

# The coat of arms, motto and ring signal simplicity for Pope Francis I

Daniela Petroff, The Associated Press - Published Monday, Mar. 18, 2013

VATICAN CITY -- Pope Francis is mixing his Argentine past with his Roman present to create his new papal coat of arms, while harking back to a pope associated with the Second Vatican Council for the simple ring that he will receive during Tuesday's installation Mass.

The Vatican on Monday released details of the symbols of Francis' pontificate, which in its inaugural days has been marked by his preference for simplicity and aversion to Holy See splendor.

The new pope chose to keep the same coat of arms he had as archbishop of Buenos Aires, and picked the simplest ring out of several models offered him. It is fashioned in gold-plated silver and was once a gift to Pope Paul VI, who presided over the second half of Vatican II, the meetings that modernized the church.

## PHOTOS



The so-called fisherman's ring, from the apostle Peter who was a fisherman and the first pope, was chosen by Pope Francis as the ring he will receive during the installation Mass, shown here on March 18, 2013. (AP / Andrew Medichini)



The new papal coat of arms is shown in this photo released by the Vatican Press Office, Monday, March 18, 2013. (AP / Andrew Medichini)

The coat of arms has a necessary addition -- the papal symbols surrounding it: a gilded miter, and crossed gold and silver keys.

The shield itself, in very simple almost modern heraldry, depicts a star, a grape-like plant, and a monogram of Christ at the centre of a fiery sun. The symbols represent the three members of the Holy Family, Jesus, Mary and Joseph. In religious writing, Mary is often referred to as a "star," while St. Joseph is often depicted holding a nard, a Middle Eastern plant. The monogram is the symbol of Francis' Jesuit order.

His motto suggests even more about the root of Francis' message:

"Miserando atque eligendo," Latin for "Having had mercy, he called him," comes from an episode in the Gospel where Christ picks a seemingly unworthy person to follow him.

Francis has stressed the importance of mercy, saying that often people are unforgiving with one another, but that God is all-merciful. "And very patient," he ad-libbed from the window of his studio during his first Angelus prayer Sunday.

In a written explanation of the coat of arms, motto and ring, the Vatican said that the inspiration for the motto stems from the calling Jorge Bergoglio heard at the age of 17, when "he experienced the presence of the love of God in a very special way," and decided to join the Jesuit order.

Francis's official ring will look like gold, but in fact is only gold plated.

Known as the fisherman's ring from the apostle Peter, who was a fisherman and the first pope, Francis's version depicts St. Peter holding the keys of the Holy See. Each pope picks his own ring, which will be destroyed at the end of his papacy.

According to Vatican spokesman the Rev. Federico Lombardi, the ring was one of several offered to Francis. Fashioned in the 1960s by Italian goldsmith Enrico Manfrini, it was offered to Paul VI through his private secretary. Lombardi said it is not known if the pope ever used it.

Paul VI presided over the second half of Vatican II, the 1962-65 meetings that paved the way for the liturgy to be celebrated in the vernacular rather than Latin and revolutionized the church's relations with Jews.

Ref.: <http://www.ctvnews.ca/world/pope-francis-coat-of-arms-motto-and-ring-signal-simplicity-1.1201087>

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