 Reading time: 15 min.

*We present the Coat of Arms of His Most Reverend Eminence, Cardinal Ángel FERNÁNDEZ ARTIME SDB, Rector Major of the Society of St Francis de Sales (Salesians of Don Bosco).*

*Every cleric who is appointed by the pope as a cardinal must put together a coat of arms to represent him.*
*A coat of arms is not just a traditional formality. It represents the most important thing for a person, family or institution, and allows identification across space and time. They appeared, according to some research, in the era of the Crusades when Christian knights applied them on their clothing, horse harnesses, shields and banners so allies and adversaries could be easily recognised. Later, they diversified and were passed on to noble families and also in the Church, so much so that a science known as heraldry has also appeared, dealing with the study of coats of arms.*
*Ecclesiastical coats of arms were standardised in 1905 by Pope Saint Pius X in the* ***motu proprio 'Inter multiplices cura'.*** *Thus, an ecclesiastical coat of arms comprises a personal shield (blazon), numerous external ornaments that echo the insignia of the dignities to which they refer (the cardinal's is a red galero with 15 red tassels), and a personal motto, usually in Latin, as a statement of faith. The elements of the coat of arms refer to the holder's name, his origins, his place of residence and religious symbols that recall theological messages and spiritual values or summarise ideals of life and pastoral programmes.*

**BLAZONING (formal description)**
"Argent, coped[i] azure. In I to the characteristic figure of Jesus the Good Shepherd, found in the Catacombs of St Callistus, in Rome, all natural.[ii] to the monogram MA, gold, stamped[iii] by a crown of the same; in III, to the anchor of two hooks[iv] , silver, corded gules. The shield is stamped with a hat[v] with red cords and tassels. The tassels, thirty in number, are arranged fifteen on each side, in five orders of 1, 2, 3, 4, 5[vi] , Beneath the shield, in the silver list, the motto in black capital letters: "SUFFICIT TIBI GRATIA MEA".

**EXEGESIS**

“Medieval man (…) lives in a “forest of symbols”. St Augustine said it: the world is made up of “signa” and “res”, of signs, that is, symbols, and things. The “res” that are the true reality remain hidden; man only grasps signs. The essential book, the Bible, contains a symbolic structure. To each character, each event in the Old Testament corresponds a character, an event in the New Testament. Medieval man is constantly engaged in “deciphering”, and this reinforces his dependence on clerics, learned in the field of symbolism. Symbolism presides over art and in particular architecture where the church is first and foremost a symbolic structure. It prevails in politics, where the weight of symbolic ceremonies such as the consecration of the king is considerable, where flags, weapons, emblems, are of paramount importance. It reigns in literature, where it often takes the form of allegory.”[vii]
Gestures and symbols refer, therefore, to something deeper: to a message, to a value, to an idea that goes beyond the sign itself.

“In human life, signs and symbols occupy an important place. As a bodily and spiritual being together, man expresses and perceives spiritual realities through material signs and symbols. As a social being, man needs signs and symbols to communicate with others through language, gestures and actions. The same thing happens in his relationship with God.”[viii]

“The learned and famous heraldist Goffredo di Crollalanza in *Genesis and History of Blazonic Language* (1876) writes among other things, “Heraldry had chivalry as its author, need as its motive, trophies as its purpose, tournaments and crusades as its occasion, the battlefield as its cradle, armour as its field, design as its means, the symbol as its auxiliary, creation as its matter, ideology as its concept, and the blazon as its consequence.” He adds, “The blazon is not the illustration; just as the mind is not the soul, but the manifestation of the soul.”[ix]

“Heraldry is a complex and particular language made up of a myriad of figures and the coat of arms is a mark that is meant to extol a particular feat, an important fact, an action to be perpetuated.

“This documentary science of history was at first reserved for knights and participants in deeds of arms, whether warlike or sporting, who made themselves recognisable by their coat of arms, placed on the shield, helmet, flag and also on the caparison [horse ornaments], representing the only way to distinguish themselves from one another.

