indeed, all the more that altars and vessels have very few standards, so textile pieces often have to be made to order. Most are mechanically made. I hear there still are congregations of sisters in Portugal and Belgium who make them, but this calling is dying out.

The smaller linens need replacing more often than the large ones. Of course, old linens are often repaired, some skillfully and some not so much. While too many repairs make any piece look like a rag, both repairs and linen-making are fiscally and ecologically responsible.

Making linens for church is somewhat simpler than projects of that type for home use. The skills needed are easy to learn, even with minimal sewing knowledge, and there are many websites with sketches, pictures and videos showing you what to do.

ADVANTAGES OF MAKING LINENS BY HAND

- ◆ The process has a meditative quality which is likely to bring you relaxation and contentment.
- ◆ It is an opportunity to learn or freshen up an old skill.
- ◆ It is a self-contained, worthwhile hobby that produces tangible results.
- ◆ It is a green alternative to future piles of paper napkins or paper towel rolls on the altar.
- ◆ It allows you to contribute to your church while working from anywhere.
- ◆ It keeps a tradition alive.
- ◆ It makes both a very useful and priceless gift to your parish.
- ◆ It's a comfortable and enjoyable activity, especially with the right eyewear (see page 14).

WRITING A MANUAL

The process of teaching by demonstration is rather easy: you sit with the person (or group) who wants to learn from you, and you can repeat the instructions several different ways and point to what you are talking about until the student shows that he or she “got it”. However, when, in a fit of madness, you decide to explain the same thing in writing, you have only ONE way to get through to the readers, whose levels of knowledge can vary.

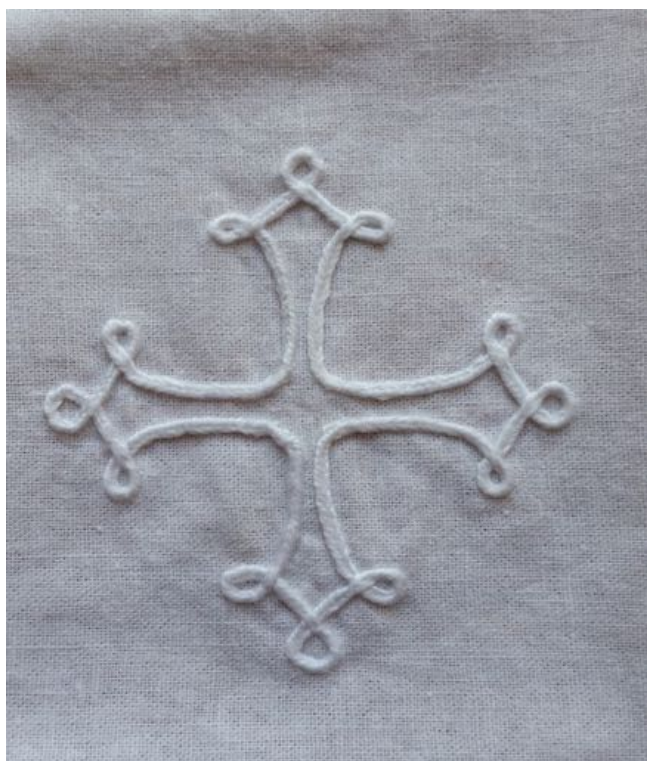
The resulting manual is as detailed as I could think of, with descriptions and recommendations to reach both accomplished embroidererers and beginners. As I worked many years in two Altar Guilds and gleaned quite a few tips and hacks beyond sewing; it seemed appropriate to include the use and care of the linens as well.

I do not expect you to use this manual exclusively. If parts of this manual are murky, a search on the internet will offer different explanations which might be more helpful. The goal here is to put your foot in the stirrup and your hand on linens.

I have no professional authority on needlework and was not even contemplating such a task until I realized the void in my own diocese. Let’s hope you’ll find this quirky attempt entertaining at least. Your comments are welcome! I hope for any critical remarks pointing to a better second edition.

I have adopted the tone and casual language level used in most internet blogs, hoping to make your reading more pleasurable.

I thought of translating this manual into French, my mother tongue, but I gave up. What I have done instead is to add a glossary of technical terms used herein.



Occitan Cross / Heavy Chain Stitch

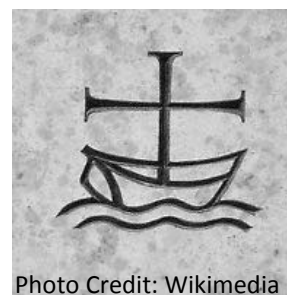


Photo Credit: Wikimedia

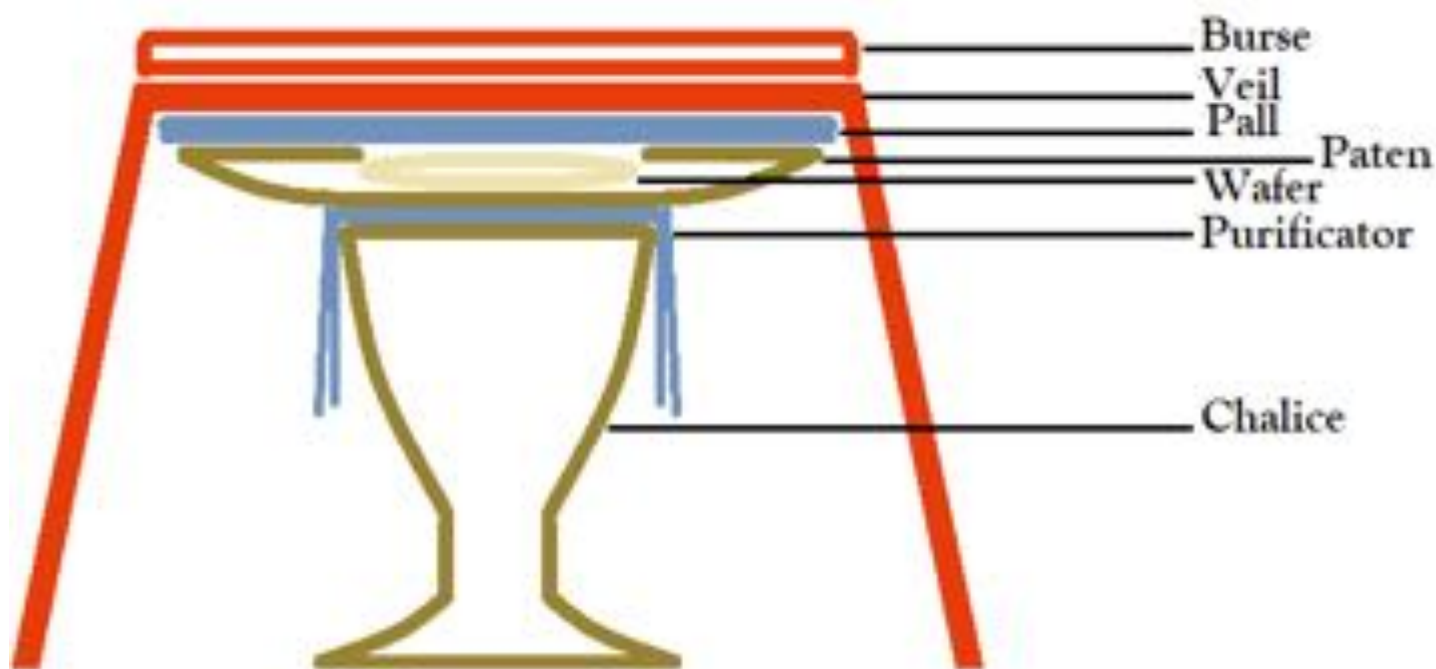
In the spirit of inclusion

Like most Christians, I have visited many churches of other denominations beyond my own parishes. This manual is written from that viewpoint and it is intended to be ecumenical.

Heads up to the Roman Catholics out there: St. Clare of Assisi is the patron saint of needlework and St. Veronica overlooks laundry.

THE VESTED CHALICE

This diagram is approximate but should give an idea to those of you who have not worked in a sacristy before. The burse and veil (in red) are not linens (they are part of the liturgical season sets, so they are heavy, colored and embroidered textiles), while the purificator and the pall are linens (drawn in blue here). The burse contains a corporal and – often – an extra purificator.



TYPES OF LINENS AND DIMENSIONS

Linen	Size (cm)	Notes
Purificator	30 x 30	Used to wipe the chalice mostly. Ornament fits in a square in the center, so the linen wears out evenly. Others put it at a corner. The ornament should be around 5-6 cm ² , so there is plenty of fabric left for usage.
Mandatory (Hand Towel)	30 x 43 or larger	Used to dry the priest's hands at the beginning on the Eucharist and held over the acolyte's left hand. The ornament is in the middle of the bottom half.
Corporal	50 x 50	Placed over the fair linen at the beginning of the Eucharist. No ornament in the center unless very flat; place it instead in the center of the bottom third. The embroidery should not create holes in the fabric because this linen is intended to catch crumbs, but it can be pretty big – five to six inches square.
Pall	15 x 15	This is used to protect the wafer in the paten and square the vested chalice (see diagram above). It is constructed as a flat pocket into which one inserts a slightly smaller piece of rigid material. The embroidery can be as big as you want on this piece.

Linen	Size (cm)	Notes
Baptism Towel	30 x 45	Same as mandatory. Ornament should recall water; a shell is easiest.
Ciborium Veil	Depends on height/width of the Ciborium	This may be a round, square, or cross-shaped linen with an embroidered hole in the center to insert the standing cross found on the lid of the ciborium. Ornamentation varies from simple to extravagant.
Fair Linen	(Altar width) x (Altar length + up to 40")	A long job indeed, since it covers the entire altar and hangs over the sides. The hem looks better when it is wide and it needs not be done with drawn-threads, but the ends hanging down both sides of the altar can be made special adding lace or anything fancy. Those linens often present five ornaments, which help in placing the linen on the altar. The main ornament is exactly at the center of the cloth and the other four placed close to the corners of the altar. A cross design is best for the center, but the corners are up to your fancy, as long as they are mutually identical.
Credence Cloth	Depends	Some credences are more like a shelf on the wall and the ornamentation should leave the use area absolutely flat. If you wish to make an asymmetrical cloth so the front hangs over with an ornament, some weights should be inserted in the hem on the opposite side.
Cere Cloth	Altar dimensions	This is a lining not much in use nowadays. The word comes from "cire" (wax in French) because the altar was waxed and the fair linen could be stained by that wax. It obviously can be made out of anything and without ornaments. It should be as white as possible.
Dust Covers	Altar dimensions	Those are put over the fair linen when the altar is not in use. Anything goes, including a quilt. Remember, though, that some heavy candelabras will be placed on it.

