

Every bishop puts a slogan on his coat of arms. Sometimes it's devotional; sometimes it's biblical. Often it is in Latin. Bishop Raymond Boland had *Euntes docete omnes gentes*: "Go out and teach all nations." Bishop Robert Finn has *Quærite primum regnum Dei*: "Seek first the Kingdom of God." One of the most striking is that of Archbishop Mark Coleridge of Brisbane, Australia. His coat of arms reads, *Sanguis et aqua*, which means "Blood and water." He admits it sounds like something you would find on a pirate flag. But, of course, it is taken from the Passion according to St. John.

None of us should act like pirates, but there are times when we feel we are at sea, battling forces ranged around us. We are offended by risqué ads we see on TV. We feel lonely in our own neighborhoods. We are disappointed when another generation's values diverge from our own. Our faith lies close to our hearts, but we struggle to hold faith strongly when others do not support us.

The death of Jesus challenged the faith of his followers. It put them at odds with family, friends, soldiers and governments. Still, it converted some nonbelievers. John's gospel says that after Jesus died, a soldier pierced his side with a lance, and blood and water flowed out. John does not tell us the name of the soldier, but later tradition has called him Longinus. St. Peter's basilica in the Vatican claims to hold the spear he used in a reliquary close to the main altar. In Mark's gospel, a centurion says of the dead Jesus, "Truly this man was the son of God." Tradition has claimed that the centurion in Mark is also the soldier in John, though it isn't that clear from the gospel. Nonetheless, many people believe that the man called Longinus, who struck the last of Jesus' five wounds, afterwards became a believer and a saint.

His actions calls to mind two Old Testament passages. The gospel itself quotes Zechariah, "They will look upon him whom they have pierced." In the book of Ezekiel, the prophet sees water flowing from the right side of the temple, water that becomes a powerful stream bringing forth new life to the earth. This is why in some depictions of the crucifixion, the artist places the spear wound on Jesus' right side. This begins to explain why Archbishop Coleridge chose "Blood and water" as his motto. Blood symbolizes the eucharist; water baptism. Jesus had said, "Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life in you." And "No one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit."

Although we may feel at times that our faith lacks support, we have all we need within our reach. The waters of baptism, the blood of the eucharist pour out for us from the wounded side of Christ.