

**Most Reverend Adam Joseph Maida  
(1984-1990)**

As former Vicar General and Moderator of the Curia of the Diocese of Green Bay, Monsignor Paul Koszarek wrote “Reflections on an Archbishop” when Bishop Adam Maida was appointed Archbishop of Detroit, Michigan by Pope John Paul II in late 1983. Among the unique characteristics he listed to describe the new archbishop of Detroit were the following:

sought to communicate honestly and clearly the teaching and the traditions of the church, a community builder, conscious of the Spirit’s presence in each member of the church, sought out and promoted the gifts and talents of all, a good listener, invited the opinions and the advice of others, especially eager to hear from people who had ideas and opinions which differed from his, patient with processes that required extended consultation, and an usual ability to sift, to digest and summarize.

When serving as the Vice-Chancellor of the Diocese of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Father Maida received a telephone call on October 31, 1983. He learned that Pope John Paul II would like him to become the next Bishop of the Diocese of Green Bay. He said, “*It came like a bolt of lightning.*” He agreed to accept the appointment to Green Bay and on November 8, 1983 the news was publicly released. Since he was not yet a Bishop, he would need to be ordained to the episcopate before he could be installed as the Ninth Bishop of Green Bay.

Adam Maida was born on March 18, 1930 in East Vandergrift, a suburb of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He was the first of three children of Adam and Sophie (Cieslak) Maida. At the age of 16, his father came to America from a rural area near Warsaw, Poland and settled in this Polish settlement in Pennsylvania. Although his father died in 1961, his mother lived in his home area with his priest brother, Father Thaddeus for many years

Following the completion of nine grades at East Vandergrift Public School, tenth grade at Scott Township High School and eleventh and twelfth grades at St. Mary High School in Orchard Lake, Michigan, Adam began his studies for the priesthood at Ss. Cyril and Methodius Seminary in Orchard Lake. He continued his studies for the priesthood at St. Vincent College in Latrobe, Pennsylvania where he received his Bachelor of Arts degree in philosophy in 1951 and his Licentiate in Theology at St. Mary University in Baltimore, Maryland in 1956. He was ordained to the priesthood on May 26, 1956, at St. Paul Cathedral in Pittsburgh.

Father Maida served as assistant pastor of St. Elizabeth Parish in Pleasant Hills until 1958, when he went to the Pontifical Lateran University in Rome and received a Licentiate in canon law. At the same time, former Norbertine Abbot Benjamin Mackin, also received his advanced degree in the same discipline.

In 1960, Father Maida was appointed Assistant Chancellor of the Diocese of Pittsburgh. He held this diocesan position until 1973 when he was named Diocesan Vice-Chancellor. Early in 1964, he received a Doctorate in civil law and also served as Adjunct Professor of Law at Duquesne University from 1971 until his appointment to Green Bay. From 1965-1967, he also was an Assistant Professor of Theology at Duquesne and from 1968-1969 he served as President of the Canon Law Society of America.

Before coming to Green Bay as Bishop in 1984, canonist Father Maida was appointed Consultor to the Vatican Commission for the Revision of the Code of Canon Law. He was actively engaged in the writing of a section of the Code in Book VII dealing with administrative procedures. He also was appointed Special Legal Counsel and Canonist for the Catholic Health Care Association in the United States. On September 23, 1983, he was named a Consultor to the Sacred Congregation for the Clergy, which was the highest dicastery dealing with priests throughout the world.

Among Cardinal Maida's publications were *Ownership, Control and Sponsorship of Catholic Institutions* (1975) and *The Tribunal Reporter* (editor; a casebook and commentary on grounds for annulment in the Catholic Church). His area of expertise concerns church property and finance.

Upon his appointment to Green Bay, then Bishop-elect Maida pledged that he would give all of his energies, talents and life to service in the Diocese of Green Bay. He described this appointment to the episcopate as a challenge and opportunity with the major issue being the shortage of priests.

On January 25, 1984, the Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul, the first anniversary of the promulgation by Pope John Paul II of the New Code of Canon Law, and the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the announcement of the Second Vatican Council by Pope John XXIII, Father Adam Maida was ordained a bishop and then installed as the Ninth Bishop of Green Bay in St. Francis Xavier Cathedral. His immediate predecessor, Bishop Aloysius Wycislo served as one of the two co-consecrators.

