



BLAZON

OF THE HERALDIC ACHIEVEMENT OF
THE MOST REVEREND

MARK O'CONNELL, D.D.

TITULAR BISHOP OF GIGTHENSIS
AND AUXILIARY OF THE CARDINAL-ARCHBISHOP
OF THE METROPOLITAN SEE OF BOSTON



Per saltire Argent and Barry Wavy of six Argent and Azure,
In chief a stag's head cabossed Gules, in fess two mullets Or, and
In base a rolled parchment scroll Proper sealed Gules and corded Vert.

On a chief Azure fretty Or a fish naiant Argent.

and for a motto

« INVENIMUS MESSIAM »



THE ECCLESIASTICAL
HERALDIC ACHIEVEMENT OF
THE MOST REVEREND MARK O'CONNELL, DD
TITULAR BISHOP OF GIGTHENSIS



The Most Reverend Mark O'Connell was born on 25 June 1964 in the city of Toronto in Ontario, Canada where he spent the first years of his childhood. His family returned to their origins in Boston in 1976 where he was ordained to the priesthood at age twenty-five on 16 June, 1990. Pope Francis appointed him Titular Bishop of Gigthi, a suppressed see in what is now a territory in the western edge of Libya, and Auxiliary to the Cardinal-Archbishop of Boston on 3 June, 2016 and at the hands of His Eminence Cardinal Seán Patrick O'Malley OFM Cap. he shall be ordained a bishop on 24 August 2016 on the feast of Saint Bartholomew, Apostle and Martyr.

*Symbolism in the Achievement
of the Most Reverend Mark O'Connell*

The design of the personal coat of arms of Bishop O'Connell set out to achieve both spiritual and theological symbolism most important to him. Premier amongst these was the bishop's staunch desire to include charges (emblems) associated with his paternal and maternal families, his Irish heritage and his Canadian birth, his

vocation as a canon lawyer, a strong homage to Saint Andrew which was most important to him, and honor to Mary, Our Lady Star of the Sea.

When a lengthy list of inclusions is requested, the challenge to the designer is to accomplish all of these symbolic references in a way that also bring great balance to the overall achievement as well as beauty.

In describing the episcopal coat of arms design for Mark O'Connell, we must begin in the *chief*. A chief is a space or bar across the top of what would otherwise be a full shield in itself. It is an added space if you will and one used, when employed in a design, for a special honor. It was therefore to the chief in this design that Bishop O'Connell's desired homage to Saint Andrew the Apostle is to be found. Saint Andrew, indeed all the Apostles except for Matthew, was a fisherman. These were the strong men of character called by Christ to follow Him, Andrew being both the First-Called and the elder brother of Simon ben Jonah of Bethsaida whom we know more commonly today as Saint Peter.

The chief herein is worked in brilliant blue, or *Azure* as it is known in heraldry. This blue represents the waters of the Holy Land, both the Mediterranean Sea, the Sea of Galilee and the River Jordan which were life-giving to the Lord's followers and indeed to all of the region and which on a spiritual note also represents the sacrament of Baptism, our own Christian initiation and the beginning of the individual Christian life of Mark O'Connell.

Upon this blue field is worked a heraldic device known as a *fretty*. The *fretty* has many purposes in heraldic design but in utmost simplicity it represents a net. And so, the chief worked in blue with a gold *fretty* upon it becomes symbolic of all the Apostles, *the fishers of men*. Upon this field is found a single fish worked in *Argent* (silver), but it should be said that in heraldry white replaces silver in the actual rendering of the artwork because silver badly tarnishes over time. In heraldry, white and silver, therefore, are one and the same. This fish represents once more Saint Andrew but it also brings a very tender secondary homage to the bishop's mother

and her Delaney family which uses three such fish as its coat of arms design.

Now a word must be said about metal upon metal which is only permitted in Catholic Church heraldry and which appears in the O'Connell arms in that the silver fish lies upon a golden fretty:

Ecclesiastical Attitude Concerning

OR and ARGENT

Or and Argent, the two heraldic metals depicted in art as yellow and white (as in the case of the flag of the Vatican City State) seldom appear together in heraldry, unless separated by color (properly known as heraldic tincture). Although this has been more or less a steadfast, almost 'sacred' rule in civil, state, and familial armorial, this rubric in heraldry has never applied to the armorial of the Latin Rite of the Roman Catholic Church.

It is true that in state heraldry, it is almost always forbidden to overlay the two metals, one on top of the other, just as it would be to lay one color upon another. But the Church of Rome never adopted this rule. In fact, it not only generally ignored it, despite centuries of criticism for doing so, particularly from northern Europe, but it all but viewed this prohibition as an abrogation of proper design methodology in creation and implementation of the theological symbolism of Christian charges which forms an integral part of all Catholic ecclesial heraldic design.