The list above is surely incomplete and there used to be more special linens around the altar, as documented in old parsons' handbooks. It is worth the research if you are interested in that aspect of church history.

As long as the end product is perfectly square, the measurements above are not absolute. A variation of a centimeter or two is acceptable. You probably should look around your church sacristy and ask your rector or altar guild for their needs and desired sizes. A take-home communion set requires smaller linens – ask the future owner for dimensions. The width of the hems depend on the size of the finished product. At least most of these are rectangles and squares, which are the easiest to make.



This cross is in hardanger style. It was made by partially withdrawing some threads in both directions, then embroidering each square and the perimeter.

CARE AND LAUNDRY

The smaller linens (purificators and towels) are laundered each time they are used and should be placed in a pan of soapy water immediately after the service and stay wet until they are laundered; because red or white wine stains become permanent if left to dry. I cannot emphasize this point enough.

If you are taking smaller linens home, wring them out and place in a plastic bag for transport. Others (corporals and fair linen) are washed as the need arises and replaced often before a major holy day. Small pieces are hand-washed with a regular laundry detergent, maybe adding a booster, which should be effective if they have soaked awhile.

A large linen should be inspected for stains and pre-treated, then machine washed on the white cycle along with one white or light-colored bath towel only (do not launder anything else with it). No dryer – on any cycle – because if any stains are left, they will bake into the fiber. Instead, hang it (folded loosely) over a towel to dry.

Avoid bleach as it weakens fabrics over time. If you must, dilute it in cold water. Rinse and air dry small pieces on a towel. Anything on the altar should be cleaned at least as soon as there's been a spillage or a stain noticed. In any case, they should be laundered regularly just to prevent the stains that were invisible before the laundry suddenly make their appearance (an apparition, really) when you are just about to iron them.

STAINS

There are three common types of stains: wine, candle wax and lipstick. Wine and lipstick will come away easily if the linen is kept wet immediately after use. You may use laundry soap or detergent, adding a booster if you feel the need to. If any stain does not come out after a day of soaking, try hydrogen peroxide. In the case of wax, stretch the stained part of the fabric over a pan and pour boiling water over the stain. Launder immediately or keep in a pan with detergent until you can launder. You could use a small amount of diluted bleach to treat mold, which is a grey to black stain, but I prefer to soak the area in rubbing alcohol for a few minutes and watch it. Launder immediately after this process. Yellowed old linens can be revived with a hot bath of sodium percarbonate (which is “green”). I use a plastic basin in the microwave for this process.

IRONING and STARCHING

When completely dry, iron on the wrong side and over a thick terry towel with proper setting, following warp and weft and never in a diagonal. You can mist lightly to help with your job, but that's it. Water can scorch. When folding, do not iron down the folds, especially anything that contains linen, as those fibers will eventually weaken and break over time. If you give a good shot of steam on the wrong side of embroideries, it will make them puff out in the towel on the other side and you'll have a nicer finish. Check that your steam comes out clean. I hardly trust my own irons on that and prefer not to take chances.

When ironing a fair linen or any long piece, a good hack is to use a clean trough (a plastic gardenbox) at your feet and either a table or a bed to lay out what has been ironed.

Starching is generally not recommended. Certainly NOT on purificators and towels because it makes them less absorbent and often difficult to unfold. A light starching on fair linen and credence covers might help. Generally, leave starching for linen vestments.

OLD LINENS

So, you've been given an old piece with obvious problems. The over-all aspect of the piece and your own skill level should help you decide if repairs are worth it. Some repairs will only make the piece worse and another stitch would be useless. Sometimes, the area embroidered can be cut out and placed on another, new-linen, appliqué-fashion.

As I mentioned before, old yellowed fabrics can be made white again with sodium percarbonate, which is a mild, but effective bleach contained in Oxiclean products.

“Retired” linen is to be burned. Ask your priest about this procedure. The “remains” are compostable.

Another end-of-life idea is to put the piece in a frame and hang it in the sacristy or another place where people can enjoy it and hopefully it will be either burned or rescued in future centuries.

NEW LINENS

Certain linens have to make a formal entrance into service: fair linen, pall and corporal. Purificators and towels do not. However, if any linen has been lovingly made by a parishioner, the priest can elect to make a little fuss over it (and mine does!) and treat them as the first three.

Unless a whole new linen package has to be used immediately – say for the consecration of a church – it seems the best time for a linen to make an entrance is the First Sunday of Advent, right at the Offertory. The linen (or linens) are brought up to the altar possibly by the donor, together with the collection plates. The celebrant says a prayer of benediction over them and uses them immediately in the Eucharist that follows.

Personally, it feels like children leaving home and going into service. Sure, I will see them here and there and have news afterwards, but they're on their own now and not mine anymore.



This purificator's central motif is actually from Japan and represents a hidden cross. It was the emblem (紋 or “mon”) of the daimyos of Satsuma, a province where a lot of people kept their Christian faith alive in spite of the shōgun's interdiction. These people were called “kakure-kirisuto” (Christians in hiding).

I have not heard that the Satsuma daimyos themselves continued to be Christians, but it is uncanny that their 紋 should look like a hidden cross.

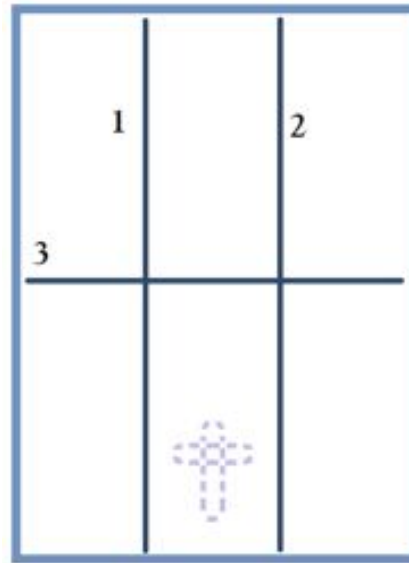
The motif was embroidered with a rope stitch.

The perimeter was made on three rows of drawn-threads and took a while to complete.

HOW TO FOLD EUCCHARISTIC LINENS

Towel

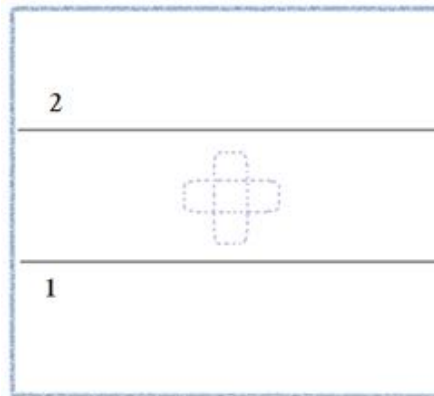
Folded in three along the length, then in two along the width with the central embroidery facing out.



Towel placed face-down

Purificator

Folded in three and three with the central embroidery facing out. I was taught that you followed the sign of the Cross. The result is square.



Purificator placed face down



Embroidery at bottom

Corporal

Folded like purificators, but with the central embroidery inside of the first fold.



Embroidery face up



Fair Linen

Generally not folded when not in use. It is stored on a roll so there are no creases anywhere. The roll can be a pool noodle or a wide carton tube in a cotton sheath, slightly longer than the width of the linen, and a protective piece of cloth added over the linen. If removing from the altar temporarily, drape it over the communion railing.

MAKING LINENS

YOUR WELL-BEING FIRST

Most of the time, you can carry your notions and project in a plastic sleeve or box so you can work anywhere there is a chair and a table nearby.

Give yourself small goals rather than rush through your work. Enjoy the process! It is perfectly normal to spend three-month's worth of spare time on a single small piece.

Planning and preparing sometimes takes as long as actual stitching, and it may be just as well, because you'll find that will save you a lot of trouble down the line. Once you are actually embroidering, you will enjoy it a lot more.

Like many hobbies, sewing linens by hand is contemplative work. No wonder whole convents dedicated themselves to it.

This type of work feels like pregnancy: there have been times when having finally sewn the last stitch, washed, dried and ironed my piece, I could finally gaze at it with the same feeling as when I looked for the first time at my first newborn baby. I certainly wish you the same feeling of achievement.



This is my vantage point in the summer when I work sitting on the family's country home terrace.

While you are making a new linen, it does not matter how clean your hands are, the whole piece is going to look dirty – fabric and embroidery floss both – and stains will happen. The grime will come out easily if you wash it first when the hem is done and again when you are finished with the embroideries. Remember that those linens are destined to be washed often, so don't hesitate to do it. If you are showing your work to enough people (and you should!), it will come back to you ready to wash again!

If you have a camera handy, do take pictures of your piece while making it and when it is completed. At some point, it will not be yours any more and you will want to document your work and have a memory of it.

I also hope that you have some support. If you are an introvert, you are on your own, but sharing with a few people, particularly those who would enjoy looking at your work, will give you a boost. Your own spouse may not be too interested, but some of your friends will be.



Some hem in the making. I forgot which linen it was!

