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The following is the text of an open letter from Detroit's archbishop, Cardinal Adam Maida, which was shared with the parishioners of St. Leo Parish, Detroit, at their gatherings the weekend of January 20-21, 2007.

LETTER TO ST. LEO'S PARISH FROM CARDINAL MAIDA

“The time has come for a transition in pastoral leadership at [St. Leo Parish](#). For the last 23 years, [Bishop Gumbleton](#) has faithfully served your community and shared your joys and sorrows, challenges, hopes, and dreams through Sunday Eucharist, works of Christian service, and reflecting on the Gospel of Life in today's society. I know how much you have valued his service and availability, and appreciated his witness to the Gospel. As Bishop Gumbleton now reaches the age of 77, it is now appropriate for him to retire from pastoral leadership of a parish.

“In accord with the provisions of [Canon Law](#) and Archdiocesan policy, all priests assume senior priest status at the time they attain 70 years of age. The Diocesan Bishop, after dialogue with the priest, may allow him to continue as pastor or administrator on a year-by-year basis. A completely different set of circumstances and protocol comes into play with [bishops](#). Bishops submit their letter of resignation directly to the Holy Father and he decides when he will choose to accept that resignation. Bishop Gumbleton and I have been informed through the [Congregation for Bishops](#) that the Holy Father has accepted his resignation, and in keeping with that resignation, he is to give up any pastoral offices such as pastor of a parish.

“Like all our retired auxiliaries, Bishop Gumbleton will still function as a priest and bishop, celebrating the sacraments, including Confirmation, throughout the parishes of the Archdiocese as need arises and his health and schedule permit.

“At this time, I would like to share with you our plans for the future pastoral care of St. Leo Parish. Effective tomorrow, January 22, Father Gerard Battersby is being appointed administrator of your parish, in addition to his ministry at Sacred Heart Major Seminary. As administrator, Father Battersby will be relating with the staff of the parish, including the soup kitchen and meeting with the Parish Pastoral Council. The Detroit Jesuit community will also be supportive of Father Battersby as administrator, providing sacramental ministry as requested.

“Having served as pastor of St. Christopher in Detroit, Father Battersby comes to you with experience of ministry in the city. I know him to be personable and open-minded, compassionate and with a genuine love of all who are in need. He will build on the tradition and foundation of your past and intends to uphold the many ministries of the parish. He will be a good servant-leader and shepherd for your community, and I trust you will give him your full support.

“St. Leo’s has a long and distinguished history within the Archdiocese and Bishop Gumbleton’s retirement as pastor represents the transition to a new chapter in the life of the parish. In our Christian faith, we trust that change – while sometimes painful – is often an occasion for spiritual growth.

“I join you in thanking Bishop Gumbleton and assure you of my prayerful best wishes for each one of you.”

Open Letter from
Cardinal Adam Maida
Archbishop of Detroit
January 20-21, 2007