

## Symbols of a bishop

**A**bishop, from the Greek work "episkopos" (which means overseer), is a direct successor to the apostles. Bishops have, by divine institution, taken the place of the apostles as pastors of the church.

The ordination and installation of Bishop Gerald M. Barbarito as the fifth bishop of Palm Beach Diocese focuses a spotlight on the many symbols designated with bishops. Below are a few examples of symbols connected with the office of the bishop:

### The bishop's chair

In ancient times, a chair was a sign of authority to teach. The bishop's chair is called a cathedra from the Latin word for chair and it is the presence of the bishop's cathedra in a church that makes it a cathedral. The bishop's chair is a symbol of the bishop's teaching office and pastoral power in his diocese. It is also a sign of the unity of believers in the faith that the bishop proclaims as shepherd of the Lord's flock.

### Coat of arms

A bishop's coat of arms (See this page) is distinguished by a sign of his rank. That sign, placed over a shield, is a particular version of an ecclesiastical hat that was worn in processions, as late as 1870. The hat is low-crowned, flat and widebrimmed.

On a bishop's coat of arms, the hat is green and hanging from it are 12 green tassels, six on each side.

There's also a processional cross above the shield. The cross on a bishop's coat of arms has one bar, while an archbishop's cross has two. The design of the shield itself differs from bishop to bishop.

### Miter

The miter is the proper liturgical headdress for all bishops of the Latin Rite, including the pope. The word comes from the Greek word, mitra, meaning "turban."

It consists of two stiffened flaps of material joined by a headband with two fringed strips hanging from the back base of the miter.

The miter as we know it today developed from the

conical head-covering worn by the pope that appeared in the 10th century. At first, it was used only by the pope.

### Pectoral cross

The pectoral cross gets its name because it is worn over the breast, or pectus, hanging from a green cord intertwined with gold threads. There are rules determining whether it is worn over or under what the bishop is wearing. If he's in a suit and collar, the pectoral cross is usually placed in the vest pocket with the chain showing.



### Crozier

The crozier is a pastoral staff that is conferred on the bishops (and abbots) at their installation. In the West, the top of the staff is curved to remind the bishop of the shepherd's crook and of his pastoral care of the people entrusted to him. It is a sign of the bishop's need to keep watch over his whole flock, sustaining the weak and faltering, confirming the wavering faith, and leading back the erring ones into the true fold.

### Ring

The bishop's ring is a symbol of the bishop's fidelity to and nuptial bond with the church, his spouse. It signifies the bishop's symbolic marriage to the church of Christ. The bishop's ring is usually made of gold with an amethyst. The bishop's ring was first mentioned as an official part of the bishop's insignia in the early seventh century.

### Zucchetto

The zucchetto is a skullcap worn, particularly by prelates, since the 13th century. The pope wears a white zucchetto, cardinals wear a red zucchetto and bishops wear a purple zucchetto. Everyone else wears black.



Sources: Catechism of the Catholic Church, Our Sunday Visitor's Catholic Encyclopedia, The Harper Collins Encyclopedia of Catholicism.

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## Bishop Barbarito's coat of arms

By Deacon Paul J. Sullivan

### Blazon

Arms impaled. Dexter: Azure, on a fess or between in chief two celestial crown of the second and at the base point two barrulets wavy Argent, a palm branch slipped and proper. Sinister: Argent, an open volume inverted with the cover Gules and edged or, the spine charges with an Alpha above an Omega, the front cover with the skewed cross of John Paul II and the back cover with a fleur-de-lis above a crescent, all of the third; issuant from the base, upon two hills of the third, three fur trees Vert, the center one with the roots visible Tenne, below two Moorcocks Sable, crested of the second.



of a shield, with its charges (symbols), a motto scroll and the external ornaments. The shield, which is the central and most important feature of any heraldic device, is described (blazoned) in 12th century terms that are archaic to our modern language, and this description is done as if being given by the bearer with the shield being worn on the arm.

Thus, it must be remembered, where it applies, that the dexter and sinister are reversed as the device is viewed from the front.

By heraldic tradition, the arms of the bishop of a diocese, called the ordinary, are joined to the arms of his jurisdiction, seen in the dexter impalement (left side) of the shield. In this case, these are arms of the Palm Beach Diocese.

These arms are composed of a blue

### Significance

The bishop's coat of arms is composed

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*'Speaking the truth in love, we are to grow upon every way into him who is the head, into Christ.'*

— Ephesians 4:15

## Bishop Barbarito's episcopal motto: *Veritatem facientes in caritate* ('Let us profess the truth in love')

Joanne Hamel

The episcopal motto of a bishop many times defines the man and his relationship with God. There is perhaps no greater truth than in the case of Bishop Gerald M. Barbarito, who will soon be installed as the fifth bishop of the Palm Beach Diocese.

For his motto, Bishop Barbarito has retained the phrase "Veritatem facientes in caritate," which in English translates into "Let us profess the truth in love."

The passage is taken from St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians (4: 15) where the mystery of Christ is revealed to the gentiles. In this phrase, Bishop Barbarito expresses that as Christians, we are all called to profess and teach the truth which is Christ, in love to all.

Upon his appointment to the diocese, Bishop Barbarito said he looked forward to getting to know the faithful here. Throughout his priesthood, Bishop Barbarito has lived out his motto, setting out into the communities, as Jesus did, to preach the word

to all with love. His personal warmth has touched many faithful, who in turn, opened their hearts and minds to Jesus and his teachings.

In a recent letter to his flock in Ogdensburg, N.Y., Bishop Barbarito explained why the opportunity to visit the people of the diocese is so important to him.

"One of the many joys of being bishop is the opportunity to meet the faithful. ... They are the church and in them I always find wonderful people of faith, hope and love. They are truly a reflection of God's goodness and a living testimony to the body of Christ," he wrote.

In his statement to the faithful of the Palm Beach Diocese upon his appointment by the Vatican, Bishop Barbarito said, "It is with an openness to do God's will that I come to the Diocese of Palm Beach as its new shepherd. ... The church is one family and, no matter where we are, it is that family which is primary. I hope to become a part of you quickly so together we may live the truth in love. Please pray for me, as I will pray for you."