



## The Coat of Arms of Archbishop Roger L. Schwietz, OMI

### Significance

The entire “achievement,” or coat of arms as it is generally called, is composed of the shield with its charges, the motto and the external ornaments. The arms feature the heraldic emblems of the Archbishop. Archbishop Schwietz’s arms incorporate the his personal heraldic elements and those of an archbishop, namely the shield is surmounted by a metropolitan cross and the tassels on the hat are increased from three to four rows.

### The left side of the shield

The arms of the Archdiocese of Anchorage – simple in design but replete with meaning. The anchor is a canting representation of the name of the Archdiocese. Canting arms “sing out” the name of the bearer. The anchor, the liturgical symbol for the virtue of Hope, is also a charge in the coat of arms of St. Pius X who ruled the See of Peter from 1903 to 1914. It was in this latter year that the city of Anchorage was founded as the headquarters of the Alaska Railroad.

Above the anchor is a star of six points to represent the Star of Bethlehem. This star, symbolizing Christ, is guarded on either side by a lily symbolizing Mary and Joseph. Thus, the Holy Family, the title of the cathedral in Anchorage, is signified. The star likewise appears in the arms of St. Pius X.

### **The right side of the shield**

To the right of the viewer, the shield is emblazoned with the personal arms of Archbishop Schwietz. By joining the personal arms on the same shield with those of the Archdiocese, the spiritual union of a shepherd with his See is expressed, a thought also symbolized by the ring which the prelate wears on his right hand.

The white falcon on a red background represents the faith of the people of Poland, the cultural heritage of Archbishop Schwietz's parents. The white color stands for the purity of faith, the red for the strength of faith to which Christians are called.

The rays of light on the lower half of the right side of the shield depict the Schwietz family name, which means "little lights." The gold color represents the Risen Christ as the true light of the world.

The "M" crowned by the cross is from the official seal of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate. Mary, as patroness and Mother of the Church, stands beneath the cross as a symbol of her fidelity. The ebony color and "M" are taken from the Oblate Cross.

The blue background on the lower part of the right side of the shield represents the lakes and natural beauty of northern Minnesota, particularly the majesty of Lake Superior, which forms the eastern border of the Duluth Diocese, where Archbishop Schwietz was ordained bishop in 1990 and served for 10 years.

### **The Motto**

The motto that Archbishop Schwietz has chosen – "Jesus Christ is Lord" – is from the early Christian hymn found in Philippians 2:6-11.