The heraldry of knights was almost immediately imitated by the Church, even though ecclesiastical bodies in the pre-heraldic period already had their own distinctive signs, so much so that when heraldry emerged in the 12th century, these figures took on the colours and appearance of that symbolism.

Ecclesiastical heraldry in our time is alive, current and widely used. For a prelate, however, the use of a coat of arms today must be defined as a symbol, allegorical figure, graphic expression, synthesis and message of his ministry.

It must be remembered that clerics were always forbidden from exercising the militia and bearing arms, and for this reason the term “shield” or “armour” proper to heraldry should not have been adopted; however, it must be said that until recent times, clerics used their family coat of arms, very often devoid of any religious symbolism.

The very symbolism of the Roman Church is drawn from the Gospel and is represented by the keys given by Christ to the Apostle Peter.

Ecclesiastical heraldry in our time is alive, current and widely used. For a cardinal, the use of a coat of arms today must be defined as a symbol, allegorical figure, graphic expression, synthesis and message of his ministry.”[x].

In the first period, the ecclesiastical coats of arms had the shield stamped by the mitre with the fluttering infulas; with the passing of time, however, the prelatic hat with the cords and the various orders of tassels or bows, of different numbers according to dignity, *all in green* if bishops, archbishops and patriarchs, *all in red* if cardinals of the Holy Roman Church, was consolidated at the top of the shield.

We also note that the “Instruction on the robes, titles and coats of arms of cardinals, bishops and lower prelates” of 31 March 1969, signed by the Cardinal Secretary of State Amleto Cicognani, states verbatim in Article 28: “Cardinals and bishops are permitted to use the coat of arms. The configuration of this coat of arms must conform to the norms regulating heraldry and be suitably simple and clear. Both the crosier and the mitre shall be removed from the coat of arms.”[xi]

In Article 29 below, it is specified that cardinals are permitted to have their coat of arms affixed to the façade of the church attributed to them as a title or diakonia.

The most excellent and reverend bishops stamp, in fact, the shield, attached to a simple astylar cross (with one crossbar), gold, trefoiled, placed in a pole, with the hat, cords and tassels of *green*. The tassels, twelve in number, are arranged six on each side, in three orders of 1, 2, 3.

The most excellent and reverend archbishops stamp the shield, attached to a gold patriarchal astylar cross, trifoliate, placed in pole, with the hat, cords and tassels of *green*. The bows, twenty in number, are arranged ten on each side, in four orders of 1, 2, 3, 4.

The most excellent and reverend Patriarchs stamp the shield, attached to a gold patriarchal astylar cross, trifoliate, placed in a pole, with the hat, cords and tassels of green. The bows, thirty in number, are arranged fifteen on each side, in five orders of 1, 2, 3, 4, 5[xii] .

The most eminent and reverend cardinals of the Holy Roman Church stamp the shield, clasped to a gold patriarchal astylar cross, trifoliate, placed in a pole, with the cap, cords and tassels of *red*. The bows in number of thirty are arranged fifteen on each side, in five orders of 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

The origin and use of hats of *green,* for patriarchs, archbishops and bishops, is said to derive from Spain, where, in the Middle Ages, prelates wore a hat of green. This is why the shields of bishops, archbishops and patriarchs are stamped with a hat of *green*.

In 1245, at the Council of Lyons, Pope Innocent IV (1243-1254) granted the cardinals a *red* hat, as a special badge of honour and recognition among other prelates, to be worn when riding through the city. He prescribed it in red to admonish them to always be ready to shed their blood to defend the freedom of the Church and the Christian people. And it is for this reason that since the 13th century cardinals have stamped their shield with a *red* hat, adorned with cords and tassels of the same colour.