A VISION ON EYESIGHT

Assuming that many among you readers might hesitate to get started because your sight is not as good as it used to be, there is a way around even the most severe presbyopia. And even if your sight is perfect, you should consider this chapter to avoid straining your eyes. It was a revelation to me and my stitching was immediately improved when I discovered what could be done. So, here we go:

Options I Tried	Verdict
Reading glasses	Will need to offer a magnification over X3. X5 is much better. No posture problem.
Magnifier with strap around the neck	Well-known in the embroidery world. Awkward (you can't move) and not enough magnification. Causes posture problems.
Clip-on table light with magnifier	OK if you are happy with X2.5 to X5.0 magnification. You might freeze in your posture, since the lamp does not move with you.
Jeweler's goggles	My favourite. Magnification is X10 minimum. Fit over glasses. I use ONE lens over my good eye. My set is cheap: around \$20.

I will often point to the use of those lenses (goggles) in the course of my explanations.

My own students use them all the time, even the young ones with no eyesight problem.

Any optician will tell you that you are better off using those lenses and they do not ruin your eyesight at all.

They spare it instead.

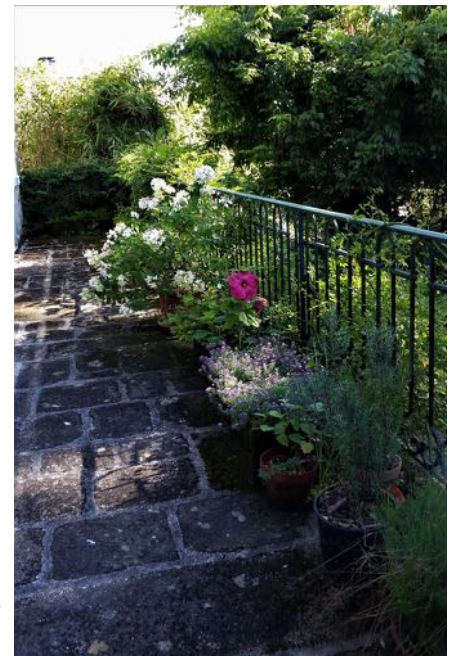
Besides, these goggles may prove very handy for other uses around the house.



LIGHT

Another *sine qua non* factor is plenty of light. When the weather permits, sitting outside in the shade is the best. Next to that is being close enough to a window.

This is my favourite spot to work on linens — on the terrace overlooking the park in summer.



CREATIVITY AND INSPIRATION

Many of us have bought embroidery or tapestry kits in the past. A kit not only contains all you need, but the most convenient thing is that the design is also printed on the cloth you are to embroider. You merely execute the pattern as shown and very little planning is needed. Most of these patterns are profane and, to my knowledge, even if a few represent a whole Bible scene, you won't find anything suitable for the linens you want to make.

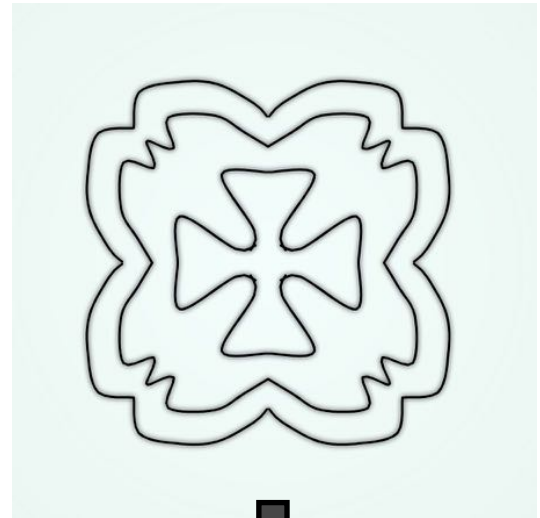
Hence one has to come up with a design and transfer it to the fabric. You can find designs online, take pictures of existing linens or architectural elements in churches, or come up with your own.

When you sketch your idea, there are websites where one can multiply a given drawing like a kaleidoscope. Friends and family members might be better than you are at this type of work, or they may be better at geometry than you are. Don't be afraid to ask for help.

However.... project sketches – especially if you are new to this – should be simple enough to translate as an embroidery. If you are offered a printed design, then that too has to be studied, so you know how you'd manage it with a needle.

There are plenty of how-to's and ideas for patterns online, as well as explanation for various stitches. If you need help in deciding or executing, please let me know. You may already have some impressive skills in whitework, appliqués, tatting, Richelieu lace and what have you. I am an apprentice Tulle lace-maker and I have been able to insert some of that lace into linens I have sewed. If you are a specialist in some suitable category of needlework, your skills can seriously take white linen making to another level.

You certainly should visit websites such as Pinterest for inspiration, but also make sure to look for embroidery techniques from other countries: the Poles, Russians, Portuguese, Italians, French (*bien sûr*), Turks, English and Irish take all this to the wow! levels. But don't be intimidated; with practice, most of those skills are not that hard to learn. Be patient with yourself.



This is a pall I designed online. The heavy chain stitch was used for the outermost lines and a plain satin stitch for the cross.

I like precision, particularly with minute stuff, so embroidery is right up my alley. When I start a job, I am determined to finish it. Sometimes I decide that what I am doing does not look right – even if I already have spent days on it – and that another type of stitch or thread (for instance) would look much better. In the end, I'd like to have something to be proud of, so I will undo the work that I already spent so much time on and start over.

SEWING MACHINES (Please don't!)

Sure, I have one and I use it too, but so far not on church linens. I would use it only on huge pieces, such as fair linens and some credence covers, and that would only be for hemming those pieces.

I do not think machine embroidery on such small pieces is worthwhile, unless you have already mastered the technique and have the best possible machine to do it. One problem is that threads used with sewing machines are made of polyester, rayon and the likes, which are foreign to me. I think there is no canon against those thread types, but if you choose to use them, the result must be worth it: beautiful, yes, but it could also go through a nuclear blast with no trouble.

I have noticed some homemade linens with crosses made with several layers of the widest stitch available on a regular sewing machine and the only way I could excuse that was that the maker was sewing this on the eve of a bishop's visit to his or her church and was pressed for time. By now, you have realized that I am partial to hand-stitching.

EMBROIDERY THREADS—General

Cotton is best, the simplest and easiest to get.

Floss is the most common embroidery thread. It comes in a slender skein and the best-known brand is DMC. The floss is six-ply, so it can be divided by two or three. The six strands have very little torsion. Floss is generally used for tapestry work, but it is workable in linens too.

Crochet or lace yarn comes in a variety of fineness and should not be divided like floss because of the torsion, but it becomes an excellent embroidery thread with the right needle. I use a fine yarn for embroidered hems and a thicker one for the rest of the linen. Those yarns are more durable.

The color should be bright white, just like the fabric. If, in spite of the choice, the hue looks somewhat different, laundry will fix that. If it does not, just pretend you intended it to look that way.

It would be best to test your stitches with both floss and yarn ahead of using them in a linen you are making. By now, I have a huge collection of different types of cotton yarns and I prefer them over floss.

EMBROIDERY THREADS—Colours

This manual talks mostly about white embroidery (white work), but it seems that coloured embroideries are suitable in Anglican, Lutheran, Presbyterian and Roman Catholic churches, maybe others. However, it is a matter of taste from parish to parish, and if you want to use color, you have to check with your church that they would welcome it.

If there is to be colour, it is most often a deep red, or gold and silver or combinations of those. I must admit I have not tried colours yet, but if I were to, I would keep in mind that colours pop out more and the overall design should probably be even simpler and smaller than what I would do in white. Unlike other threads, gold and silver require some practice and testing before you can use them.

Think ahead about laundry as well, and do test your floss or yarn by sewing a bunch of stitches on a cotton cloth and do a boiling test on it. Did it run? Did the floss shrink? No problem? You've made it to embroidery heaven.

NOTIONS YOU WILL NEED

- Small pointy embroidery scissors, fussy-cut type
- Plain, **sharp** sewing needles, and others depending on the threads/floss/yarns you will use
- A few long thick pins with a good head
- Any coloured threads, at least two colors, plus white
- Needle-nose tweezers
- Embroidery hoop
- Measuring tape
- Embroidery fabric pencil for temporary markings
- Embroidery floss or other suitable yarns.

OTHER ACCESSORIES

- Good quality compass
- Pencil and eraser
- Graph paper
- Metal T-square
- Caliper
- Magnifier(s) or strong reading glasses (see p. 14)
- Iron and Ironing table
- White terry towel

Scrap Fabric

You may already have the fabric you need right there at home. If it looks suitably new, why not?

A bunch of white cotton table napkins were recently turned into material for my students. I simply took out the corner embroideries and washed them. Bedsheets can be used, but the weave could be too fine. A stained tablecloth may have areas that stayed clean.

The finer the fabric, the finer your embroidery thread should be. If you do not know what it is made out of, take a fabric thread and do the flame test described on the next page. If the fabric has never been washed (or you're not sure if it has been) make sure to wash it before you work with it, as it could shrink or invisible stains reappear.

FABRICS

Fiber Contents

- Linen
- Linen-cotton blend
- Cotton

Linens should be absorbent, particularly the smaller pieces. This is why polyester is not recommended, as it just smears liquids.

Silk is seldom found in altar linens.

In my opinion, a linen/cotton blend is the best of both worlds.

Colour

Bright white, in case you asked.

Fabric Weight

Medium to fine. The finer the fabric, the shorter the piece's lifespan.

Weave

Linen weave is the plainest, the most common and the best for your linens.

Weaving patterns such as twill or satin are difficult to embroider by hand and should certainly not be used on the smaller linens.

See next page for more on weave.

Honeycomb or Waffle Weave

This weave is rare these days as it has been replaced with terry cloth. But it can be considered for a baptism towel since it is the most absorbent.

Because of the thickness, embroideries on the front can be invisible on the back.

Aida cloth

Known to cross-stitchers, this type of cloth cannot be used. The weave is too open and the fabric too stiff for altar purposes.

WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT FABRICS

Warp and Weft

Warp, (which visually rhymes with “harp”) refers the threads lined up on the loom.

Weft, or woof, is the other thread on the shuttle.

