

Vatican releases Pope Francis' coat of arms, motto and ring



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A gold star representing the Virgin Mary, and the nardo, a grape-like plant with which St Joseph is often represented, are painted on a bright blue background. Above them is the emblem of Francis' Jesuit order. Together the three represent Jesus, Mary and Joseph.

The papal ring is in gold-plated silver and was originally offered to Paul VI in the 1960's.

The Vatican also unveiled the coat of arms and motto Francis will use - which remain the same as those he used as archbishop of Buenos Aires.

The coat of arms shows three symbols on a blue background: at the top, a sun with the letters IHS in the middle - the logo of the Jesuit Society - and underneath a five-point star and a lily, symbolising the Virgin Mary and St Joseph.

The Latin motto beneath the crest is "miserando atque eligendo" - which refers to a Bible passage showing Jesus Christ's "mercy" in choosing Matthew, a tax collector, to be one of his disciples.

"The motto recalls Pope Francis's personal vocation and he wanted to keep it," Fr Lombardi said.

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