

Most Rev. Carlson's Coat of Arms

Motto: ANTE CRUCEM NIHIL DEFENSIONIS | Before the Cross there is no Defense



The arms of a diocesan bishop are displayed on a heraldic shield divided vertically into two portions. The arms of the Catholic Diocese of Saginaw are the dexter impalement shown on the half of the shield to the viewer's left. The arms of the Bishop Carlson are on the sinister impalement, to the viewer's right.

The personal arms of Bishop Carlson were designed by the Rev. James Parker. The "garb" is the heraldic representation of the sheaf of wheat and represents the bishop's native city of Minneapolis, Minn., known as the "Miller of the Midwest". The field of green suggests the great plains of South Dakota as well as the liturgical color for growth in the Faith.

On the field, on either side of the sheaf of wheat are a crescent and a Latin Cross. The silver crescent represents Mary Immaculate and the Cross represents the bishop's faith commitment and his mission to the faithful entrusted to his care.

The heraldic chief at the top of the shield is taken from the family arms of the bishop. The wavy bars in the base of the shield represent the Sioux River and the bishop's service in the Diocese of Sioux Falls.

The scroll, bearing the bishop's motto is placed below the shield. As his watchword, the bishop chose: ANTE CRUCEM NIHIL DEFENSIONIS, which means "Before the Cross there is no defense".

The entire achievement is completed by the addition of a gold processional cross that extends above and below the shield and a green ecclesiastical hat, the galero, with six tassles on each side disposed in three rows on either side of the shield. These are the heraldic insignia of a bishop according to the Instruction of the Holy See given on March 31, 1969.

-From information provided at Bishop Carlson's installation, prepared by the Very Rev. Canon Matthew R. Mauriello of Bridgeport, Conn