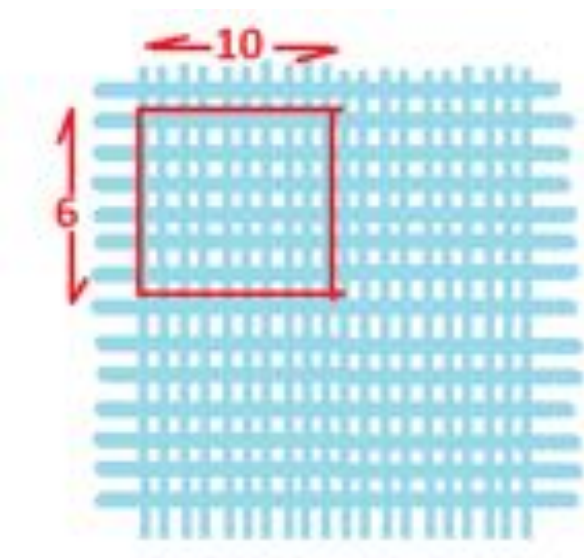
Warp threads are often stronger than those on weft.

If you notice a slant in the weaving, this can be fixed with a T-square and iron with steam.

Even and Uneven Weaves

The warp/weft ratio should be as close to 1/1 as possible, meaning that in a given square, the number of warp and weft threads is the same. It is a little easier for beginners if they are, because calculations will be the same in both directions.

The linen/cotton blend I use most is seven for warp and five for weft. In case you have a similar piece of cloth, reminders and tips are provided for hemming and embroidering this type of weave under those rubrics.



Example of uneven weave

Fabric Contents Test

Pull out a thread out of BOTH warp and weft since they could be different fibers. Bring the tip of each thread close to a flame and watch:

If it burns to ashes, it is vegetal. Cotton burns faster than linen.

If it beads up or melts, it is synthetic.

Wool and silk smell when hot.

Rayon burns easily but silk does not.

Shrink Testing

It is important to verify the shrinkage, especially if your end-product has to fit certain dimensions.

Use a piece of the fabric to test, like a square you measure – say 15 x 15 cm. Wash it in hot water (use your microwave to bring it to boil), cool it immediately and back to hot and immediately cold a couple of times more. Rinse and dry. Iron just to flatten it then measure it again. Is it still 15 x 15 cm?

Cotton and wool are well-known shrinking fibers, but the industry seems to pre-shrink fabrics nowadays. You should find rather little shrinkage if the fabric was manufactured recently. But then again, better safe than sorry.

Dry-Cleaning

Just in case you wondered about this, fabrics made of natural fibers are usually laundered, and it is especially true of white linens. Heavy fabrics such as the colored textiles used for altar frontals, chasubles and the likes are dry-cleaned. Any material that has been dry-cleaned cannot be laundered after that process.

CUTTING THE FABRIC

Sewing Allowance

The sewing allowance is between 2.5 to 4 cm for a purificator or a towel and 5 cm for corporals (and proportionally much wider for the larger linens) – this, of course, if you intend to make drawn-thread hems (which last a long time) or a basic hem.

If you go for a rolled, festooned or scalloped edge, you will not need so much sewing allowance.

However, to make sure that the end product is perfectly straight, all cuts and hems should be made along the one same fabric thread (warp-wise and weft-wise). Those of you who have taken actual sewing or tailoring classes know how important this is.

Drawn Threads and Pulled threads

“Drawn” means that some fabric threads are actually removed (withdrawn) from the warp or weft or both. This method is used for fancy hems (Venetian hems or Hardanger embroidery, for instance).

“Pulled” means that the embroidery thread is pulled so tight that the fabric threads are separated, creating voids in the fabric – a well-known craft in the U.K.

However, the word “pull” in this manual describes often the gesture to withdraw threads.

DRAWING THREADS—First Step

First, decide how much of the fabric piece will eventually be folded in the hem.

For instance, that would be a generous 3 cm for a purificator or a towel (so 3 cm total hem allowance). Later on, you will need to fold it twice over in equal parts so the hem area will actually have three layers.

If you go with 3 cm, that is the line away from the edge of the fabric from which you will start drawing out the fabric threads.

The drawn-thread hem is prepared before the hem folds are creased down with an iron. This is why this chapter is found here.

If you are not sure, remove one thread or more from the edge of the fabric until you have a perfect edge, with the same warp or weft thread running from end to end. Cut away any resulting fringes.

In drawn-thread hems, the “sewing allowance” is going to be partially included in overall dimensions, but since we most often do not need an exact - say - 30 x 30 piece, it does not really matter.

If you make a small snip on one edge of the fabric and then rip it, the rip should follow a straight line between the same two fabric threads on its own in either direction, BUT it might distort some of the fabric area.

If the selvage contains threads of another color, cut it away and do not include it in your calculations.

**According to my students,
taking threads out of the fabric
is the most fun part of the work!
You will need your goggles
to see the fabric threads clearly.**

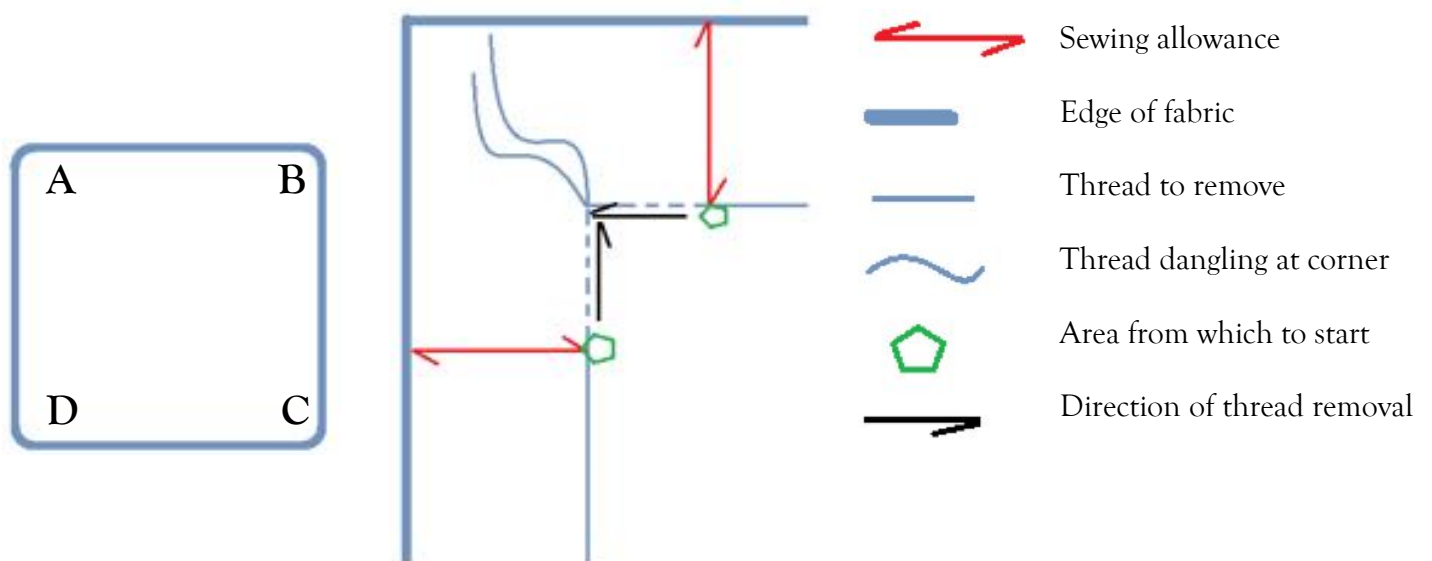
The explanations in the next couple of pages are going to seem pretty fastidious to many among you. I spared NO details because you might never have done this before. However, the process itself is not that complicated, so not to worry.

REMOVING THREADS— First Steps

1. At the first corner (A), carry the hem dimension to the edge of the fabric with your measuring tape or caliper and find the parallel thread which will be taken out first. Use a pin to raise that thread.
2. Remove the measuring tape and look closely where your pin has raised the thread. Cut the loop.
3. Start unweaving that thread towards the nearest corner. Don't do too much yet -at this point, it is just for visual support.
4. Turn the fabric around 90° and do steps 1, 2 and 3 again, so you are working on the same corner but from another direction.
5. This time, you can pick out the threads from both directions until both threads meet.
6. Leave the threads you picked towards the corner dangling away.
7. Now go to the diagonally opposite corner (C) and repeat steps 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6.
8. You then continue removing the same four fabric threads until you get close to one of the other two corners and the lines cross each other's paths, BUT NOT BEYOND, since you will want dangling threads at all corners.
9. To be sure you do not remove too much, start alternating between two lines that are about to cross each other's path. Anywhere in the middle you can discard the thread you removed rather than try to save it, except that close to corners, keep a minimum of half an inch dangling thread at the corner, the rest can be wasted.

(Continued next page)

How to start at corners A and C



You noticed that you do not make those measurements markings at all four corners – only the two that are diagonally opposite. This is why you started at corners A and C, since B and D will be determined by the first two.

Removing a thread is akin to unweaving. It is easier on your hands if the pin you are using has a big head. Needle-nose tweezers are good too.

This operation will take you some time, but you should end up with a piece of fabric that has two fabric threads dangling at each corner and four lines appearing where you removed the first four threads.

When you're done removing the first thread from all four sides, remove a second thread from all four sides too, also leaving their ends dangling at the corners. That second thread should be on the center-side of the first one, because you have already measured your sewing allowance. This operation will be way easier than the first one and will leave you with a better visual of the lines when you iron the hem folds.

You want to know (in case it crossed your mind) that, even if you have been able to remove a single thread from top to bottom, it is not worth saving. The reason is that those fabric threads are not mercerized and will break easily. Pass them on to your cat instead.

Sometimes, a drawn thread will leave some of its fibers behind. I call it a ghost thread and remove it.

Again, pay attention to the dangling threads. They are not only important to avoid fraying, but their number matches the number of threads you have removed, in case you lost track.



Beautiful dangling threads. Sister Marcelle du Sauveur would have been so happy to see that!

