

**Description of the Episcopal coat of arms
of S.E.R. Mons. Paolo Bizzeti SJ
Bishop of Tabe
Apostolic Vicar of Anatolia**

According to traditional catholic ecclesiastical heraldry, a bishop's coat of arms is commonly composed of:

- a **shield**, of various forms (consistent with features of traditional coat of arms shields) containing symbols representing personal ideals, family traditions, or references to a name, lifestyle and other imagery;
- a **processional cross** with a transversal arm, in gold, mounted vertically on a staff behind the shield;
- a **prelatical hat** (*cardinal's hat*), with pendent cords and twelve tassels, six on each side (arranged from top to bottom, in order 1.2.3.), all in green;
- a **scroll** positioned on the lower part of the shield, containing a motto, normally written in black.

In our case, a classical, Gothic shaped shield has been chosen (frequently used in ecclesiastical heraldry), and a processional cross which recalls the **Cross of St. James**.



The motto RAB SIZINLE
(*The Lord be with you*)

In honor of God's people in Anatolia, who were now under his pastoral care, Father Bizzeti adopted an episcopal motto in Turkish, *RAB SIZINLE*, which translated into English means *THE LORD BE WITH YOU*, thus recalling the biblical credo of alliance which is repeated during the liturgical greeting by the priest to the congregation during the service. This greeting became such a habit, that the Jews of the Old Testament used it in their daily encounters amongst themselves; in place of "good morning" or "good evening" they greeted each other with "The Lord be with you!" (*Rut 2,4: יהוה עִמָּכֶם*).

Interpretation

Positioned in the central part of the shield is the emblem of the Society of Jesus, to which Father Bizzeti belonged: *a radiantly flaming sun* with the letters *IHS*, (*Jesus Hominum Salvator*), the trigraph of Jesus; positioned on a background in *light blue*, symbol of the incorruptibility of the sky: it expresses the certainty of the sky's victory over every other aspiring lordship.

On the upper portion there is a *star* - a classic Marian symbol which signifies that the new bishop has entrusted his new pastoral ministry to the maternal protection of our Heavenly Mother - and *a pomegranate*.

The pomegranate is an ancient plant that originated in Western Asia and is cited on numerous occasions in the Bible: The Book of Exodus (*Ex 39, 24-26*) states that images representing this fruit must adorn the ritual robes of the high priests; it is also considered one of the special fruits of the "Promised Land", in fact it is written "...*God is bringing you to a good land... a land of wheat, barley and grapes, where figs, pomegranates and olive trees thrive abundantly*" (*Dt 8,8*).

According to Jewish tradition the pomegranate contains 613 seeds that represent the 613 commandments of the Torah, which if observed diligently one is certain to attain an elevated spirituality of wisdom and fairness.

Because of its vermilion red seeds and above all its juice, the pomegranate in Christianity symbolizes the blood shed by Christ and the Martyrs and represents the union of all sons of the Church: for example it appears in the works depicting Sant' Ambrogio with multiform symbolic meanings, yet it is always attributable to the image of the Church; in *Esamerone*, Ambrogio offers the clearest and most complete explanation regarding this symbol: the Church, in the likeness of the pomegranate, is specious regarding the blood of the Martyrs but is primarily *endowed with the blood of Christ*. In fact, it is found in many religious-themed paintings and often painters of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries depicted the Christ Child holding a pomegranate to illustrate the passion that Christ will have to undergo.

In various Middle Eastern cultures it has always been a symbol of fertility: even today in Turkey, during marriage celebrations, it is tradition that the bride throws a pomegranate on the ground and will have as many children as the number of seeds that come out of the split fruit.