

THE MOST REVEREND WERNER FREISTETTER, BISHOP OF THE MILITARY ORDINARIATE OF AUSTRIA





The military ordinariate is responsible for the pastoral care of Catholics serving in the Austrian Armed Forces. The military ordinariate is headed by a bishop – the military bishop of Austria.

Werner Freistetter was born on 28 October 1953 in Linz [Upper-Austria].

He studied theology in Vienna and Rome and earned a doctorate in social ethics. He was ordained priest by the Archbishop of Vienna, Franz Cardinal König, on 9 October 1979 in Rome.

In the years that followed, Freistetter worked as a pastor in parishes of the Archdiocese of Vienna and as an assistant at the University of Vienna's Institute for Ethics and Social Sciences. Later he worked at the Pontifical Council for Culture in Rome and was a member of the Holy See's representation to the OSCE.

In 1997, he was entrusted by the then Military Bishop Christian Werner with the direction of the Institute for Religion and Peace at the Military Bishop's Office.

In 2006, he became Episcopal Vicar for Science and Research, Basic Theological Issues and International Relations.

As a military chaplain, he has been deployed to the Golan Heights, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and Lebanon.

Werner Freistetter is also known as the author and editor of numerous publications and for his extensive national and international lecturing activities.

He was appointed military bishop by Pope Francis on 16 April 2015 and was consecrated bishop by Apostolic Nuncio Peter Zurbriggen in the dome of Wiener Neustadt on 11 June 2015.



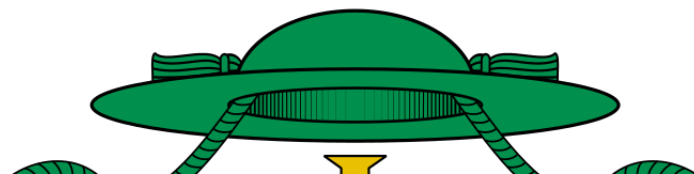


► In discussion with soldiers



► Symbols of a bishop: mitre and crosier

MOTTO AND COAT OF ARMS





The motto of Military Bishop Werner Freistetter is "Religio et Pax" [Religion and Peace].

The coat of arms includes the so-called "cross of paws", the symbol of the Catholic military chaplaincy in Austria, as well as a palm branch and a dove. The palm branch stands for the resurrection and the victory over death and sin. The dove stands for the Holy Spirit, for purity and peace. The colours of the coat of arms are silver and blue. Silver symbolises purity and clarity, but also stands for the colour white in the Austrian national flag, as silver is usually used instead of white in coats of arms. The colour blue stands for revelation and loyalty as well as faithfulness and peace.