REMOVING THREADS— Last Steps

Now you have a decision to make and you have three options, starting with the easiest:

If you leave it at two threads drawn, you can get away with stitching the hem on one side only (following the instructions further below). There is an idea given under *Thread Bundles* (page 26).

If you take another four to five threads, you will need to stitch the hem AND the other side of the line (instructions starting on page 26). If you are new to drawn-thread hems, it is not that hard.

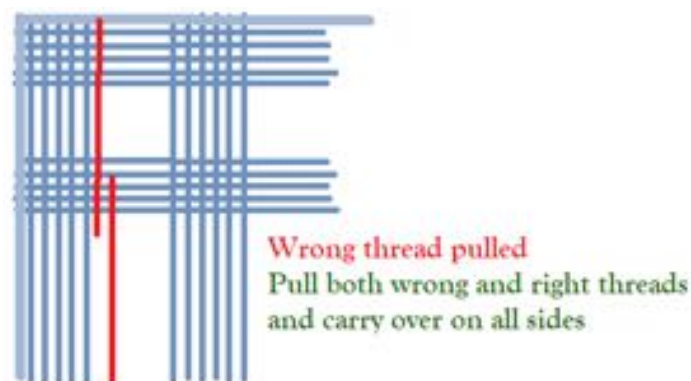
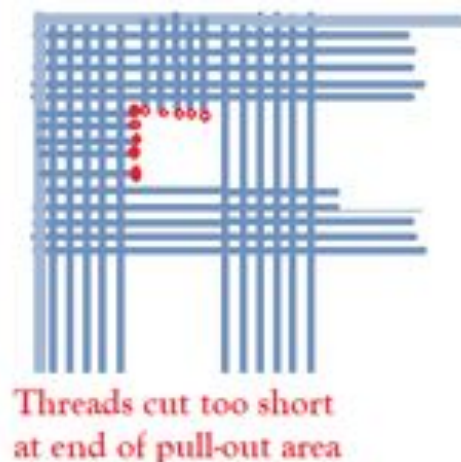
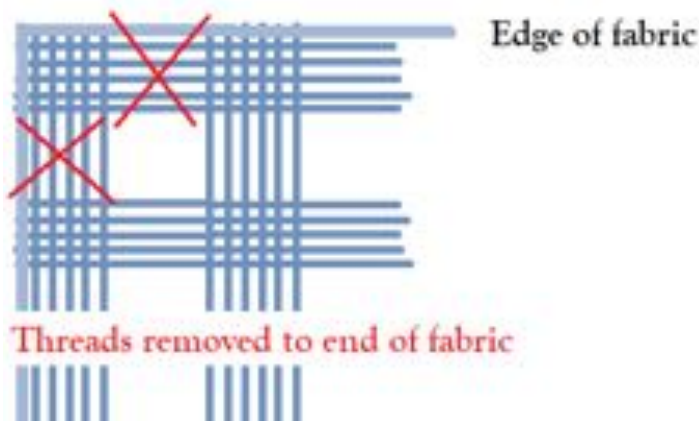
If you take more threads out, it means that you want a really fancy hem and you're on your own there, although I have some tips later on.

Keep in mind that if your piece is small, a gigantic hem area is not a good idea. Remember that your work looks better understated. Fancy hems are particularly good on corporals and on the bottom side of a towel.

Do not get carried away if you are new to this type of hem. Your mind can play tricks on you if you are not vigilant while you pick threads. I talk from experience!

If your fabric is not an even-weave, you may want to pull an extra thread or two on parallel sides so the empty spaces at the corners are square. If you go for a fancy hem with tons of threads removed, the number of extra disappearing fabric threads could be higher or lower, so the whole piece looks even.

COMMON DRAWN THREADS ERRORS



Here are three types of mistakes which can happen if you are not vigilant through the process.

OTHER TYPES OF HEMS AND BORDERS

There are several types of hems to choose from. I am partial to drawn-thread hems because they can take a lot of wear (and it is a long tradition), but if you are working with a fine fabric, rolled hems (like old handkerchiefs), festooned and scalloped edges are all in order, as long as it does not add too much bulk, particularly when the piece is folded. As I said earlier, I do not recommend the use of a sewing machine, unless you are pressed for time, because the end-product may not look as neat as a hand-sewn edge. Those edges and borders' beauty comes from the regularity of your stitching, rather than the complexity of the stitch.

A rolled hem is a great stitch if the fabric is fine and your piece small. There are videos online to show you how it is done. Regular sewing threads are used for this type of hem.

A tight blanket or button-hole stitch can be made with regular thread, but you may also use floss or cordonnet, as long as it does not feel too thick. Work your stitch line close to the edge of the fabric and cut away all of the fabric below your stitches when the row is completed. The use of both magnifying lens and fussy-cut scissors is advised.

A scalloped edge is probably the fanciest. You want to measure and mark the scallops before you get started so they will be symmetrical.

You can also attach strips of lace around the piece, particularly if you are making a credence cloth. In that case, it would be best if the lace was made of natural fibers, since a synthetic lace will not age the same way as the rest of the piece. On small linens, lace is probably too much, and there is a risk it might eventually tear.

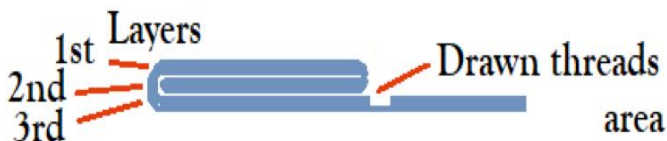
FOLDING THE HEM—(drawn-thread or plain)

If you have not done so already, cut away any fringes at the edge of the fabric before you iron. Fold the outer edge (your sewing allowance) twice equally and evenly.

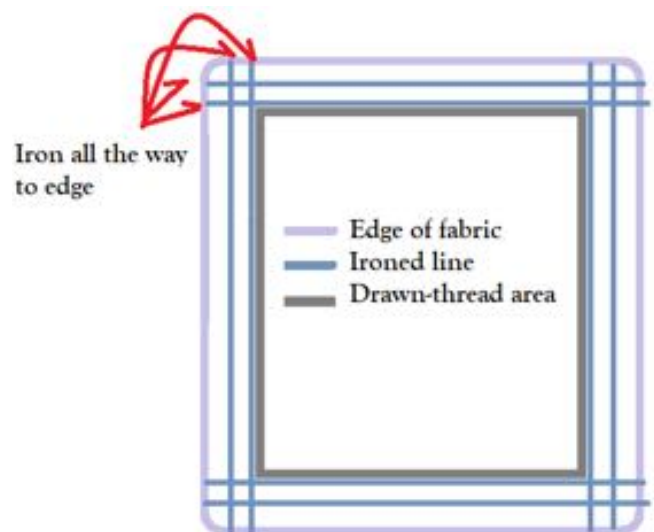
If you have drawn threads, the first fold is flush with the line where thread has been removed. The line and the empty squares at corners should stay visible.

If you are short on fabric and making a plain hem you can get away with a short fold first, followed by a bigger one.

Iron those folds down all the way to all edges. Ironing a narrow hem is tricky and your fingers may be too close to the heat. Use any tool in your sewing box which can hold down the fold as you iron it: scissors, tweezers, etc.



Later on, you will need to clearly see those ironed lines crossing at the corners, so insist in those areas.



MITERED CORNERS— (drawn-thread and plain hems)

Piling the ends of the hem folds on top of one another is a well-known method... which does not work. Those corner “stones” are much too bulky and the stitches are visible no matter what.

A mitered corner is shown on the front of this manual. The right side is plain and the wrong side shows a short diagonal seam. They also have three layers like the rest of the hem, instead of six when piled up. Quilt-makers are familiar with this elegant technique.

Starting where we were with the two hem folds ironed down, here is what to do next:

Unfold the fabric at the corners and now fold it in a diagonal so this new mountain fold is on the same side as the two ironed valley folds.

Pin the new (and temporary) fold along the outer ironed fold, making sure that all the iron lines on both front and back are above one another as exactly as possible.

Thread a needle with a common white thread and make a small knot at one end.

Start a back stitch at the edge of the temporary diagonal fold where it meets the inner ironed fold. Stitch along a line at right angle of the diagonal fold and stop sewing when you reach the outer ironed fold, but no further. Stop your thread with a knot.

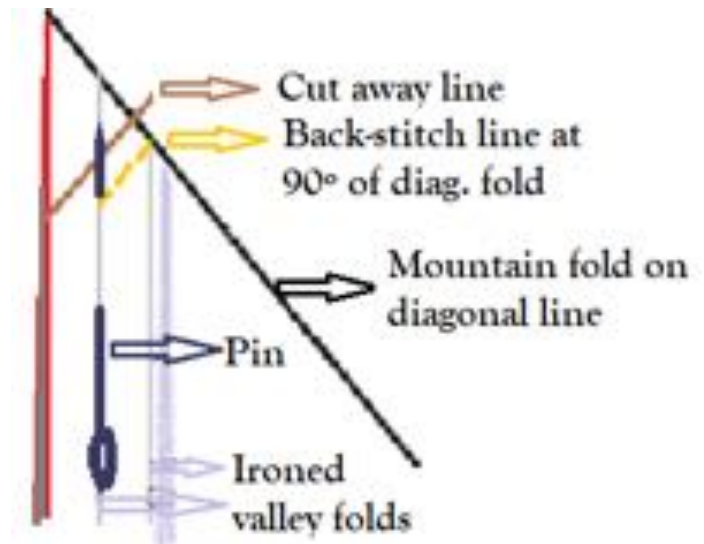
Take the pin out and cut the point parallel to your stitch line as close as is safely feasible. Reverse the fold and use a blunt-point tool to push out the corner.

Repeat on the other three corners.

If this is your very first mitered corner -use a piece of scrap cloth to practise on.

If you are going for the drawn-thread hems, please read *Finishing the Corners* on the next page.

