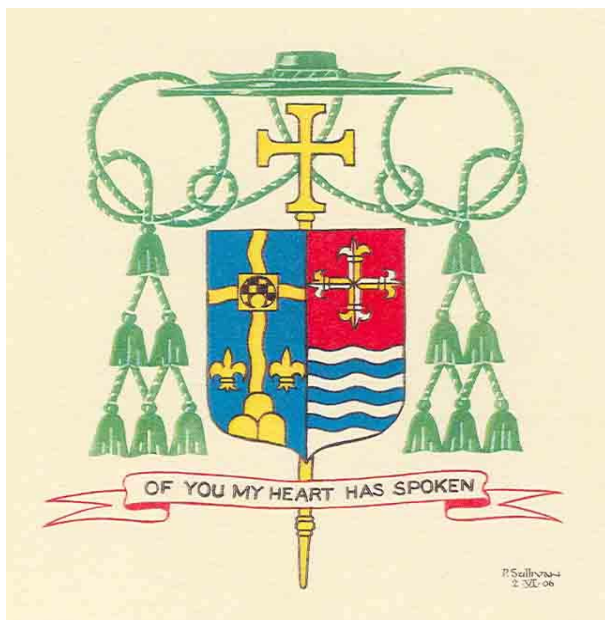


The Coat of Arms Of The Most Reverend J. Peter Sartain For Young People



The Tradition of *Ecclesial* (Church) Heraldry

Every bishop in the world has his very own *coat of arms*, just like a knight in medieval times. These are made up for each bishop by a specialist in *heraldry*, the ancient system of symbols used in coats of arms. A bishop's coat of arms, or *device*, represents him, and may change if he becomes the *Ordinary* (assigned bishop in charge) of a different diocese.

Heraldry developed in Europe in the Middle Ages, beginning in the late 11th century, as personal badges of the warrior classes, in part as a mark of identification on the battlefield. For the Church, the need for identification arose primarily with seals to mark documents and buildings. Clergy imitated the noble coats of arms, but being non-combatants they replaced some of the military elements with clerical (priestly) elements. Other non-clerical devices, like supporters and *coronets* (crowns) also found a place on clerical coats of arms. However, there was no structured heraldry until the 17th century, when a system for ecclesiastical hats attributed to Pierre Palliot came into use. The system of emblems as it exists today depends largely on the letter of Pope Pius X *Inter multiplices curas* of February 21, 1905.

An *episcopal heraldic achievement*, or bishop's coat of arms, is composed of a shield with its *charges* (symbols), a motto scroll and the *external ornaments* (outer ornaments that are the same for every bishop). By heraldic tradition, the personal arms of the bishop of a diocese are on one side and on the other side appear the arms of the diocese in which he serves.

The coat of arms usually appears on a bishop's special chair in the diocesan cathedral, the *cathedra*. In the Cathedral of St. Raymond, this coat of arms is embroidered on special dark green velvet which is attached to the back of the *cathedra*. The coat of arms will also appear in various other places. Some dioceses use it on their website, in their newspaper, or on the covers of worship aids for special ceremonies involving the bishop, to name a few of its uses.

The *shield*, which is the central and most important feature of any heraldic device, is *blazoned* (described) in 12th century terms that are archaic to our modern language, and this description is done as if it is being given by the bearer with the shield being worn on the arm. Thus, it must be remembered, where it applies, that the terms *dexter* (right) and *sinister* (left) are reversed since the coat of arms is viewed from the front.

Bishop Sartain's Coat of Arms

On Bishop Sartain's coat of arms, the *dexter impalement* (left side) represents the *crest* (symbol) of the Diocese of Joliet, and is the same as it appeared on the arms of the previous bishops, Martin McNamara (1949-1966), Romeo Blanchette (1965-1979) and Joseph Imesch (1979-2006).

The *fleur-de-lis*, the French form of the lily, honors the Blessed Virgin and commemorates the French ancestry of Louis Joliet for whom the *See City* (headquarters of a diocese) of Joliet is named. The *fleur-de-lis* appears on the coat of arms of the Archdiocese of Chicago from which the Diocese of Joliet was formed. The wavy-lined cross represents the northern reaches of the Mississippi River which Louis Joliet discovered with Pere Marquette. The *trimount* (three mountains) is taken from the coat of arms of Pope Pius XII who established the Diocese of Joliet-in Illinois. The *quadrate* (square center) section of the cross displays the *checky* (checkered) crescent from the coat of arms of Saint Francis Xavier, Patron of the Diocese of Joliet. The *field* (background) of the *crest* is blue and all other ornaments are gold.

For his personal arms, seen in the *sinister impalement* (right side) of the shield, Bishop Sartain has adopted a design that reflects his life and ministry as a priest, and a now as a bishop. These arms are composed primarily of the three colors (red, blue, and silver) that are used in the coat of arms of the Diocese of Memphis in Tennessee, where he was serving as Vicar General when he was elected to receive the fullness of Christ's priesthood as a bishop, and then to lead God's people in the Diocese of Little Rock. On the upper red portion of the design is a cross of eight parts, in alternating silver and gold. Such a cross is used here to pay devotion to several of Bishop's Sartain's patron saints who followed the Lord along the way of the Beatitudes: St. Thomas More, St. Bernard of Clairvaux, St. Teresa of Avila, St. John of the Cross, and Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati.

On the lower silver portion of Bishop Sartain's design are the blue wavy bars that are used to signify three rivers, the Mississippi, the Tennessee and the Arkansas, that represent the geographic region of America that have been his life, his heritage and his roots.

For his motto, Bishop Sartain has selected the beginning of the 8th verse of the 27th Psalm, "Of You My Heart Has Spoken." In this phrase, the psalmist expresses his spontaneous love for God and his trust in God's ways. Bishop Sartain interprets the verse as a call to prayer and love because we are made for God, our hearts speak spontaneously of Him and through Him, of one another.

The device is completed with the *external ornaments* which are a gold episcopal processional cross, which is placed in back of the shield and which extends above and below the shield, and a green ecclesiastical hat, called a "*gallero*" with its six tassels, in three rows, on either side of the shield. These are the heraldic insignia of a *prelate* (high ranking member of the clergy) of the rank of bishop by instruction of the *Holy See* (the Vatican) of March 31, 1969.