According to longstanding Church custom, gold and silver are heavenly attributes, metals that represent purity, innocence, wisdom, mercy and Godliness. As such, law in ecclesial armorial cannot separate them even when civil authorities diverge. When appropriate, it is right and proper to combine the two, as in the case of sacred charges.

Perhaps this posture towards metal upon metal stems from the medieval Church's embrace of the arms of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem which appear as a silver (Argent) shield with a gold (Or) Jerusalem Cross upon it. Nevertheless, after the Latin Kingdom's creation, Or and Argent became generally accepted by the Church at Rome—an acceptance that also spread throughout the Latin Rite in subsequent centuries. In fact, nine popes through the ages have included metal upon metal in their pontifical coat of arms, including two recent pontiffs, Pope-Saint John XXIII (1958-1963) and John Paul I (1978), both of whom included 'in chief' the golden lion of St. Mark (a permissible titular charge) upon a silver field. It is interesting to note that in Italian papal blazonry, this design is referred to as '*d'argento al leone passante alato e nimbato al naturale*', which has been translated as a nimbed lion passant Proper, but for all intents and purpose, these two recent papal arms serve as the foremost examples of the acceptability of metal upon metal in ecclesial armorial and the Holy See clearly views them as such.

In his work on the subject entitled *Or and Argent* (Van Duren, 1994), Archbishop Bruno Heim not only traces the foundation of the rule 'against' placing metal upon metal in heraldry but he likewise illustrates the Church's negation of this rule, illustrating how the Church viewed general insistence of this rule as an anathema, primarily on spiritual grounds. Included in Heim's tome are 60 black and white illustrations with proper hatching depicted, as well as, 360 color illustrations of arms granted through the centuries that include this practice by a variety of states including Italy, France, Spain, Portugal and Poland. Oddly, Heim does not cite the many papal arms as proof of the Church's acceptance of placing silver upon gold and vice versa in this work but those that he purposefully chose to include do cite the acceptance of this custom amongst European aristocracy, churchmen, and in burgher arms across the continent through the centuries.

It is clear that most modern civil heraldists (and state heraldic authorities for that matter as well) continue to aggressively avoid this practice, but true ecclesial heraldists may not do so as both Catholic custom and the Latin Rite's ecclesial heraldic law both permit and encourage its usage in the inclusion of properly

rendered spiritually symbolic charges of churchmen and institutions of every rank and office of the Roman Catholic Church. And to this I must add, that in 1986, but a mere thirty years ago, the then-Garter King of Arms (Sir Colin Cole) and the then-Clarenceaux King of Arms (Sir Anthony Wagner), in the name of Her Majesty the Queen, both designed and formally issued a royal Grant of Arms to one Raymond Andrews of Berkshire, England in which design were placed both metal upon metal and color upon color. Surely the College of Heralds of the England therefore accepts this practice as well.

Unlike the recent case in England, however, in Catholic ecclesial armorial Or upon Argent, and vice versa, are generally found in theologically or spiritually inspired charges rather than in a metal charge placed upon a metal field. And thus is the case in the arms of Bishop Mark O'Connell, a design which only subtly uses this process, Catholic symbolism in the charges selected for his coat of arms adds additional homage to the Church by use of silver and gold the flag and emblem of the Holy See and the Vatican City State.

Also of importance to note, in Catholic heraldry the single fish seen in profile is keenly Christological as it was this image, not the Cross of Calvary that the early Christians used to identify themselves as followers of Jesus. The symbol takes the name ICHTHUS in Greek. Using the letters of the Greek alphabet spelling the word fish, early Christians secretly bore this symbol with the hidden meaning JESUS CHRIST, SON OF GOD, SAVIOR which is what the backronym ICHTHUS actually stood for. For Bishop O'Connell, the incorporation of a single fish on his coat of arms design carries multiple references, none more important than his identity as a modern follower of Christ.



Returning to the coat of arms design, below the chief is the shield proper. To continue the primary reference to Saint Andrew, so important to Bishop Mark O’Connell, the shield is divided into four quarters by use of a *per saltire division* plan. In viewing the coat of arms you will note that the shield has four equal quarters, each taking the form of a triangle. The per saltire division accomplishes this, the saltire being an “X” division method and this “X” is known in Catholic heraldry as *the Saint Andrew Cross* as this Apostle was martyred by crucifixion on a cross that took the “X” form rather than the form of cross, known as the *Cross of Golgotha* in heraldry, on which hung the Savior of the world.