It is only once the mitered corners are finished that you will then baste all sides down as ironed. If you are making a plain hem (which takes less time) instead of a drawn-thread hem, you can baste and sew it down with your hem stitch at this point. Make sure your stitches are small and very regular.



This picture shows the back of a finished mitered corner.

FINISHING MITERED CORNERS—Drawn-thread hems

By now you have a square cloth with a defined hem, mitered corners almost done and empty spaces there where some fabric threads (FTs hereafter) are dangling. Make sure you “unweave” those threads from each other all the way to the corner of the piece so you have a perfect square.

The general idea is to enclose the dangling FTs to prevent fraying and secure all layers together. You may cut away some of those fabric threads to about one cm from the fabric so you don’t pack so much that you would feel big bumps under the fabric. Using a needle or a pin, push them out of sight under the folded edge.

I would advise that you wear your goggles to see clearly what you are doing. Baste those corners from right to left making sure that the folded edge is flush with the edge of the empty space in the bottom layer, particularly at the end of the corner seam. An option, if you test this first on a scrap piece of fabric, is to use your old stapler as a basting tool: simply pivot the bottom plate of your stapler so the staples flatten out instead of fold in. It makes a very convenient pin.

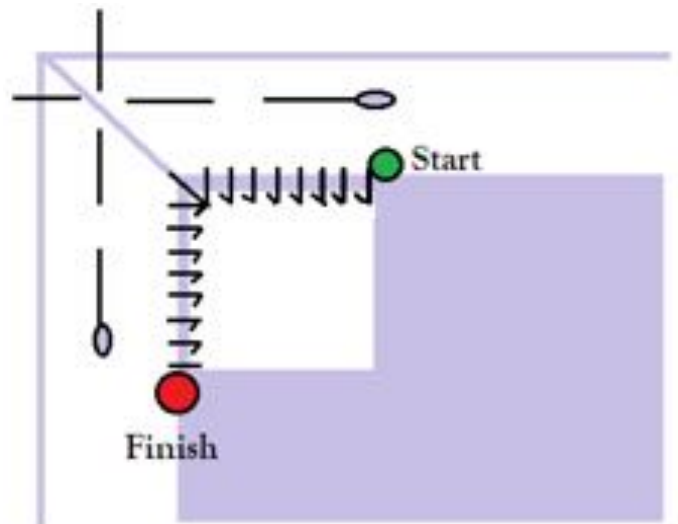
Thread a needle with white plain thread and knot one end (a discreet knot, please). Use your goggles again. Hold the fabric wrong side up (that is where you can see the diagonal corner seam).

Insert your needle somewhere inside the layers so the knot won’t show on either side of the finished piece, and, if you are right-handed, at the edge of the corner on the left.

Take two FTs from the bottom layer, then two threads on the edge of the fold at the top and pull on the needle. Repeat every two or three fabric threads.

Keep working from left to right until you reach the end of the second side of the empty corner.

Your stitches will be tiny and neat and all three layers grabbed by the needle. If you have some thread left on your needle, you can use it to start sewing down the hem (described next page).



The stitches above are shown in black, but they are done in white thread, of course.

BASTING THE HEM—Drawn-threads

Baste in the bottom third of the hem so you have room to open the fold later. This is important because you will need access to the middle layer of the hem later on to start and finish with your permanent white thread since no knots will be possible then. The basting ensures that your stitches will match on both top and bottom layers.

FINISHING THE HEM—Plain

There are a variety of hem stitches and you can use any which you can make invisible and strong. Some stitches go from right to left and some the other way. You could also use a floss and turn that hem into an embroidery as well. If you do, the wrong side will become your right side.

SEWING A DRAWN-THREADS HEM

Now starts another fun part. You will be more comfortable with a X5 or X10 lens to see what you are doing. You do not need a hoop for this.

Thread Length

A regular length is best. For one, the stitching makes the thread twist and you will have more trouble when the thread is long and you need to untwist. A long thread will look frayed in the end too.

Thread type

This is usually done with plain white thread, but IF you previously removed only a couple of threads, you could use embroidery thread to make the same stitch as explained below, with a thicker needle which should still have a point. That thread being thicker, the effect is like a row of tiny pearls and the spaces between the fabric thread clusters will not be as visible.

Thread Start and Stop

When you start at the corner, you can hide a little knot in there. Otherwise, you'll want to weave both ends of your sewing thread in the middle layer of your hem. This is why your basting stitches were far from that fold earlier, so you could reach inside.

Where to Start

For obvious reasons, the job is done at the back of the piece. Check you see the diagonal corner seams to be sure. Your path will go left to right, corner to corner.

Thread Bundles

You need to decide first how many fabric threads (FTs) you want to gather in each bundle. Generally, it is an even number and I suggest four or six, four being the easiest to see if you are new to this. It could be that you gather four in one direction (warp) and six in the other (weft) if your fabric is not an even-weave, but remember to match the stitches at least on parallel sides. When you are close to the end of your hemline, count how many FTs you have left so you know to increase or decrease the number of FTs gathered to make it. Yes, that's cheating. You're welcome.

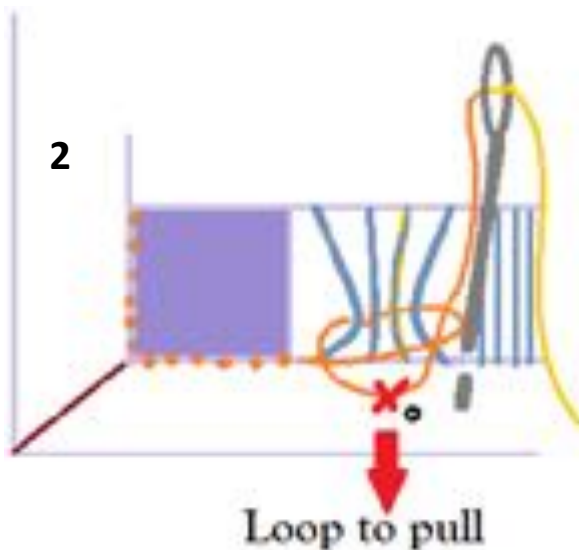
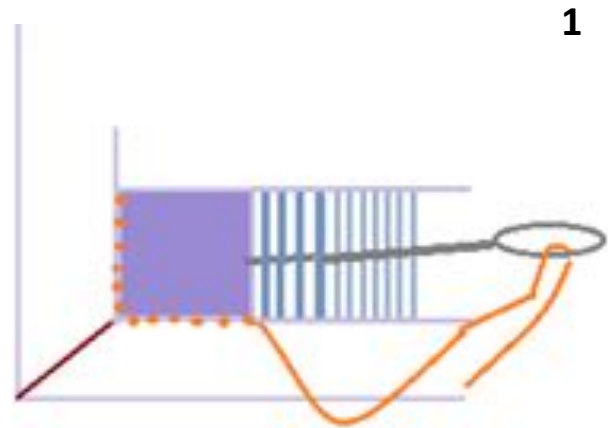
A mandatory in progress. I had removed two threads from the length and one width, and plenty on the bottom width. Note that the diagonal line in the corner indicates that this is the back. Four FTs in each bundle. Blue basting thread should have been closer to the bottom of the cloth.



DRAWN-THREAD HEM—Demonstration

Of course, if anything on this page is too long or complicated to read, I can refer you to hundreds of how-to videos online. You might get it much faster. However, since we are this far into the manual, here we go!

Step One : Pick four or six FTs inserting the needle under them from right to left and pull your thread through and down.



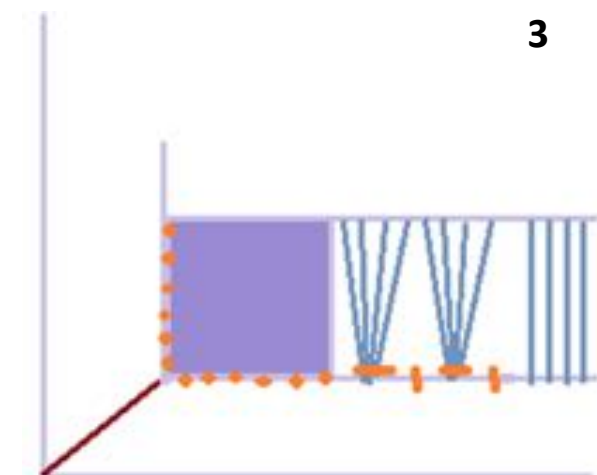
Step Two : Come back to the space between the FTs you have gathered and the remaining FTs to the right. Change the direction of your needle, so you are now going up-down. Pick two threads from the top of the ironed fold, pull the needle through until you have a little loop remaining. With the tip of the needle, pull that loop down so the FTs are neatly packed, hold that with your left thumb and finish pulling the thread through under your thumb. Please note that you do not insert your needle anywhere in the bottom layer - only the fold.

This is what it should look like, although the vertical stitch in the drawing will actually slant a little.

This is a test to show how regular your stitching can get!

Your stitches should not be as loose as they would need to be for an ordinary hem. You are almost tying knots at the bottom of each bundle.

You will notice that, from time to time, you need to roll the needle in your fingers to un-twist the thread so it goes where you want it to without effort.