Finally, the Most Eminent and Most Reverend Cardinal Chamberlain of the Holy Roman Church wears the shield with the same hat as the other cardinals, but stamped with the papal gonfalon, *during munere*, that is, during the Apostolic See vacant. The papal banner or papal standard, also called the *basilica*, is in the shape of an umbrella with red and yellow kernels with the pendants cut in vajo and of

contrasting colours, supported by a pole in the shape of a lance with a halt and crossed by the papal keys, one gold and the other silver, decussate, with the gibbets facing upwards, tied with red ribbon.

The same colours of *green* or *red* are also to be used in the ink of the seals and coats of arms on the deeds, the latter with the prescribed conventional signs indicating the enamels.

The blazoning – heraldic description – of the coat of arms of Cardinal Ángel FERNÁNDEZ ARTIME SdB does not bear the shield attached to a gold, astylar cross, placed in a pole, because he is not a bishop. He will be consecrated to the episcopal order next year, after he ceases to serve as Rector Major of the Salesians of Don Bosco, and at that time his shield will be attached to an astylar cross, placed in a pole.

Over the centuries, the Old and New Testaments, Patristics, the *legendaries of* the Saints, and the Liturgy have offered the Church the most varied themes for its symbols, destined to become heraldic figures.

Such symbols almost always allude to pastoral or apostolic tasks of ecclesiastical institutes, both secular and regular, or tend to indicate the mission of the clergy, recall ancient traditions of worship, memories of patron saints, pious local devotions.

**ENAMELS**

One of the fundamental rules governing heraldry states that *he who has less has more*, with regard to the composition of the enamels, figures and poses of the shield.
And the armour we shall now examine is composed of the metals *gold* and *silver and the* colours *blue and red*.

To seek one’s coat of arms, therefore, the real one, to be able to raise as a banner, with which to mark one’s cards, to fully understand its symbols, is it not, in some way, to seek oneself, one’s image, one’s dignity?
This is how an act, which could only be read formally, can instead acquire a symbolic and highly meaningful meaning.

**Gold**, **silver**, **azure** and **red,** then, are the enamels that appear in the coat-of-arms

of our Eminence Cardinal Ángel FERNÁNDEZ ARTIME SdB., but what symbols do these enamels contain and present, what messages do they convey to the often bewildered mankind now in the 21st century?

The “metals”, gold and silver, heraldically represent and recall the ancient armour of the knights who, according to their degree of nobility, were in fact gilded or silver-plated; gold, moreover, is a symbol of divine royalty, while silver alludes to Mary. The blue “colour” recalls the sea the crusaders crossed on their way to the Holy Land, while the red “colour”, which was considered by many heraldists to be the first among the colours of arms, the living blood shed by the crusaders.

Delving more specifically into the heraldic symbolism of the ‘enamels’, we recall that among the “metals”, gold represents Faith among the virtues, the sun among the planets, the lion among the zodiac signs, July among the months, Sunday among the days of the week, the topaz among the precious stones, adolescence to twenty years among the ages of man, the sunflower among the flowers, the seven among the numbers and himself among the metals; the silver represents Hope among the virtues, the moon among the planets, Cancer among the zodiac signs, June among the months, Monday among the days of the week, the pearl among the precious stones, water among the elements, childhood up to seven years among the ages of man, the phlegmatic among the temperaments, the lily among the flowers, the two among the numbers and himself among the metals.

Among the “colours”, light blue symbolises Justice among the virtues, Jupiter among the planets, Taurus and Libra among the zodiac signs, April and September among the months, Tuesday among the days of the week, sapphire among the precious stones, air among the elements, summer among the seasons, childhood up to the age of fifteen among the ages of man, choleric among the temperaments, rose among the flowers, six among the numbers and tin among the metals, while the red, Charity among the theological virtues, Mars among the planets, Aries and Scorpio among the zodiacal signs, March and October among the months, Wednesday among the days of the week, ruby among the precious stones, fire among the elements, autumn among the seasons, manhood until fifty among the ages of man, sanguine among the temperaments, carnation among the flowers, three among the numbers and copper among the metals.

