

Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe - 2009

Relating the Miracle of Our Lady in Heraldic Vocabulary

The Society's 2009 Design Award for Corporate Heraldry was made to the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe, LaCrosse, Wis. The arms are blazoned *Tierced in chapé Vert and Argent a bunch of roses Gules leaved and slipped vert.*



The arms were designed by Professor Brian Abel Ragen of Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville, at the invitation of the Rev. Thomas Keller, an assistant to H. Em. Raymond Cardinal Burke, Archbishop of St. Louis. Cardinal Burke had founded the shrine some years before when he was Bishop of La Crosse.

In designing the arms, Ragen said his goal was "to create simple arms that tell part of the story of the Blessed Virgin's apparition in Mexico." As that story is told, Mary appeared before Juan Diego, an Indian, and instructed him to tell the Spanish bishop that she wanted a church built at the site of her apparition. After the bishop ignored him, Mary appeared before Juan Diego again to give him proof of her appearance to take to the bishop. Despite the winter cold and

snow on the ground, Mary made roses grow on a nearby bush; she told Juan Diego to cut some flowers, wrap them in his *tilma* (cloak), and take them to the bishop. When the cloak was unwrapped, an image of Mary appeared on the inside. That image is on display at the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico City and appears throughout Latin America.

Ragen explains that "the arms essentially take Juan Diego's *tilma* and fill it with Our Lady's roses. The division of the field is used in [Pope Benedict XVI's] arms, and in the arms associated with many Dominican institutions, where the sable and argent recall the Dominicans' white cassock and black cape. I chose vert so that with the roses we would have the red, white, and

green of the Mexican flag."

The Society's Design Award, named beginning in 2013 for the distinguished American heraldist Pierre de Chaignon la Rose, is awarded annually for excellence in heraldic design. The award is given to an American academic, corporate, military, civic, or social organization whose armorial bearings exemplify the best in heraldic design.

Information about the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe can be found at <http://www.guadalupe Shrine.org/>.