

# Blazon and Explanation of the Coat of Arms of the Most Reverend Robert J. Lombardo, CFR, DD

Titular Bishop of Munatiana and Auxiliary Bishop of Chicago

**BLAZON:** *Chape Ployé Argent and Azure; in dexter chief the crossed arms of Jesus Christ and St. Francis Proper wounded Gules; in sinister chief the monogram of the Virgin Mary composed of the letter "M" interlaced with a cross Azure; in base above two barrulets wavy Argent a cross-shaped monstrance Or charged with a plate. Shield ensigned with an episcopal cross Or behind the shield and a bishop's galero Vert cords and twelve tassels disposed in three rows of one, two and three all Vert. On a scroll below the shield the motto: "My God And My All"*

**EXPLANATION:** The armorial bearings of Bishop Lombardo reflect his Religious Community, his Marian devotion and the centrality of the Eucharist. The shield is divided into three sections by a dividing line that suggests an open cape. In the upper left on a silver (white) background is the customary symbol of Franciscans the world over composed of the right bare arms of Jesus and the left clothed arms of St. Francis of Assisi. Both show the hands bearing the nail mark of the Crucifixion because St. Francis received the stigmata prior to his death. The color of the sleeve on the arm of Francis reflects the grey/blue habit worn by the CFR Franciscans. This color more closely approximates the color of the robe actually worn by St. Francis himself. Bishop Lombardo is the first member of his community to be named a bishop.

The upper right depicts a traditional monogram of the Blessed Virgin Mary. It is composed of the letter "M" interlaced with a cross. The whole is depicted blue, a color frequently associated with the Blessed Mother on a silver (white) field. This emblem is also found on the reverse of the Miraculous Medal of Our Lady which the bishop received years ago in Lourdes and has worn every day since.

The lower, main, portion of the shield is blue with a gold (yellow) cross-shaped monstrance holding the Sacred Host above blue and silver (white) waves. The waves allude to the Atlantic Ocean of the east coast of the US where the bishop was born, and also to Lake Michigan where Chicago is located and where he has done priestly and, now, episcopal ministry as well as to the Mediterranean Sea near Salerno and Calabria in Italy from which his ancestors came. The central figure is a simple monstrance in the shape of the cross containing the Eucharist. This symbolizes the central place in the bishop's life of the Eucharist and also the Eucharistic retreats undertaken by the friars of his community all over the world.

The motto below the shield is “My God And My All”

The shield is also ensigned with those external ornaments that indicate the bearer is a bishop. The gold (yellow) episcopal cross, not to be confused with a processional cross, is placed vertically behind and extending above and below the shield. In former times archbishops, and later all bishops, had a cross mounted on a staff carried immediately in front of them while in procession or on solemn occasions. This cross was a symbol of their rank as bishop. While such an episcopal cross is no longer used practically it has been retained heraldically. In fact, there are other clerics who make use of the ecclesiastical hat with its many tassels but the one true heraldic emblem of a bishop, and the only essential one, is the episcopal cross placed behind the shield.

Above the shield is the ecclesiastical hat, called a galero which, in heraldry, replaces the martial helmet, mantling and crest. “The hat with six pendant tassels (green, purple or black) on each side is universally considered in heraldry as the sign of prelacy. It, therefore, pertains to all who are actually prelates.” (Heim, Bruno B., Heraldry in the Catholic Church 1978, page 114) The galero is green with green cords pendant from it and twelve green tassels arranged in a pyramid shape on either side of the shield. At one time in history bishops and archbishops wore green before adopting the more Roman purple we see today. In heraldry the green hat and tassels was retained for prelates with the rank of bishop according to the Instruction of the Secretariat of State, “Ut Sive” of March, 1969.

The armorial bearings of Bishop Lombardo were designed, blazoned and rendered by the Rev. Guy Selvester a priest of the Diocese of Metuchen, New Jersey.

October, 2020