The red: “it is also a reminder of the Orient and overseas expeditions, as well as demonstrating justice, cruelty and anger. *Ignescunt irae*, said Virgil. Finally, as it

was consecrated to Mars by the ancients, it signifies intrepid, grandiose and strong impulses. The Spaniards call the red field ‘sangriento’, or bloody, because it brings to mind the battles they fought against the Moors. We find a similar name in Germany in *blütige Fahne, vexillum, cruentum*, an all red field without any figure, indicating royalty rights, and found in the arms of Prussia, Anhalt, etc. Red is, together with blue, one of the two most commonly used colours in the coat of arms; but it is more frequently found on the arms of Burgundian, Norman, Gascon, Breton, Spanish, English, Italian and Polish families In flags, red represents boldness and valour, and seems to have been adopted in the beginning by the fire worshippers.”[xiii]

Among “colours”, “**natural”** is “a figure reproduced in its natural colour (i.e. as it appears in nature) and not as a heraldic enamel.”[xiv]

We would like to point out that it was also necessary to create conventional signs to understand and identify the “enamels” of the shield when the coat of arms is reproduced in seals and black and white prints. Thus, heraldists, over time, used various systems; for example, they wrote in the various fields occupied by the enamels, the initial of the first letter corresponding to the colour of the enamel, or they identified the colours by inscribing the first seven letters of the alphabet or, again, they reproduced, in the fields of the enamel, the first seven cardinal numbers.

In the 17th century, the French heraldist Vulson de la Colombière proposed special conventional signs to recognise the colour of the enamels in shields reproduced in black and white. The heraldist Father Silvestro di Pietrasanta of the Society of Jesus was the first to make use of them in his work *Tesserae gentilitiae ex legibus fecialium descriptae*, thus spreading their knowledge and use.

This classification system, which is still used today, identifies red with thick perpendicular lines, blue with horizontals, green with diagonals from left to right, purple with diagonals from right to left, and black with crossed horizontals and verticals, while gold is dotted and silver without hatching.

To represent colour “au naturel”, some heraldists envisage other conventional signs, but we intend to espouse the thesis of the heraldist Goffredo di Crollalanza where, for colour “au naturel”, after recalling that it can be placed over metal and over colour indifferently, without infringing the law of overlapping enamels, he

clarifies that it is expressed[xv] in drawings by leaving the piece blank and shading the figure in appropriate places.

Also of this opinion was the distinguished heraldist Archbishop Bruno Bernard Heim, who in the pontifical coats of arms of Popes John XXIII and John Paul I that he designed, in those reproduced in black and white, in the patriarchal cape of Venice depicts the lion of St. Mark without any conventional signs.

**THE FIGURES**

**Jesus the Good Shepherd**
The figure of Jesus the Good Shepherd responds to a profound aspiration of ancient man. The Jews saw God as the true shepherd who guides his people. Moses, in turn, had been given the task of being a shepherd and guide for his people. The Greeks knew the image of the shepherd standing in a large garden and carrying a sheep on his shoulders. The garden is reminiscent of paradise.

The Greeks associate the shepherd with their longing for a pure, uncorrupted world. In many cultures, the shepherd is a father figure, a caring father to his children, an image of God's paternal concern for mankind.

The first Christians make the aspiration of Israel and Greece their own. Jesus is, like God, the shepherd who leads his people to life. Christians of Hellenistic culture associate the figure of the good shepherd with that of Orpheus, the divine singer. His song tamed ferocious beasts and raised the dead. Orpheus is usually depicted within an idyllic landscape, surrounded by sheep and lions.

For Hellenistic Christians, Orpheus is a Jesus figure. Jesus is the divine cantor, who with his words makes peaceful what is wild and fierce in us and revives what is dead. Jesus, presenting himself in John's gospel as the good shepherd, realises the archetypal images of salvation contained in the human soul under the shepherd images. This figure, in the shield, precisely because of its significance, is loaded into the main posture.