During his tenure in Green Bay from 1984-1990, Bishop Maida traveled to various regions of the diocese to visit students, teachers and staff members in Catholic schools and people in nursing homes. He ordained 11 men to the priesthood and increased the number of seminarians from six in 1983 to 24 in 1990. He made regular visits to vicariates and celebrated parish and diocesan events as he met with priests, deacons, religious and laypeople. Other commitments within the National Conference of Bishops and various national and international duties often took him out of the diocese. But again, in the words of Monsignor Koszarek, he kept his ministry centered on personal and communal prayer, particularly the Eucharist:

As priest, Adam Maida is convinced that ministry is made more fruitful through holiness of life. The Mass is central for him. He views the Mass as the source of his zeal and the summit of his ministry. He celebrates liturgies not from a sense of duty but with desire and with joy. His day begins with prayer and long meditation.

Whatever else his crowded days might include, the praying of the Liturgy of the Hours and the Rosary were never excluded.

Among the many diverse accomplishments of Bishop Maida during his six years in Green Bay were the following:

- 1984—convened the Diocesan Lay Congress
- 1985—established the Diocesan Finance Council, implemented the Diocesan Communications Plan, visited all Catholic nursing homes in the diocese, and convened hearings on the United States Bishops' Economic Letter
- 1986—initiated the diocesan census, conducted consultation with religious communities, mandated the parish pastoral council norms, established the Ministry Formation Program, named the first parish director in the diocese, hired the first full-time Director of Stewardship and Development and raised nine million dollars to endow diocesan educational programming through the *Lumen Christi* campaign
- 1987—appointed the first female Religious Diocesan Chancellor and appointed a Vicar for Priests
- 1988—convened the Diocesan Synod and established diocesan commissions, reinstated the permanent diaconate program and appointed the first deacon and laywoman to the Diocesan Corporate Board
- 1989—established the Diocesan Planning Council, streamlined diocesan agencies, implemented a public relations program for Catholic schools and mandated parishes and other diocesan institutions to participate in an unemployment compensation plan.

In February 1986, Bishop Maida also received an appointment to a 19 member American bi-partisan delegation to observe the Philippines presidential election. His role was primarily that of a private citizen. In a candid news interview in April 1989, Bishop Maida spoke directly of how he looked at leadership centered on priorities and then implementing them in service to God's people:

I don't look at labels. I look at reality. I look at the issue against the value system, the experience and the wisdom that I've acquired. I just feel all human problems can be solved. It takes effort, cooperation, good will, honesty and integrity. To meet the challenges, people have to love and serve one another in a day when the emphasis is the opposite. Sacrifice isn't in the vocabulary of many people.

In 1989, Bishop Maida was appointed by Pope John Paul II to serve as a consultor for the Vatican Congregation for Seminaries and Institutes of Study for the Roman Curia. In this position, he advised those who were administering seminaries, other Catholic institutions of higher learning and parochial and diocesan elementary and secondary schools as well as promoting church vocations.

After serving zealously as Bishop of Green from 1984—1990,, Bishop Maida was named the Archbishop of Detroit, the fifth largest diocese in the United States. He would

shepherd 1.5 million Catholics and 331 parishes. He was officially installed on June 12, 1990, he was installed in the Cathedral of the Most Blessed Sacrament, Detroit, Michigan. In his homily during his installation, Archbishop Maida called on his priests to become even more sensitive and loving to parishioners.

Shortly before leaving Green Bay in 1990, Bishop Maida oversaw the formation of one Catholic high school in Green Bay, Notre Dame de la Baie Academy. It was the result of the consolidation of three local high schools. This difficult decision was seen by a number of administrators as a way of bringing people into a renewed vigor and hope for the Church. It was also seen as a model to cope with the restoration of vibrancy in the Church of Detroit.

On November 26, 1994, Archbishop Maida was elevated to the Cardinalate by Pope John Paul II in St. Peter Basilica in Rome. At the time, Cardinal Maida credited his tenure in Green Bay with preparing him for his new position by teaching him how to be a bishop and leader. He said he was especially happy that his 86 year old mother Sophie, who came to Green Bay for his ordination and installation as Bishop of Green Bay, was also able to attend this milestone. He credited her with being ever present on his journey of faith.

The coat-of-arms of Cardinal Adam Maida is accentuated by his motto taken from the Book of Revelation 21: 5: *Facere Omnia Nova* (“To Make All Things New”). These bold words articulate clearly who and what has guided Cardinal Maida during his more than 50 years of ministry as a priest, bishop, archbishop and now Cardinal of the Church. Cardinal Maida retired as Archbishop of Detroit in 2009.

| *Father James P. Massart*