Pope Benedict XVI will be inaugurated in a solemn Mass on Sunday morning, presided over by Senior Cardinal Deacon Jorge Medina Estevez of Chile. The event is expected to closely resemble John Paul II’s investiture in 1978.

Before the Mass

During the installation, the pope receives the pallium, a narrow white stole of symbolic significance. Before his investiture in 1978, Pope John Paul II blessed the pallium at the Altar of the Confession then descended the stairs there to pray at the tomb of St. Peter.

About the pallium

- Two-inch-wide, white wool stole embroidered with black silk crosses
- Fastened with three jeweled gold pins across his chest, at his back, and left shoulder, symbolizing Christ’s wounds.
- Crosses represent the cardinal virtues: justice, fortitude, temperance and prudence.
- Two pendants, one in front and one in back, symbolize active and contemplative life.

Investiture garments

- Miter: The liturgical headdress worn only by the pope, cardinals and bishops. Derived from the Greek word mitra, meaning turban.
- Pastoral staff: Symbol of jurisdiction and power, made of silver.
- Pectoral cross: Dates to Middle Ages; attached to a chain or silken cord; made of a precious metal and decorated with gems.
- Fisherman’s ring: Large gold signet ring with relief of Peter, the first pope, casting a net from a boat.
- Chasuble: Major outer Mass garment, requires blessing before use; a symbol of charity.

Among the Mass events

Front steps of St. Peter’s

A Important garment
Pope receives the wool pallium, a symbol of his pastoral authority and communion with the church.

B Homage
In order of seniority, the cardinals pledge their loyalty and receive the ceremonial “kiss of peace.”

C Prayer
Cardinals recite the Lord’s Prayer.

D Chant
Choir chants “Tu es Petrus” (“Thou art Peter”), a reference to the first pope.

E Homily
Benedict XVI delivers a homily.

F Blessing
Ceremony ends with pope’s apostolic blessing to Rome and the world.

Sources: Associated Press; United States Conference of Catholic Bishops; Maureen A. Tilley, associate professor of religious studies, Dayton University; wikipedia.org; newadvent.org. Graphics reporting by Tom Reinken

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