
SERVE THE LORD WITH GLADNESS



Heraldic Achievement of
MOST REVEREND EDWARD C. MALESIC
Bishop of Cleveland

In designing the shield—the central element in what is formally called the heraldic achievement—a bishop has an opportunity to depict symbolically various aspects of his own life and heritage, and to highlight particular aspects of Catholic faith and devotion that are important to him. Every coat of arms also includes external elements that identify the rank of the bearer. The formal description of a coat of arms, known as the blazon, uses a technical language, derived from medieval French and English terms, which allows the appearance and position of each element in the achievement to be recorded precisely.

A diocesan bishop shows his commitment to the flock he shepherds by combining his personal coat of arms with that of the diocese, in a technique known as impaling. The shield is divided in half along the pale or central vertical line. The arms of the diocese appear on the dexter side—that is, on the side of the shield to the viewer's left, which would cover the right side (in Latin, *dextera*) of the person carrying the shield. The arms of the bishop are on the sinister side—the bearer's left, the viewer's right.

The arms of the Catholic Diocese of Cleveland are based on the family arms of General Moses Cleaveland (1754–1806), who surveyed and founded the city that bears his name. To the Cleaveland arms—which divide the shield with a line like an inverted “V” (per chevron), and charge it with a similar shape drawn with semi-circular indentations along its edge (a chevron engrailed)—the Diocese adds three small Crosses, the arms of which are crossed again (cross crosslets). The shield is painted black (sable) above the chevron; below, it is white with small black spots meant to represent ermine, a fur typically used to line the robes of royalty and nobility. The crosses and the chevron are counterchanged; that is, they are painted black where the shield is ermine, and ermine where the shield is black.

The personal arms of Bishop Malesic were devised by Renato Poletti of Rome, Italy, in consultation with Bishop Malesic after his episcopal appointment on April 24, 2015. The shield embossed in blue (azure), the color of the sky, which symbolizes the direction of the soul’s ascent toward God and away from worldly values therefore, the color represents the path set by the spiritual virtues, raising a person from the things of the earth toward the incorruptibility of heaven. The chevron is an heraldic device best described as an inverted “V” and is one of the most ancient figures in heraldry. Frequently, in Roman Catholic Church heraldry, it signifies the rafter which supports the roof of the church as a source of protection for the community of faith gathered under it. The three shamrocks represent the Cathedral of Harrisburg, dedicated to Saint Patrick, where Bishop Malesic was ordained to the priesthood by the imposition of the hands of Cardinal William H. Keeler, at that time Bishop of Harrisburg. The chevron is in silver (argent), the color of transparency, also of truth and justice, fundamental requirements of the Bishop’s pastoral service.

The crown above the chevron is the symbol of Bishop Malesic’s given name, after Saint Edward “The Confessor” (d. 1066), King of England who gave witness to his Catholic faith through his life. The crown also recalls Mary, Queen of the Apostles, upon whose intercession Bishop Malesic relies.

The linden tree below the chevron expresses the Slovenian heritage of Bishop Malesic’s father. The linden tree is considered the national tree of Slovenia and is also a symbol of joy and safety. The community often gathered under the shade of the linden tree for fellowship and community discussions.

The shield is ensigned with external elements that identify the bearer as a Bishop. A gold processional cross appears behind the shield. The galero or “pilgrim’s hat” is used heraldically in various colors and with specific numbers of tassels to indicate the rank of a bearer of a coat of arms. A bishop uses a green galero with three rows of green tassels.