**Monogram of Mary Help of Christians**
This monogram, MA, stamped with a crown, all in gold, symbolises Mary HELP OF CHRISTIANS, Don Bosco's Madonna. After the name of Jesus, there is no name sweeter, more powerful, more consoling than that of Mary; a name before which the

Angels bow in reverence, the earth rejoices, hell trembles.

St John Bosco once confided to one of his first Salesians, Fr John Cagliero, a great missionary in Latin America and future cardinal, that “Our Lady wants us to honour her under the title of Help of Christians”, adding that “The times are so sad that we need the Holy Virgin to help us preserve and defend the Christian faith.”

This Marian title, in truth, had already existed since the 16th century in the Loretto Litanies and Pope Pius VII instituted the feast of Mary Help of Christians in 1814 and set it for 24 May, as a sign of thanksgiving, for the return to Rome, on that day, acclaimed by the people, after the exile decreed by Napoleon. But it was thanks to Don Bosco and the construction of the Shrine of Mary Help of Christians, in Turin Valdocco – desired by Our Lady herself, who appeared in a vision to the Saint, indicating that she wanted to be honoured in the exact place where the first Turin martyrs Avventore, Ottavio and Solutore, Christian soldiers of the Theban Legion, suffered death – that the title of Help of Christians became current again in the Church. Fr Lemoyne, the Saint’s private secretary, writes verbatim in his monumental biography, “What appears clear and irrefutable is that between Don Bosco and Our Lady there was certainly a pact. All his gigantic work was done not only in collaboration, but even in association with the Virgin.”

Don Bosco, consequently, recommended his Salesians to spread devotion to Our Lady, under the title of Help of Christians, wherever they were in the world. But Don Bosco did not leave the devotion to Mary Help of Christians to spontaneous devotion alone; he gave it stability with an Association that took its name from Her. Direct witnesses saw in the Association of the Devotees of Mary Help of Christians, one of the initiatives dearest to Don Bosco and of the widest resonance, after that of the two religious congregations (Salesians and Daughters of Mary Help of Christians) and the Association of the Cooperators.

In fact “it is not Don Bosco who chose Mary; it is Mary who, sent by her Son, took the initiative to choose Don Bosco and to found the Salesian work through him, which is her work, ‘her business’, forever.””[xvi]

**The anchor**
The anchor recalls, firstly, that Cardinal Ángel FERNÁNDEZ ARTIME SdB, is the son of a fisherman from the sea of Spain.

It is worth remembering, then, that “The Salesian coat of arms is a condensation of essential incentives characterising every true son of Don Bosco. St John Bosco also wanted the theological virtues represented in the shield: for Faith, the star; for Hope, the anchor and for Charity, the heart. It might seem absent from the Salesian coat of arms is the indispensable presence of Mary Help of Christians, from whom,Don Bosco said, all that is Salesian derives. But the Founder himself, and all the first confreres, always identified in the symbols of the anchor, the star and the heart, also the reference to Jesus and his Mother; and this is another aspect of the significant density that the coat of arms encompasses”[xvii] .

Indeed, the Salesian’s life and actions are an expression of his faith, the shining star; of his hope, the great anchor; and of his pastoral charity, the burning heart.

The anchor, in heraldry, symbolises constancy.[xviii] “An instrument used in Mediterranean navigation, importance was already attached to it in antiquity as a symbol of the god of the sea. The anchor promised stability and security and therefore became the symbol of faith and hope. Employed at first in pre-Christian grave images as a professional indication and as a marker of sailors’ graves, due to its cross-like shape, it became in early Christianity a disguised symbol of redemption.”[xix]

Like man, the symbol is also what it has been in order to be authentically what it will be.
It is therefore necessary to make memory and hope of this very rich and inexhaustible source, from which it is still possible to draw for our today.

