

The Most Reverend John R. McGann, D.D.
Second Bishop of Rockville Centre



Blazon:

Argent, an eagle rising wings addorsed and inverted gules, haloed or, in chief a lion's head erased of the second, between two mullets azure, in base a crescent of the last. Motto: Serve the Lord with Gladness.

Significance:

The coat of arms has as its principal charge an eagle rising, the head bearing a halo, to represent Saint John the Evangelist, the baptismal patron of the Bishop. The eagle as a symbol of Saint John dates beyond the fourth century, and

appropriately symbolizes the Gospel of Saint John which soars to the very heavens in proof of the Divinity of Christ.

The lion's head is an abbreviation of the full lion rampant on the coat of arms of the McGann family of Ireland.

The two stars have many significances. They refer Mary, the Mother of God, under her stellar title of "morning Star" from the Litany of Loretto. The stars also represent the mother and sister of the Bishop who both bear the revered name of Mary. Finally, the stars honor Bishop Kellenberg, who displays such a Marian star on his coat of arms, and whom Bishop McGann will assist as Auxiliary.

The blue crescent on the silver field honors Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception in her Marian colors. This lunar symbol is derived from the Apocalypse: "And a great sign appeared in the heavens: a woman clothed with the sun and the moon was under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars (12:1).

The motto, "Serve the Lord with Gladness (Psalm 99:2), has as its full verse: "Sing joyfully to God, all the earth: serve ye the Lord with gladness. Come in before his presence with exceeding great joy." A motto is a program of life and the ideal of the bearer of the shield.

The external ornaments of the shield are composed of the pontifical hat with its six tassels on each side, disposed in three rows, all in green, and the episcopal cross tinctured in gold. These are the heraldic insignia of a prelate of the rank of Bishop in accordance with the Instruction of the Holy See of April 17, 1969. 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 the prelate a custom which is still preserved in ecclesiastical heraldry.

The foregoing description was prepared by William F. J. Ryan, of New York, New York.