

Explanation of the Bishop's Coat of Arms



1. The Holy Child Jesus, Señor Santo Niño de Cebu, is at the very center of the shield, sailing on the waving Philippine flag. The huge rising sun behind the image and three stars above it represent the earliest known contact of Christianity in the Philippine soil. This is a portrayal of Isaiah's prophecy (Isaiah 9:2) on the people walked in darkness and have seen a great light in Jesus. Señor Santo Niño is the greatest light for Filipinos who believe and devote their lives to worship and honor God in the image of a child. It brings back the work of evangelization in the Philippines by the first missionaries and how the Filipino Christian faith started and matured. It recalls the many miracles that Santo Niño de Cebu continually blessed upon the Filipino people.

2. In both the upper left-hand and right-hand corners are the Greek Alpha and Omega alphabets that Christianity use to symbolize Christ who is the beginning and the end. On Easter Vigil, priest marks the Paschal candle and invoke these Greek letters to stress the important characteristic of our witness of Christ's resurrection. He is the Alpha and the Omega! With this Christian faith reality, we rejoice and proclaim that we find everything in Christ.

3. At the bottom of the shield is an open and streaming Word of God, the open Holy Bible. The light blue vapor from the pages of the Bible represents the Blessed Virgin Mary as to how she received the very message of Archangel Gabriel and how she treasured God's message in her heart. The Word of God is alive and active, but it becomes more alive and active in our lives by the way we receive and treasure it. The Word of God is the best weapon to evangelize and transform the world.

4. From top to bottom, piercing through the shield, is the golden staff, the crozier, recalling the principal ministry of the bishop as God's shepherd. He must know his sheep so well that he "has the smell of their odor" as Pope Francis said on one occasion. It symbolizes service as the anchor of bishop's life and authority in the Church and in the diocese.

6. The Bishop's motto: "Todo lo puedo en Cristo que me fortalece" (Spanish), "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (English), is taken from the Epistle of Paul to the Philippians Chapter 4 verse 13. Without Christ, we are nothing. With Christ's presence, we have the greatest empowerment to serve and make a difference in the lives of people entrusted to our care. Christ is about salvation, the greatest gift to humanity.