



REVEAL YOUR PRESENCE

Heraldic Achievement of
THE MOST REVEREND MICHAEL G. WOOST
Titular Bishop of Sertei
Auxiliary Bishop of Cleveland

Argent, a Cross emerging from a pile embowed reversed Or, charged in base with a closed book Gules, in dexter chief a gutté d'eau surmounted in bend sinister by a gutté de sang, and in sinister chief a tongue of flame proper.

MOTTO: "REVEAL YOUR PRESENCE" is the first line of stanza eleven in the poem *The Spiritual Cantic* by Saint John of the Cross, 16th century Carmelite, spiritual guide, mystic, and Doctor of the Church. It is the cry of a heart that has encountered the abiding presence of the triune God, felt God's absence, and longs "to reach the perfect love of the glory of God" (C 11, 5). It expresses the anguish of those for whom God seems hidden and distant (Ex. 2:23-25), the hope of those who trust that God is faithful (Est. C:16, 23), and the prayer of those who yearn to share more fully in God's life now (Ps. 63:2-4). Its truth is manifest in the Incarnation (Jn. 1:14), realized in the Paschal Mystery (Mk. 15:39), and extended through, with, and in us by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (Lk. 24:4, 6-49). Faith in God's self-revelation through life and love, to which it testifies, is witnessed in the ministry of the Church (Jn. 13:12-17; Acts 3:6; 2 Cor. 4:7-11) and the liturgical celebrations of God's People in which the Risen Christ lets himself be seen (Lk. 24:31; *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 7). Therefore, we pray: *Reveal Your Presence*.

SHIELD: When 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 particular aspects of Catholic faith and devotion. 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.

The main colors, or *tinctures*, of Bishop Woost's shield are more properly called *metals*, as white is used in heraldry to represent silver (*Argent*) and yellow to represent gold (*Or*). Gold and silver have long been used to paint the crossed keys of Saint Peter, and thus have come to represent the Roman Pontiff and the Apostolic See. Bishops only exercise their ministry by "maintaining the bond of communion among themselves and with the successor of Peter," the Pope.*

The figure painted gold (*a pile embowed reversed Or*) is a triangular shape with bowed sides that emerges from the base of the shield; in this case the point of the triangle terminates in a Cross. This figure appears prominently on the coat of arms of the Discalced Carmelite order. While the Carmelite shield depicts this figure in brown (*tenné*) to recall the Carmelite habit, the gold in the Bishop's coat of arms alludes to sand. The Bishop's surname is an Anglicization of the German word *wüst*, meaning "wild," which is itself derived from the German *Wüste*, a wilderness or desert.

Throughout his priestly ministry, both as an explorer of spiritual theology and as a retreat director, the Bishop has been formed, and formed others, by the spiritual tradition of the Discalced Carmelites, particularly the teaching of Saint John of the Cross and his call to encounter the presence of God in the *nada*, the quiet and solitude of the literal and spiritual wilderness. The motto on the scroll below the Bishop's shield—"Reveal Your Presence"—is the first line of Stanza 11 of Saint John's great prayer-poem, *The Spiritual Canticle*.

In the top left corner of the shield (*dexter chief*) appear two drops of liquid, painted red and blue (*a gutté de sang* and *a gutté d'eau*). The heraldic description of the drops reveals their symbolism: they are described in French as *a drop of blood* and *a drop of water*. Recalling the blood and water that flowed from the side of Christ when it was pierced by the soldier's lance after His death (cf. John 19:34), they symbolize the Divine Mercy and the sacramental grace that is given to each Christian by the sacraments, especially Baptism and the Holy Eucharist. Having celebrated these sacraments as a priest, and taught about them as a professor of Liturgical Theology, the Bishop is now given the responsibility to be the steward of this grace and the guardian of sacramental celebrations.†

The centrality of the sacraments in the life of the Church and of Bishop Woost is further represented by a book placed towards the bottom of the shield (*in base*). The red cover (*gules*) trimmed in gold reminds the viewer of the typical design of liturgical books like the Roman Missal and the Lectionary, and recalls both his priestly ministry and his years of service as professor and as director of liturgy for St. Mary Seminary and for the Diocese of Cleveland. The clasps on the book also remind one of the books that contain the writings of the Church's doctors and saints, and the prayers and devotions that foster the spiritual life of the faithful.

In the top right corner (*sinister chief*) is a tongue of flame, Saint John of the Cross's "living flame of Love." It recalls the descent of the Holy Spirit on the Church at Pentecost (cf. Acts 2:3), as well the ordination of Bishop Woost as a priest of the Diocese of Cleveland, and the celebration of his first holy Mass, which took place over the weekend of Pentecost 1984. Together with the drops of blood and water, it also alludes to the responsibility of the Bishop to testify "that Jesus is the Son of God" before the whole world (1 John 5:5). "For," as Saint John the Evangelist proclaims, "there are three that testify: the Spirit and the Water and the Blood ... And this is the testimony: that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son" (1 John 5:7-8, 11).

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.

*Vatican II, Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen gentium* On the Church, no. 25.

†Cf. *Lumen gentium*, no. 26

Design and description of the Coat of Arms by Rev. Philip G. Bochanski
Explanation of the Episcopal Motto by Bishop Michael G. Woost