

Archdiocese of Detroit

An episcopal coat of arms is composed of a shield, symbols, motto, scroll and external ornaments. The shield, which is the central and most important feature of any heraldic device, is traditionally described in 12th-century terms.

Upon his episcopal ordination in 1996, Bishop Vigneron selected for his personal coat of arms, a design that reflects his life as a priest and as a bishop, which is presented on the right side of the shield. This new design now combines his original coat of arms and that of the Archdiocese of Detroit.



The main portion of Archbishop Vigneron's personal arms is red with blue and silver wavy bars that are the heraldic representation of water. The swan symbolizes the fact that his family has lived in the same small farming village on Swan Creek since 1840. Above the swan is a gold fleur-de-lis to honor his French heritage and his deep devotion to the Blessed Mother as the Immaculate Conception. The Archbishop's home parish church, Immaculate Conception in Anchorville, Michigan, was built on land given to the church by his great-great-great grandfather. The upper portion of his coat of arms is composed of a gold field with a cluster of purple grapes with their stems and leaves of green. This is to honor his family name, Vigneron, the French word for "vine tender."

The left side of the shield is the crest of the Archdiocese of Detroit which symbolically honors Michigan's spiritual father, St. Isaac Jogues, the State of Michigan, the Blessed Trinity and the City of Detroit. It is divided into four gold sections by a black cross embellished with three gold stars. A pair of black antlers appears in the section at the upper left and a black martlet in the other three. The black and gold colors are from the shield of St. Isaac Jogues as are the antlers (which also appear in the State Seal of Michigan) and the three gold stars honor the Blessed Trinity. The martlets are mythical birds that appear on the shield of Antoine de la Mothe Cadillac, whom historians honor as the founder of Detroit in 1701.

For his motto, Bishop Vigneron adopted the phrase "Aspicientes in Jesum." Taken from St. Paul's Letter to the Hebrews (Heb. 12:2), it expresses his hope that in all we do and in all we are, we must keep our focus correct while "keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus."

The external ornaments are a gold processional cross and a pontifical hat, called a *gallero*, with its ten tassels all in green, in four rows on either side of the shield. These insignia identify the crest as one of an archbishop.

— Rev. Mr. Paul J. Sullivan, of the Diocese of Providence, originally created Bishop Vigneron's personal coat of arms and wrote its description.