

Sacred Symbols of a Bishop



Mitre – The mitre is worn by a bishop as a mark of his office and a symbol of his authority. The mitre is presented to the bishop during the Rite of Ordination of a Bishop. The proper color of a mitre is always white. The mitre is distinguished from other episcopal vestments in that it is always laid aside when the bishop prays at Mass.



Crosier – The crozier, also known as the pastoral staff, is conferred on a bishop at his consecration. It is a symbol of his authority and jurisdiction. The origin of the pastoral staff is associated with the shepherd's crook. It is employed by a bishop whenever he performs solemn liturgical functions, by right in his own diocese.



Episcopal Ring – The bishop's ring is a sign of his faithfulness and bond with the Church. It is presented to him at his ordination and worn at all times as a visible sign of his apostolic ministry. The material and style of the ring are of the bishop's choice.



Pectoral Cross – The pectoral cross is worn on the chest, usually suspended from the neck by a cord or chain. In ancient and medieval times pectoral crosses were worn by both clergy and laity, but by the end of the Middle Ages the pectoral cross came to be a special indicator of position worn by bishops.



Zucchetto – The zucchetto, also known as a skullcap, is typically worn by a bishop. It originally protected head bared by the tonsure, a hairstyle in which the center of the scalp was shaved as a sign of humility and piety. It is worn under the mitre, but removed at the Eucharistic Prayer so that the bishop's head is uncovered in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament.



Coat of Arms – Unless a new bishop has a family coat of arms, he typically adopts within his shield symbols that indicate his interests or past service. Devotion to a particular saint is represented by symbols established in iconography and heraldic tradition.

The ecclesiastical hat is a distinctive part of the achievement of arms of a Roman Catholic cleric. This hat, called a galero was originally a pilgrim's hat like a sombrero. A bishop's galero is green with six tassels on each side. The display of a cross behind the shield is a mark of their dignity. A motto is a short phrase usually appearing below the