

THE COAT OF ARMS *of* THE MOST REVEREND EDWARD M. RICE

Bishop-designate for the Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau

Gules, between three French crowns Or, a chevron Azure, fimbriated Argent, charged with two garbs of the second.

Significance

The episcopal heraldic achievement, or bishop's coat of arms, is composed of a shield, which is the central and most important part of the design, a scroll with a motto and the external ornamentation. The design is described (blazoned) as if the description was being given by the bearer (from behind) with the shield being worn on the left arm. Thus, it must be remembered, where it applies, as the device is viewed from the front that the terms sinister and dexter are reversed.

Drawing upon heritage of his parents, John and Helen (Madden), the Rice "family arms" (a red field with a blue chevron) has been varied and differenced to reflect its use by the Bishop. As solely a mark of difference the chevron is outlined ("fimbriated") in silver (white). Upon the chevron are two golden (yellow) garbs of wheat, taken from the arms of The Most Reverend Robert J. Carlson, Metropolitan Archbishop of Saint Louis and Principal Consecrator for Bishop Rice's elevation to the episcopacy of the Roman Catholic Church. The garbs are also emblematic of "The Bread of Life," The Eucharist, which is the core mystery of the Catholic Faith and the central activity of the priesthood.

Above and below the chevron are three golden "French crowns," (elevations are in the form of fleur-de-lis). One crown honors Saint Louis, King of France, and titular of the See City of Saint Louis, that His Excellency has served as a priest and now as a bishop. Another crown gives honor to Saint Edward the Confessor, His Excellency's baptismal patron. A third crown honors the Blessed Virgin Mary, especially in her title of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, the parish where His Excellency was baptized.

For his motto, His Excellency Bishop Rice has selected the Latin phrase "VENITE ET VIDEBITIS." The phrase is taken from the Gospel of John, Chapter 1:39, the call of the first disciples, Andrew and John. When they ask Our Lord where He is staying Jesus responds, "Come, and you will see." The verse was chosen to recognize His Excellency's seminary and vocation work and to highlight the call of Pope John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI for a time of "new evangelization" in the Church.

The achievement is completed by the external ornamentation which are a gold (yellow) processional cross, that is placed in back of the shield and which extends above and below the shield, and the pontifical hat, called a "galero," with its six tassels in three rows on either side of the shield, all in green. These are the heraldic insignia of a prelate of the rank of bishop, by instruction of The Holy See, of March 31, 1969.

(by Deacon Paul J. Sullivan)

