

Symbols of the Ministry of a Bishop

Pectoral Cross

A pectoral cross is often worn on the chest (*pectus* in Latin), along with a ring, as a sign of service by bishops and monastic leaders. It reminds us that, in imitation of Christ, we are called to bear with love and patience the many crosses and afflictions that come into our lives.

Ring

The bishop's ring is a symbol of the bishop's fidelity to and covenant relationship with the Church, the spouse of God. The bishop's ring was first mentioned by St. Augustine and its practical use as a seal.

Miter

The miter is the proper liturgical headdress for all bishops of the Western Church. The word comes from the Greek word *mitra*, meaning "turban." It consists of two stiffened flaps of material, representative of the Hebrew and Christian Testaments of Scripture, joined by a headband with two fringed strips hanging from the back base of the miter. The miter, as we know it today, developed from the conical head-covering worn by the Hebrew spiritual leaders.

Pastoral Staff

The pastoral staff (sometimes called a *crozier*) is conferred on bishops and monastic leaders at their installation. In the West, the top of the staff is curved to remind the bishop of the shepherd's crook and of the pastoral care of the people entrusted to bishop. It is a sign of the bishop's need to watch over the whole flock, to encourage the faithful, restore the lost, and build up the Body of Christ.

Pastoral Motto

A bishop's personal motto has always been intended to represent his/her personal spirituality and theologically-based philosophy of life and is most frequently grounded in Sacred Scripture or in a prominent prayer or litany. Bishop Steve's motto is from Saint Matthew's Gospel (20:28), ***Not to be served, but to serve***. By selecting this verse of Sacred Scripture for his motto, Bishop Steve confirms his own belief about the manner of ministry and service as a bishop, as well as for the entire Catholic household of faith in its life.