

## SYMBOLISM OF THE COAT OF ARMS OF THE CATHEDRAL-BASILICA OF SAINT AUGUSTINE

The coat of arms of the Cathedral-Basilica of Saint Augustine have been developed in harmony with the ancient heraldic tradition. They have been composed with a shield and other symbols granted to a church that has been designated a minor basilica.

The shield, or *escutcheon*, is quartered *gules* (red) and *argent* (silver) with a heart transfixing in *fess point* by an arrow in *or* (gold).

The quartered field of red and silver is reminiscent of the Spanish origin of the City of St. Augustine. It represents the royal arms of Castile and Leon in Spain. From there an expedition led by Don Pedro Menendez de Aviles embarked and first sighted land along the east coast of Florida on August 28, 1565 – the feast of Saint Augustine of Hippo from which the City would take its name.

The heart, symbol of the heart of Saint Augustine, is transfixed by an arrow, symbol of Divine Love. It is the accepted emblem of the Saint after whom the City is named and which is the See City of the Diocese of St. Augustine. In his book *Confessions*, the Saint wrote: *Nos fecisti ad te et inquietum est cor nostrum donec requiescat in te* (“You have made us for Yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in You”).

Behind the shield are displayed the heraldic elements that are proper to a basilica.

The Pavilion (*ombrellino*, or canopy), in alternating stripes of red and gold, is a papal emblem dating from the 15<sup>th</sup> century. It was used as a protective covering for the pope in solemn processions eventually acquiring a purely symbolic function as a symbol of the temporal power of the Church. Its use in a church, honored with the title of minor basilica, is a reminder of the special relationship the specific church has with the Holy See.

The crossed keys, one in silver the other in gold, are the symbols of the papacy signifying the power to bind and loose given by the Lord Jesus to Saint Peter (*rf.*, Mt 16:19) and through him to his successors, the Bishops of Rome. The keys have been a traditional symbol of the papacy since the 14<sup>th</sup> century. The gold one alludes to the power of the heavenly kingdom while the silver one indicates the spiritual authority of the papacy on earth. The cord in red that unites the grips of the keys is said to represent the bond between the two powers. The color red is used to symbolize the blood of Christ shed for the forgiveness of sins.