

Father Flanagan League Society of Devotion - Crest History and Symbology of Design

This design was derived and inspired by the results of a design competition held in 2013 amongst the children of the national schools within the Diocese of Elphin, Servant of God Father Flanagan's native diocese in the West of Ireland.



This simple design is deep in meaning. Several of the images within the design convey more than one mutually reinforcing message or theme.

The tree is an extremely powerful symbol here. First, a tree is part of the Flanagan family coat of arms, thus it further echoes Servant of God Flanagan's Irish heritage, it can also represent the enormous sycamore tree adjacent to his home in Leabeg and the fact that Boys Town is recognized as a "Tree City" USA, thus a twinning link of the Sister City International relationship between the village of Ballymoe, Ireland with the village of Boys Town, Nebraska, USA. It has further symbology in faith as it could represent the Tree of Life (Revelations) or in Eastern Christianity it also represents the love of God... with plentiful fruit, beauty, protection and regeneration. Might, bounty, deep roots and a family tree (Boys Town alumni, the Universal Church/Body of Christ). In many cultures the tree represents life itself.

The Church... Obvious in its message and intent. This silhouette is of Dowd Chapel, Immaculate Conception Church is the final resting place of Servant of God Flanagan. It further represents Boys Town, the living legacy of his life's work for Christ and his Church.

The Celtic Cross connotes the Catholic Faith, but the Celtic Cross is more universally recognized and it further signals Servant of God Flanagan's Irish Heritage. It communicates Christ/faith, Catholic Church and Ireland. Note that within the Celtic Cross feature the Celtic Knot

representing the Holy Trinity.

Children and an Adult... The adult is actually the modified silhouette of the Father Flanagan statue, Servant of God Flanagan in cassock and the children represent the youth he served in his time and those at Boys Town now. The youth he served throughout the world and the image of a loving family. Trust between God's servants and the most vulnerable of God's children.

The Dove... is the most prominent universally used symbol to demonstrate the Holy Spirit... the Spirit that shrouded and moved Servant of God Flanagan in his work. The Spirit that came to and motivated Boys Town alumnus Ken Suddeth to initiate the cause for canonization. The Holy Spirit that moves through the Father Flanagan League in their devotion and that must be present in this cause. The Holy Spirit that must move through the laity to gain the intercession of Servant of God Flanagan for miracles and to gain the will of God in this matter to be recognized by the Catholic Church.

The design has the dates of Servant of God's Life and the banner is used for the League's name.

Nationalism is down-played in both, but heritage of Ireland and the USA are present in both, thus the potential to achieve a more universal image well recognizing heritage, mission and legacy.

A 4-color treatment is provided that uses the colors of the flags of Ireland and the USA.

Note that in our Western culture, people read and view things from left to right, top to bottom. Thus, the Ireland elements of his life and faith start on the left and the top begins with a symbol of life and family (tree) and recognizes his faith formation in Ireland (Celtic Cross). Moving to the right, we pick up his immigration to the USA, overcoming his extraordinary health challenges and repeated entries into seminaries around the world to become a priest in the Catholic Church (Church), the very place and source of his inspiration to serve God's children resulting in the mission and legacy that became Boys Town (Father with children).

This crest is simple, yet very deep and complex in telling the story of his faith and life. It is scalable and discernable even at small scale.