*Giorgio ALDRIGHETTI*

*Blazoning and exegesis by heraldist Giorgio Aldrighetti of Chioggia (Venice), ordinary member of the Italian Heraldic Genealogical Institute. Miniatures by heraldist Enzo Parrino of Monterotondo (Rome).*

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[i] Heraldic partition consisting of a shield divided into three sections, of two different enamels, obtained by two curved lines that, from the midpoint of the upper

side of the shield, reach the midpoints of the two lateral flaps of the shield. (L. Caratti di Valfrei, *Dizionario di Araldica (Dictionary of Heraldry)*, Milan 1997, p. 50. entry *Cappato*.

[ii] “A figure reproduced in its natural colour (i.e. as it appears in nature) and not as a heraldic enamel (*Ibid*., p. 18, entry *al naturale).*

[iii] “These are all the different external ornaments of a coat of arms, placed above a shield”. In this case. on the monogram). *(Ibid.*, p: 203, entry *timbro* (*stamp)*).

[iv] “They are the crampons of the anchor”, (La Caratti di Valfrei, *Dizionario di Araldica,* cit., p. 211, entry *uncini* (*hooks).*

[v] Prelatic hat, a sign of ecclesiastical dignity, depicted with a hemispherical cap and flat round brim characteristic of the galero, a broad-brimmed headdress used from the late Middle Ages until recent times by cardinals and other prelates. Used as a non-liturgical external adornment of the shield. It takes on different colours, and is adorned with cords from which one or more bows usually hang in a pyramid shape on both sides; the dignity and role held by the holder can be deduced from their number and the enamels of the ensemble. (A. Cordero Lanza di Montezemolo-A. Pompili, *Manuale di Araldica Ecclesiastica*, cit., p. 116, entry on the *Cappello prelatizio (prelatial hat*).

[vi] The most eminent and reverend cardinals of the Holy Roman Church stamp their shield – attached to a gold astylar cross, trifoliate, placed in a pole, if they have episcopal consecration – with their hat, cords and tassels *of* red. The bows in number of thirty are arranged fifteen on each side, in five orders of 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

[vii] Jacques Le Goff, *L’uomo medievale,* Bari 1994, p. 34.

[viii] *Catechism of the Catholic Church,* Vatican City 1999, p. 335.

[ix] A. Cordero Lanza di Montezemolo – A. Pompili, *Manuale di Araldica Ecclesiastica*, cit., p. 18.

[x] P. F. degli Uberti, *Gli Stemmi Araldici dei Papi degli Anni Santi,* Ed. Piemme, s. d

[xi] from *L’Osservatore Romano*, 31 March 1969.

[xii] The heraldist His Excellency Most Rev. Bruno Bernard Heim for the Patriarchal

Coat of Arms states: “*The Patriarchs adorn their shield with a green hat from which descend two cords, also green, ending in fifteen green bows on each side”* (B. B. Heim, *L’Araldica della Chiesa Cattolica, origini, usi, legislazione*, Vatican City 2000, p. 106.)

[xiii] G. Crollalanza (di), *Enciclopedia heraldico-cavalleresca*, Pisa 1886, pp. 516-517, entry *Rosso*.

[xiv] L Caratti di Valfrei, *Dictionary of Heraldry,* Milan 1997, p. 18, entry *al naturale*.

[xv] A. Cordero Lanza di Montezemolo – A. Pompili, *Manuale di Araldica Ecclesiastica,* cit., p. 28, entry *Al naturale*.

[xvi] *Cooperators of God,* Rome 1976-1977, Edizioni Cooperatori, p. 69

[xvii] G. Aldrighetti, *Il bosco e le rose. Il nostro stemma (The Wood and the Roses. Our coat of arms). Bollettino Salesiano*, December 2018.

[xviii] L Caratti di Valfrei, *Dizionario di Araldica,* cit., p. 21, entry *Ancora.*

[xix] H. Biedermann, *Enciclopedia dei simboli,* Milan 1989, p.30, entry *Ancora*.