DRAWN-THREADS HEM - Other side

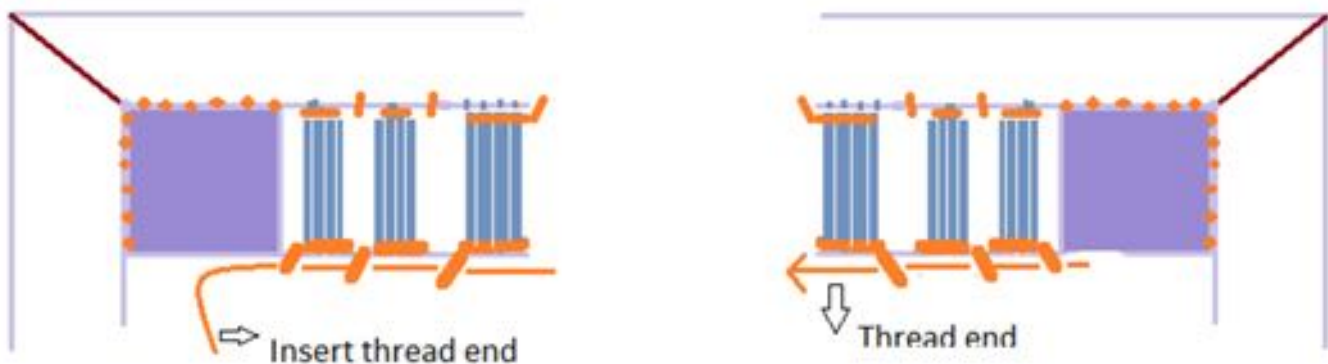
If you have removed four/five threads earlier, you should sew both sides of the FT bundles. If you only removed two, you're safe to go on to the centre motif. If your hem is simple, this stitching is best done with regular white sewing thread too. If you are going to turn this hem into an embroidery, see below for instructions.

Now that you have been thoroughly exercised with the hem itself, the basic stitch for the other side is actually the same. It is also done on the wrong side of the linen.

What to do with them thread ends

Now you are out in the open and there are two ways to deal discreetly with both ends of your sewing thread on the other side.

- If you are using plain thread, leave a length at the beginning, re-thread your needle with it later on and weave the thread under the slanted stitches.
- If you are using a floss or yarn, hide the ends somewhere in the middle layer of the hem, crossing over so your thread is disguised as a fabric thread.

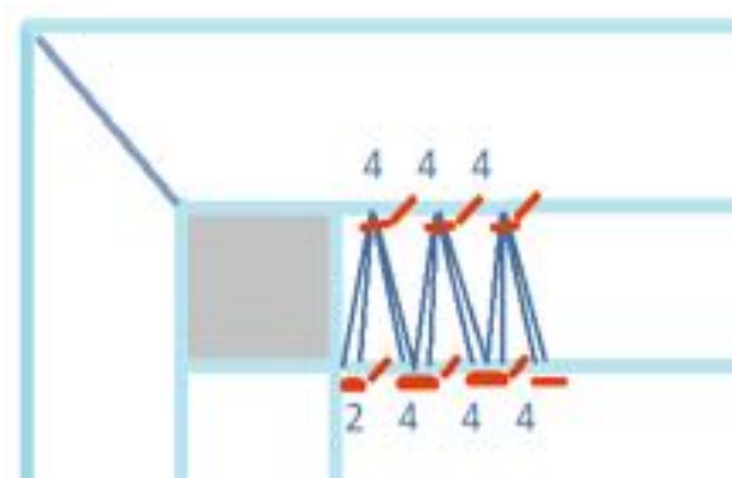


Mock Hem Stitch

Instead of taking two threads from the fold, you take two from the edge between the bundles.

This diagram shows that you can also separate the threads of your bundles to get a houndstooth effect.

Note that for those simpler hems, you are still holding the fabric with the wrong side facing you.



If you turn your hem into a more involved embroidery with floss, you should do it on the right side, and turn to the wrong side when starting or finishing a length of floss only.

HEM EMBROIDERY

If you have been pulling more than five or six FTs, your hem will need more involved stitching. However, you will still need to make the basic drawn-threads hem with plain white thread as explained previously. There are patterns online if you need inspiration, or I can send you pictures of work I've done. A purificator or a corporal (square linens) should have the same style hem on all four sides. You will use a floss or cordonnet (fine crochet cotton) rather than plain white thread. Make tests and decide.

If you go for a more decorative hem, you will now work on the front of the piece (and that is the side where the mitered corners show no diagonal line). Some embroidery stitches are actually suitable for this, particularly those based on the old chain stitch (feather, wheat ear, and the likes). An embroidery hoop is not needed for hem embroidery.

STARTING AN EMBROIDERY THREAD

Since no knots can show, you start from the wrong side, right where the embroidery should start:

- Insert your needle in the hem fold, making sure you are just between the top and second layer.
- Slide the needle in and make it re-appear in the same hem fold about 1-2 cm away or less.
- Pull on the thread until the other end is just about to disappear in the fold.
- Insert the needle again in the fold, but one or two (max) threads away and go back the same way to the place you started from.

Remember to get back to the right side of your work. If you needed to start some embroidery over, you can pull out that thread easily with a little tugging, but otherwise, it will stay put.

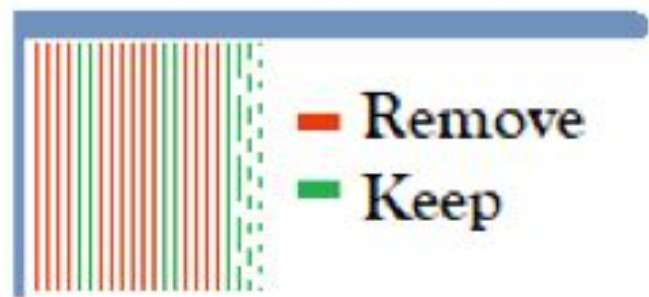
When you are embroidering away from the fold, use the same method, but hide your thread inside embroidery stitches already made, or over some FT bunches ahead of the embroidery work (and that extra thread over the FTs will be enclosed in your embroidery), on the way to or from the “garage”.

You will be so happy to use your special eyewear. It does prevent a lot of mistakes.

VENETIAN HEMS

This is what embroidered drawn-thread hems are actually called.

There are so many stitch patterns to choose from that I cannot describe them all here. Some work on spaces where you took out more than six threads and others on partial thread removal, as shown here (remove four, spare two, remove six, spare two and remove four).



CENTRAL MOTIF—General

Pattern Selection

Crosses are the first thing to come to mind, but other designs, such as chalices, wheat, grapes, lilies and twining twigs are great too. It depends on your skill-level and your imagination. Remember what the cloth will be used for. If you go for these liturgical groceries, the symmetry of your work will be the least of your problems.

Some mandalas make great patterns.

Even if you've found the perfect motif and can use it "as is", you still should doodle, pen in hand, or on your computer. Maybe the size needs conversion or you could add or subtract details from the drawing. Keep your first attempts simple.

Keep a small library of crosses, shells and chalices for future stitching. Some may not be suitable right away, but they will inspire you later.

Stitch Selection

Choosing stitches is another task to do ahead of time. In a working piece of linen, the back of the motif shows no knots and no carry-over threads. It merely looks like the front, although somewhat plainer. But not to worry, this leaves many popular stitches to choose from and you may even know a few of them already.

This would not be a problem if, instead of a working piece of linen, you intended to wear or frame the result of your labor. In that case, what happens on the wrong side does not matter.

You have a choice between outline or filling stitches. I have used both, but outlines are much easier.

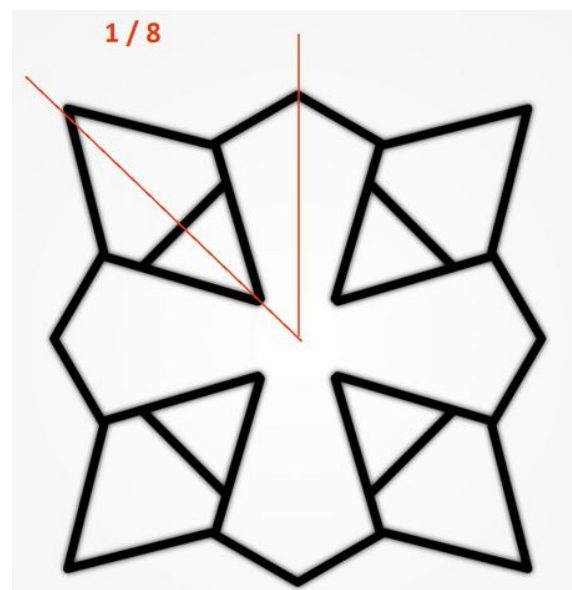
In any case, you will find a website at the end of this handbook to get you covered.

Finding Symmetry

"Symmetry" does not always mean that two sides mirror each other.

Some patterns are strictly square, meaning they can be divided in four quadrants or even in "pieces of eight".

You remember a compass is not just to draw circles, but to carry over dimensions. A caliper (they are digital nowadays so extremely precise) is handy when your motif is large. It will save you from counting threads or pin holes forever.



Divide and conquer! Notice in the sample above that the cross is not only divisible by four, but by eight too. What you transfer then is only what is contained in that angle. Ugly motif, though...

CENTRAL MOTIF—Prep Work

Important Mind Shifts

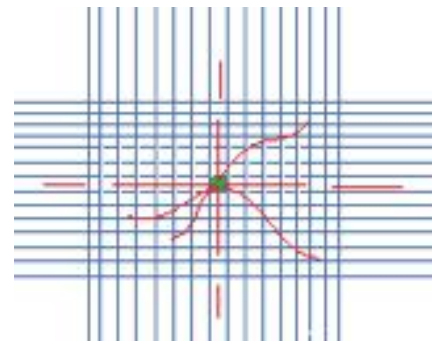
You have been counting fabric threads for hemming, but from now on, we will talk about pin holes as well, which is the space between any given two warp or weft threads. Make sure you are working on the front from now on. Also, as you may already have figured out, goggles will be necessary with this section. It might help you to think of your piece of fabric as an aida cloth when placing your motif. If you have experience with cross-stitch or tapestry, you know how exact your stitching has to be so the overall effect looks right.

If you are working on a symmetrical motif, it is better not to take chances “eyeballing” distances and even a measuring tape will not be precise enough on short ones. Use a good compass or caliper from a given pin hole to another, and carry over. Count the fabric threads or pin holes and you’ll be sure that all dimensions are perfectly mirrored in the other three quadrants or seven eighths.

Centering

- Before transferring the pattern of your choice, thread four needles with a bright-color thread leaving the end without a knot.
- Fold your hemmed linen, side over side as exactly as you can and mark the line with a pin.
- Unfold and do the same in the perpendicular direction using a second pin.
- Unfold and from the pins’ placement, you should find the centre hole of your motif.

