

Symbols of the Bishop

The Cathedral Church

The cathedral church is the church that is the site of the bishop's cathedra or chair. Generally, the bishop presides at the more solemn liturgies in this church.

The diocesan cathedral in the majesty of its building is a symbol of the spiritual temple that is built up in souls and is resplendent with the glory of divine grace.

As St. Paul says: "We are the temple of the living God" (II Corinthians 6:16). "The cathedral, furthermore, should be regarded as the express image of Christ's visible Church, praying, singing, worshipping on earth. The cathedral should be regarded as the image of Christ's Mystical Body, whose members are joined together in an organism of charity that is sustained by the outpouring of God's gifts" (Apostolic Constitution of Pope Paul VI, *Mirificus Eventus*, 1966).

The Cathedra or Bishop's Chair

In the Diocese of Ogdensburg, as in every diocese, there is only one cathedral – "the bishop's church," in the words of the American church architect, Robert Rambusch. The bishop's chair, or *cathedra*, is installed here and is placed prominently near the main altar. It represents the seat of diocesan authority that is vested in the bishop, our chief priest, teacher and pastor, the one to whom all the people of the diocese look for guidance.

Miter

Originally the miter was a simple cap made of soft material, terminating in a peak with a string on each side to fasten it to the wearer's head when traveling about. By the 10th century, it took the form known to us today and its use was limited to liturgical ceremonies.

At first the miter was used exclusively by the pope as a mark of distinction, but by the 12th century its use was extended to all bishops as a mark of their office and a symbol of their authority. Today, bishops are invested with a miter during their ordination ceremony. It is used by popes, bishops, cardinals and sometimes by abbots when officiating at liturgical ceremonies.

Crosier

The crosier or pastoral staff takes its shape from the crook used by shepherds. In the 5th century it became customary for the pope to carry a wooden staff in processions. By the 6th century, all bishops acquired the custom of carrying a staff as an outward sign of their ministry as shepherds of God's people.

In later centuries, pastoral staffs were crafted from precious metals and decorated with jewels. Today, the bishop is presented with a crosier to be used at liturgical services. It is carried by the bishop of the diocese only as a sign of his jurisdiction, a sign that is indeed his flock.

Ring

Originally worn by the pope and known as the "Fisherman's Ring," its purpose was to link the ministry of the pope with ministry of St. Peter the Apostle. By the 11th century, all bishops adopted the custom as a reminder of their participation in the ministry of the Apostles.

The ring is a sign of the bishop's fidelity to and nuptial bond with the Church, his spouse. The material and style of the ring is the choice of the individual bishop. It is presented to him at his ordination to be worn at all time as a visible sign of this apostolic ministry.

Pectoral Cross

The pectoral cross is worn by the pope, cardinals, bishops and abbots. It is worn over the breast (*pectus*) of the wearer. The pectoral cross reflects the order of dignity of the office of bishop or abbot. It served originally as a reliquary of the True Cross, which encouraged the custom of wearing this cross close to the breast. The bishop assumes the cross upon his ordination and wears this cross either suspended from a ceremonial cord at liturgical services or on a chain with his clerical suit.

Zucchetto

The zucchetto, or skullcap as it is sometimes called, is part of the liturgical and choir dress of the pope, cardinals, bishops, abbots and priests. It was developed to cover the tonsure (part of the back of the head that is shaved as a man entered into the clerical state.)

In recent times, although permitted to all the clergy, only the pope, cardinals, bishops and some abbots have made use of it. It is worn during liturgical and some non-liturgical function and it is removed during the liturgy at the Holy, Holy, Holy, so that the head might not be covered in the presence of The Blessed Sacrament.