

## Coat of Arms Description

### A description of Most Reverend Michael F. Olson's Coat of Arms

The episcopal heraldic achievement, or bishop's coat of arms, is composed of a shield, the central and most important part of the design, a scroll with a motto, and the external ornamentation. By heraldic tradition, the arms of the bishop of a diocese are joined with the arms of his jurisdiction, seen in the left side of the design. These arms are composed of a blue field, to honor the most Blessed Virgin Mary, on which is displayed a castellated fort in silver (white). Above the fort is a green trefoil (also known as a shamrock), to honor Saint Patrick, the titular of the Cathedral-Church.



For his personal arms, His Excellency, Bishop Olson has adopted a design to signify the important aspects of his life. The upper section, is silver (white) on which is seen a black ring, upon which is a red cross pattée that has on it three interlaced gold (yellow) rings of Irish knot-work. The knots are a traditional representation of The Most Blessed Trinity and are placed on the cross and ring forming the logotype of Holy Trinity Seminary, in Irving, Texas, where Bishop Olson served as Rector.

The lower portion is red on which is seen a gold (yellow) sword, for Saint Michael, the Archangel, the Bishop's Baptismal patron, that has been converted to a pan-balance of justice, to reflect that justice is the prime call of all clerics and most especially bishops. Across the center of the design is a blue bar that bears a spikenard between two roses, all gold (yellow). The spikenard is taken from the arms of our Holy Father, Pope Francis, who appointed Bishop Olson to the episcopacy and is between two roses, one for Mary in her title as Our Lady of Guadalupe, and the other for Saint Thérèse, the "Little Flower." For his motto, His Excellency Bishop Olson has chosen the phrase "VERITATIS SPLENDOR," the title of an encyclical by Blessed Pope John Paul II. The words "the Splendor of Truth," express Bishop Olson's profound belief that the truth of Jesus Christ is splendid beyond belief.

The achievement is completed by the external ornamentation which are a gold (yellow) processional cross, that is placed in back of the shield and which extends above and below the shield, and the pontifical hat, called a "galero," with its six tassels in three rows on either side of the shield, all in green. These are the heraldic insignia of a prelate of the rank of bishop, by instruction of The Holy See, of March 31, 1969.

*By Deacon Paul J. Sullivan*