In this sketch, the blue lines are fabric threads, the green dot is the centre pin hole and the red lines are the ranging stitches. Note that they all start at the centre pinhole and are inserted again at the fifth pinhole away in all four directions. Continue the running stitch going in and out every five pinholes until you have reached a little more than the size of your motif.

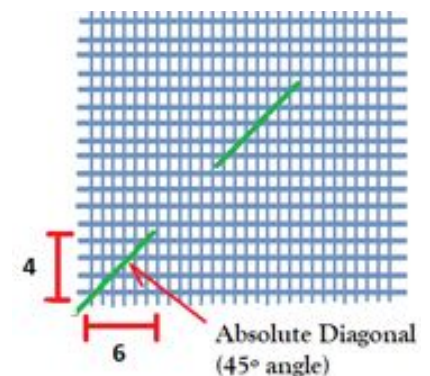


Pattern Placement for Uneven Weave Fabric

Stitching precisely will not be difficult if you are following a warp or weft thread. You could change the length of your embroidery stitch to compensate for the difference, which is what I have done on certain motifs.

However, when your stitching is diagonal—and let’s talk about an absolute diagonal, which is 45 degrees in a square—a long stitch will be skewed if you were to insert your needle—say—two pinholes away warp-wise and two pinholes away weft-wise from the last hole.

When you have pencil-transferred your motif “wedge” and gone over the line with a color sewing thread, you will notice how-many-threads-over there actually are in the fabric, both warp- and weft-wise, under your running stitches, and that number of threads is what you carry over when you mirror your first wedge, be it a quarter or an eighth. It takes a bit of practice but in time, it will be second-nature to you.



MOTIF EMBROIDERY OUTLINE

You may think that it is downright fussy and a waste of time to outline a future embroidery with basting threads, but this prep work is going to make the actual embroidery a lot more relaxing. So much will have been decided ahead of time that you should not have new questions to stop you in the middle of the bliss you should experience working with embroidery thread.

Once you have placed the ranging threads to show the axis of the motif, and some other thread marks to guide you with counting in the outer areas of the motif:

- Transfer as little as possible (a quarter to an eighth of the pattern) on the fabric with a transfer pen.
- Take another contrasting color thread on your needle—no knot.
- Outline the section you transferred with a running stitch. If you will have an embroidered outline, use the same holes with your color thread as you will with the floss later on. It will save you time.
- When a line “breaks” because of a change of direction, for instance, cut the thread and start again. The reason is that if you notice a problem, you will not have to undo more than a few stitches.
- Once that section is done, mirror it in the other sections of your motif using the corresponding pinholes.
- You will end up with a mess of threads dangling everywhere. At this point, you can pull out the ranging threads and just leave the outline threads.
- When you start with the embroidery thread, undo your outline thread as you go, stitch by stitch.

That should be another fun part of the job because your color threads are in place to guide you, there is no more decision-making and you can finally relax.

The pictures on the next page illustrate the process of placing ranging threads and outlines.

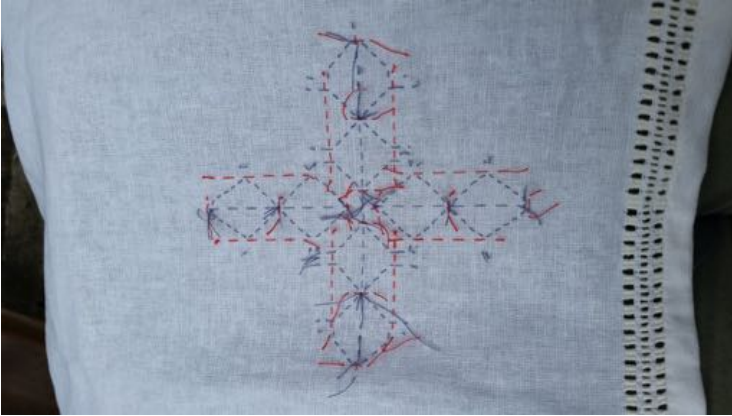
Tying Loose Ends

Ends of embroidery floss are not knotted. Before you start your first stitch, leave about 5 inches of floss dangling.

If you are making an outline stitch, wait until you have made at least a few stitches of embroidery, put that first tail in your needle and stitch back to the front, under the embroidery. Continue with a couple of running stitches under those embroidery stitches and cut the rest of the thread close to the embroidery, but on the front and under that embroidered line.

If you are making a filling stitch, it is even easier. Insert the end of the floss back to the front, feeling your way under the embroidery stitches, make sure nothing shows on the back or the front and cut.

MOTIF EMBROIDERY PROCESS



I used a blue thread to draw the axis of the cross, counting the pinholes so the stitches were even. Then a red thread was used to mark where the limits of the motif would be.

Finally blue thread was used again to outline the motif, each entry and exit of that needle used later on for the embroidery thread.

The ranging stitches were pulled out and the outline threads left in.

Notice that I have a new length of thread starting at all corners, turns and new sections.

I probably spent eight hours total to prepare the motif.



As I embroider each stitch, I pick out the blue stitch ahead.

The embroidery itself took about two days, but it was bliss.

Finished cross. Heavy chain stitch was used and the line goes over-under itself - an inspiration from Irish motifs.

There is a slight puckering in some places which could have been prevented if

I had used an embroidery hoop.



Note: these four pictures are of the same cloth—an example of how lighting effects colour in photographs!

CONCLUSION

You may well have spent a couple of months on your first project and that's okay. The Irish say that when God made time, he made plenty of it.

Miracles do not always happen in a flash. When your piece is done, you will probably notice errors - like I do all the time - but they are probably tiny and only you would really notice them. I am sure that your completed project will be gratefully acknowledged by your parish and that you will get plenty of compliments to boot. I do not think God requires perfection. He or She Loves you for giving it your best shot.

I have spent more time on this manual project than I would have on a couple of corporals and I am looking forward to my next job, which is a ciborium cover. I will try to take as many pictures as possible in the process so I can share them. Much love to all and God Bless.



My grandson Lulu having way too much fun with my goggles.

GLOSSAIRE

The following glossary contains all the vocabulary needed either to translate the handbook or to help explain concepts and procedures in French.

Anglais	Français
A	
Acolyte	Servant de Messe
B	
Back Stitch	Point arrière
Basting	Surfiler
Blanket stitch	Point de feston
Bulk	Volume
Burse	Bourse
C	
Caliper	Étrier à mesurer
Carry over	Reporter (dimension)
Cere cloth	Doublure de nappe (d'autel)
Chalice	Calice
Ciborium	Ciboire
Corporal	Corporal
Crease	Pli écrasé
Credence	Crédence
D	
Dangle	Pendouiller
Dashed line	Ligne à traits interrompus
Drawn-thread hem	Ourlet à jours
E	
Even-weave	(tissage) Armure 1/1 *
F	
Fair linen	Nappe d'autel ou surnappe
Floss	Fil à broder
Fraying	Effilochage
Fringe	Frange
Frontal	Tapis d'autel
Fussy-cut scissors	Ciseaux à broder

Anglais	Français
H	
Hem	Ourlet ou bord
Honeycomb	Nid d'abeille
Hoop	Tambour ou cercle à broder
Houndstooth	Zig-zag
I	
Inner	Interne
K	
Kit	Trousse
L	
Laundry	Lavage à l'eau
Layer	Couche
Lens	Lentille
Linen	Linge**
	or Lin
Linen weave	Toile ordinaire
Loom	Métier à tisser
M	
Magnifier	Loupe
Measuring tape	Mètre-ruban
Mercerized	Mercerisé
Mitered (corner)	(Coin) en onglet
Mundatory	Manuterge***
N	
Needle-nose tweezers	Petite pince pointue
Notions	Accessoires de couture
O	
Offertory	Offertoire
Outer (edge)	(Bord) externe
Outline stitch	Point de contour
P	
Pall	Pale (f)
Patén	Patène
Pulled thread	Broderie anglaise
Purificator	Purificatoire
R	
Ranging stitch	Points de repère
Rolled hem	Ourlet roulé ou à mouchoir
Running stitch	Point de devant

Anglais	Français
S	
Scalloped (edge)	Bord à festons
Scrap fabric	Bout de tissu ou chute de tissu
Selvage	Lisière
Sewing allowance	Valeur de couture
Sheath	Doublure
Shrink	Rétrécir
Shrinkage	Taux de rétrécissement
Skein	Pelote ou écheveau
Starch	Amidon
Stitch	(n) Point; (v) coudre
Strip (of lace, e.g.)	Bande
T	
Tatting	Frivolité
Terry (cloth)	Tissu-éponge
T-square	Équerre (f)
Twill	Sergé
U	
Uneven weave	(tissage) Armure irrégulière****
Unweave	Défaire le tissage
V	
Veil	Voile
W	
Wafer	Hostie
Waffle-weave	Tissage gaufré
Warp	Fils de chaîne
Weft	Fils de trame
Wheat ear	Épi
White work	Broderie blanc sur blanc

* Autant de fils de trame que de chaîne sur un cm² donné

** Il s'agit du linge blanc.

*** Serviette à main ou de baptême

**** Le nombre de fils de trame n'est pas égal à celui de la chaîne dans un centimètre carré donné.

NOTES

Websites

Needlenthread.com by **Mary Corbet** – a treasure-trove of stitching videos as well as useful tips

Pinterest.ca – a huge website in which you can get lost for days

Myoats.com – a website where your sketch can be mirrored and multiplied

Nancysnotions.com – This is where I found my favourite fabric. The store is in the US and I also shop there for notions.

Amazon.ca – This is where I found my goggles for \$20 and ended up buying several more. They either fit like glasses over your ears or you can use the strap around your head. (iKKEGOL 10X 15X 20X 25X LED Double Eye Jeweler Watch Repair Magnifying Glasses Loupe Magnifier 9892G)

Questions or comments? Please don't hesitate to contact me: **altarlinens@gmail.com**.