Sometimes in heraldry one sees an actual “X” of metal or color atop the field of a coat of arms but this only works when no, or very few, subsequent charges (emblems) are desired. When many more need to be incorporated into a plan, this Saint Andrew Cross is abandoned as too large and cumbersome for a balanced design and in its place a designer makes use of the per saltire division which accomplishes the same thing but which opens much more space for further charges.

For the episcopal arms of Mark O’Connell, the shield appears as follows within this division format: the top quarter, known as chief within the shield itself, is worked in Argent (silver). Upon this field is homage to the bishop’s paternal family, the O’Connell clan. The image in the clan’s arms is the stag (a large male deer) but as there have been many bishops bearing the clan’s name, including William Henry Cardinal O’Connell (b. 1859—d. 1944), who served as Archbishop of Boston from 1906 until his death, it became necessary to take care to include this stag reference but not in a way that has been seen in the church in any of the O’Connells who have been raised to the episcopacy. The designers chose to render this reference as a *cabossed* stag’s head, which simply means that only the head and rack, no neck, no body, is seen and it is always depicted full face versus in profile. And so although another reference in episcopal coats of arms design of the O’Connell stag is now introduced, in Bishop Mark O’Connell’s design a fresh, new and unique approach has been included.

It can be noted that the Stag's head has been placed directly below the chief field on which appears the Delaney fish, thus bringing together heraldically both parents of the bishop and both of their families in a symbolic way. The fish of the Delaney was actually designed to be somewhat smaller in size than normal for heraldry so that it would be closer in size to the rack of the deer below, symbolic of both equal parents in the birth and upbringing of the new bishop.

Continuing downward as one views the design, on a similar Argent field is a rolled scroll, bound by a waxen seal and green cords. The scroll, not the book, is the proper heraldic emblem for canon law. It is rendered as *Proper*, which in heraldry translates to *as one would see it in life*. The scroll is sealed in red wax, the color used by the Holy See for all bullae, decrees, grants and documents and thus of a formal, legal, and canonical nature. The cords that bind it have been rendered in green to bring to this design the color most associated with canon law (especially in doctoral or academic dress for canon lawyers).

This leaves the two fields on the left and right sides (*in fess*) of the shield. These two spaces were used specifically to honor the Blessed Virgin Mary and in so doing to bring a final sense of overall balance to a very busy design. To achieve this, heraldic designers use a field known as a *Barry Wavy Argent and Azure*—this translates to a succession of wavy lines of silver and blue which create the impression of water. This was most important to the bishop who desired a further reference to Boston. These waters represent water in general but also pay homage to Boston Harbor and the Atlantic Ocean that fronts the Metropolitan See and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. As only the residential bishop may include charges (emblems) from the diocesan coat of arms, no such right exists for auxiliary bishops; a reference to the see itself must be made in new ways. The waters bring to the coat of arms the respect and love for the archdiocese that Bishop O'Connell feels deeply today.

Moreover, these waters as represented in two quarters refer to a primary symbolic tribute to the BVM under Her title of Our Lady Star of the Sea (Stella Maris). Upon the reference of the water is

found the golden star emblematic of Our Lady Star of the Sea. The theme was repeated twice, a common practice in heraldry for both much needed balance of a busy design and also to counter the homage to Saint Andrew, giving the BVM similar importance and standing within the design.

Thus comprises the shield of Bishop Mark O'Connell. However, there are external elements to every coat of arms design that must also be explained, especially under Catholic heraldic law. Surmounting the episcopal shield is the pilgrim's hat, the heraldic emblem for all prelates and priests of the Latin Rite of the Roman Catholic Church. For the rank of bishop, both residential and titular, the pilgrim's hat is always worked in deep green, the true color of the Office of Bishop. For this rank and office there are six tassels suspended on either side of the hat in a pyramidal style. The interior of the hat is worked in scarlet to represent the martyrdom, real or spiritual, which all bishops, not only cardinals, are called to at the time of consecration to the episcopal dignity. The hat is properly known in the Church as the *galero* and the tassels take the name *fiocchi*. These, too, are worked in green for the rank of bishop. Behind Bishop O'Connell's coat of arms is the episcopal cross. For the bishops, this cross has only one transverse arm. The cross may be jeweled or stylized and may also be depicted as plain and most resemble the processional cross used at Mass.

For Bishop Mark O'Connell's design, the episcopal cross displayed is a *Cross Erablé* which takes the form of a golden Latin Cross but at each of the three visible terminus is found a maple leaf worked in gold, the maple leaf being the emblem of Canada. Therefore the designer uses this cross for bishops of Canadian origin when they wish a reference to these roots. And so here is the reference that the bishop wished for his Canadian heritage. Not to forget his Irish roots, the stone at the center of this cross is a deep green cabochon emerald—the stone unmistakably of Holy Ireland.

