

Armorial Seal  
of  
The Catholic Theological Society of America

**Blazon**

Quarterly, gules and sable, a cross throughout or; 1, a beehive argent; 2, a Greek cross of the last, interlaced at the junction with two rings conjoined of the third; 3, a dove regardant of the last, the beak of the third; 4, two arrows in saltire enfiled by a flaming heart of the fourth; over all an open book of the last, garnished of the third; on a chief of the fourth the sun in its splendor proper between two mullets azure. Crest: on a wreath of the colors an ancient lamp or.

**Seal**

A golden periphery, double edged in red, bears the legend "Societas Catholica Theologica Americana" in red. The shield is displayed on a white background bounded by the inner periphery.

**Significance**

The first and fourth quarters of the shield are tinctured in red, the color of the Humanity of Our Lord, and the cross is emblazoned in gold, the color of His Divinity. The cross of our salvation is an appropriate charge with which to quarter the arms of the Catholic Theological Society of America. The open book refers, of course, to the Sacred Scriptures.

To represent Tradition, the four Doctors of the Church who support the *Cathedra Petri*, enclosed in a gigantic casing of bronze above the apsidal altar of St. Peter in Rome, are represented by their symbols in the four quarters of the shield. Two are of the Latin and two are of the Eastern Church.

The beehive in the first quarter represents St. Ambrose, on whose lips as a young child a swarm of bees is said to have rested as a portent of his eloquence.

The symbol of the cross with the two interlaced circles in the second quarter is based on the history of the life of St. Athanasius and the Arian heresy of which he was the principal antagonist. Since

"Athanasius" is from the Greek, meaning "without death" or "immortality," a black field has been chosen to symbolize death and the cross is tinctured in silver to carry out the meaning of his name. Silver is the color of life and light and it is accentuated by being placed on a black background. The two circles, interlaced to symbolize unity in one person, represent the two natures in Christ, substantially joined, which Athanasius defended. They encircle the cross, the symbol of Faith and Jesus Christ, to bring to mind the Athanasian Creed which derives its title from this great Confessor and Doctor of the Church. The form of cross used is Eastern, commonly known as a Greek cross.

The third quarter indicates St. John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople. His name means "golden mouthed." It is said that a snow-white dove flew into the church at his ordination. The beak of the dove has been advisedly tinctured in gold to symbolize his name. The black field has been chosen to artistically balance the Athanasian second quarter.

The four-quarter bears the flaming heart with the two arrows to represent St. Augustine. This is the well-known symbol of the Bishop of Hippo.

The chief (upper compartment) bears a golden sun, the symbol of St. Thomas Aquinas, Doctor of the Church and author of the *Summa Theologica*. He is the patron of Catholic students, schools, and universities.

At either side of the emblem of the Angelic Doctor is a star. The stars represent Mary, the Mother of God, as "Stella Duce" or "Stella Maris," the guiding light of theological wisdom and "extirpator of all heresies."

Above the shield the lamp of learning and wisdom rests on a wreath to symbolize "Reason."

The order of the quarters follows chronologically the dates of birth of the four Doctors. The first Latin Doctor, Ambrose A. D. 340, is in the first quarter; the second quarter portrays the symbols for Athanasius A. D. 296, the first Greek Doctor; in the third quarter Chrysostom A. D. 346, the second Greek Doctor; and in the last quarter Augustine A. D. 354, the second Latin Doctor. The Greek Doctors are placed between the Latin Doctors in the first and fourth quarters.

WILLIAM F. J. RYAN.