

The Most Reverend Walter P. Kellenberg, D.D.
First Bishop of Rockville Centre



Blazon:

Impaled Arms. Dexter: Per saltire azure and or, on an ogress between two escallops in the flanks and one in base, the chief charged with a lamb's head coupé, all counterchanged, three coupeaux, one over two, argent, with a bordure wavy of the last. Sinister: Vert, two ears of corn, a mountain issuing from the base or, charged with three ermine spots sable, on a chief argent, two piles azure accosting a mullet of the last. Motto: "Regina Verte Lumina."

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. As one looks at the shield, the terms "dexter" and "sinister" must be understood contrariwise, as the shield was worn on the arm in medieval days and these terms were used in the relationship of one behind the armor.

By custom in ecclesiastical heraldry the arms of the diocese are displayed in the dexter impalement, on the left to the viewer.

The arms of the Diocese of Rockville Centre are based on the history of Long Island and the etymology of the name Rockville Centre. The shield is divided per saltire and is bordered by a bordure composed of wavy lines.

The tinctures of the field within the bordure are gold and blue. These identical tinctures appear on the coat of arms of King William III of the House of Nassau and on the arms which the county of Suffolk in England has used at times, these arms being those of Ipswich. In 1692 Governor Benjamin Fletcher addressed the Council in the old Stadt Huys in New York and expressed the wish that the name of William III of the House of Nassau might be retained forever among them, and

therefore asked for a bill calling Long Island "The Island of Nassau." The bill was passed, and as it has never been repealed, this is still the legal name of the island (Long Island Almanac, 1931, p.71). Suffolk County, Long Island, was named in honor of the county of like name in England on November 1, 1683, by the First General Assembly of the English colonists. It is these two counties which now comprise the newly created Diocese of Rockville Centre. Thus, Nassau and Suffolk are commemorated by the tinctures of the arms of their forebears in England.

It is interesting to note that this historical division of the shield into two colors is accomplished by the heraldic saltire, which forms the Greek letter Chi, the initial letter of Christ in that language.

Three of the four partitions formed by the saltire are emblazoned with scallop shells for a very definite reason. Although "Lange Eyeandt" was the Dutch name for the island which was called by the Colonial Legislature "Nassau," nevertheless, there were earlier names for Long Island. When discovered in 1609 by Henry Hudson, Long Island was inhabited by thirteen tribes of Algonquin Indians. The names of these Indians were Matinecock, Nissaquag, Setalcott, Corchaug, Canarsee, Rockaway, Merric, Marsapeague, Secatogue, Patchogue, Shinnecock, Montauk and Manhasset. The Long Island Almanac (1931, p. 71) says that "Names of Long Island are a record of the Indian, Dutch and English occupation." There were no less than twelve names for the island itself, besides those of Nassau and Long Island. Seawanhacky or "Island of Shells" was the name generally used by the Indians of the mainland in preference to Matouwacks or the rarer Paumanock. Wampanamon is also one of the names which the Algonquin Indians bestowed on Long Island. It takes its meaning from "wampum" and also means "Island of Shells." The name was given to the extreme eastern point of the Island. It first occurs, among the colonists in the Indian deed of July 11, 1661, for Montauk. Wampum, or white money, was made originally from the stem or stock of the periwinkle. Suckanhock, or black money, was made from the inside of the shell of the quahaug or hard clam. The three principal Indian names given the islands, Meitanawack (Matouwacks), Seawanhacky and Poumanock, are derived from the industry carried on by the Indians in the manufacture of beads and other ornaments from shells. Meitanawack (Matouwacks) is the material of which the shells were made; Seawanhacky was the article itself, finished and ready for sale; and Paumanock was the tax or tribute of wampum which the Indians were obliged to pay.

The reason for the three escallop shells (Island of Shells) on the coat of arms is now apparent. The escallop shell is also truly heraldic, and a symbol which is often used to signify the flowing of water in the Sacrament of Baptism; in the Middle Ages anyone who made the pilgrimage to the Shrine of St. James the Greater at Compostella was entitled to wear the escallop shell as a badge.

The wavy silver bordure is the heraldic equivalent of water and, surrounding, as it does, the other charges, signifies the insular nature of the diocese. Medieval heraldry was very fond of these canting arms or "armes parlantes," which are allusive arms bespeaking the name of the bearer - the shells express the Indian name for Long Island.

The lamb's head is the symbol of St. Agnes, virgin and martyr, the titular of the Cathedral of the Diocese of Rockville Centre. St. Agnes has been represented with a lamb, the symbol of her virginal innocence, since the Middle Ages. On her feast, January 21, two lambs are solemnly blessed and from their wool are made the palliums sent by the Pope to the archbishops of the Church throughout the world. The black roundle in the center of the shield with the three stones or rocks affords canting arms for Rockville Centre. The black roundle is indeed in the exact center of the shield. The three rocks or stones are derived from the coat of arms of Pope Pius XII, who established the new Diocese of Rockville Centre in April, 1957. The roundle is tinctured in black to represent the seventeenth century name of Brooklyn, from the diocese of which the See of Rockville Centre was separated in April of 1957. The black tincture represents the marshes, which recalled to the Dutch their homeland in Breuckelen on the Vecht in the Province of Utrecht. The Dutch who settled Brooklyn at first called it "Breuck-Landt," meaning "broken land," or "marshland," inasmuch as a great deal of land was broken up by patches of water.

The sinister impalement bears the personal coat of arms of Bishop Kellenberg. The coat of arms of the Kellenberg family, which stems from the vicinity of Holland and Germany, consists of a mountain in natural colors upon a black field with a golden chief (upper compartment) bearing a black eagle. The coat of arms of Bishop Kellenberg has been differenced by changing the tincture of the field from black to green to recall Saint Patrick as the patron of the Bishop's native Archdiocese of New York, and to commemorate the eighteen years which the Bishop spent as a priest in Saint Patrick's Cathedral.

The mountain in the base and the two ears of corn form canting arms which bear symbols for the name of the bearer, "Berg," the last syllable of Kellenberg, means mountain in German; and "Kern," the family name of the Bishop's mother, means

an ear of corn. Several Kern coats of arms bear ears of corn to confirm this etymology.

A trinitarian number of ermine spots are charged on the mountain for patronage to His Eminence Francis Cardinal Spellman, whom Bishop Kellenberg served as Auxiliary Bishop.

Besides the ears of corn, the shield has been further differenced by removing the eagle from the chief and substituting a blue star between two like-tinctured piles (reversed triangular objects) on a silver field to honor the Blessed Mother of God by her colors, blue and white. The star is the symbol of the Blessed Virgin under the title of Morning Star from her litany. This star also recalls Saint Mary's Cathedral in the Diocese of Ogdensburg, where Bishop Kellenberg ruled at the time of his appointment to Rockville Centre.

The motto is taken from the hymn of first vespers in the new office of the Feast of the Assumption of Our Lady on August 15. It is translated: "Queen, guide me by thy light."

The external ornaments are composed of the green pontifical hat with its six tassels on each side disposed in three rows, and the precious mitre, the processional cross and the crosier, all in gold. These are the presently accepted heraldic trappings of a prelate of the rank of Bishop. Before 1870, the pontifical hat was worn at solemn cavalcades held in conjunction with papal functions. The color of the pontifical hat and the number and color of the tassels were signs of the rank of a prelate, a custom which is still preserved in ecclesiastical heraldry.