Overall, Bishop O'Connell's episcopal coat of arms has remained faithful to the style of heraldry originally developed in the Middle Ages. It is this ancient style that the Church continues to demand in the seals of office of each diocesan bishop, the co-adjutore and

the titular bishops as well, whose seals traditionally derive from the design of the personal coat of arms.

MOTTO

In heraldry, a motto has been both a personal philosophy of life as well as a family dictum, and sometimes even a cry for battle. But in Church heraldry, a prelate's personal motto has always been intended to represent his personal spirituality and theologically based philosophy of life and is most frequently grounded in Sacred Scripture and spiritual reflection.

Bishop Mark O'Connell has selected « **INVENIMUS MESSIAM** » for his motto, which translates into English as "*We have found the Messiah,*" words attributed to Saint Andrew who it is said used them when greeting peoples for the first time, his way of announcing the coming of the Lord, His Redemptive Act, and his Resurrection. Bishop Mark O'Connell's spiritual roots are deeply rooted in this spiritual dictum. A further homage was requested by the bishop when the design process began. He wished to have this motto rendered in a specific font type, that known as PERPETUA as this was the font type preferred by his late father and the font style used to cut his name on his father's eventual tombstone. The artists have been able to include this final requested homage in all the black and white, single color, line art exactly. The calligrapher has been able to mimic this form as best as possible in the formal library painting itself, as well.

With this motto as his guide, Bishop O'Connell undertakes his episcopal ministry for the Church in Boston. May God be praised...

ABOUT THE HERALDIC DESIGNERS

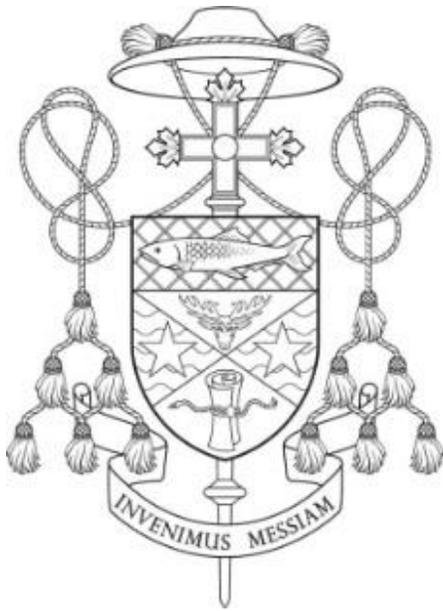
James-Charles Noonan, Jr. is a well-known Church historian and ecclesiastical protocolist as well as one of the most famous ecclesial heraldists at work today. He routinely works with the Holy See, with members of the College of Cardinals and the episcopacy. Noonan has published numerous books on these subjects, in the United States and Europe, including the bestselling opus *The Church Visible: The Ceremonial Life and Protocol of the Roman Catholic Church* (Viking, 1996) which was reissued in late 2012 with 150 new pages of text and histories. He holds several academic degrees and is an alumnus of numerous prestigious institutions in America and Europe. He has also been highly decorated for his achievements, having received nine orders of knighthood from foreign heads of state, royalty, and from the Vatican. Noonan, in particular, is a Knight Grand Cross of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem conferred upon him personally by Pope Saint John Paul II.

Trained in ecclesial heraldry by the undisputed leaders of this field of study, namely the late Archbishops Bruno B. Heim, the private secretary of Pope John XXIII whose arms Heim designed along with the papal arms of Paul VI, John Paul I and Pope John Paul II (of beloved memory) and H.E. Cardinale, papal diplomat, author and heraldist, as well as the late Cardinal Jacques Martin (Prefect of the Papal Household during three pontificates), Mr. Noonan is now recognized as the leading Catholic heraldist of our own time. His select clients include cardinals, archbishops and bishops, and he has designed arms for basilicas, cathedrals, seminaries, shrines, and for abbots, priors, priests and minor prelates the world over. Mr. Noonan resides in Gwynedd Valley, Pennsylvania (USA).

Linda Nicholson, who expertly paints the heraldic arms designed by

James-Charles Noonan, Jr., completes the partnership of this unique team in Church service. Nicholson's talented renderings complement Noonan's rich designs. She is a Craft Painter of the prestigious Society of Heraldic Arts in England. According to Noonan, "Linda Nicholson is one of the great heraldic painters of our time and one of the few remaining experts in this craft". In addition to her artistic talents, Mrs. Nicholson holds a Master's Degree in Medieval Studies from the University of Toronto.

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