

Archdiocese of Detroit

To: News Editors and Assignment Desks
From: Department of Communications
Date: March 13, 2005

RE: Death of Bishop Joseph Breitenbeck

The Department of Communications has learned of the passing on Saturday, March 12, of Bishop Joseph Breitenbeck, (*pronounced* Bright-**Ten**-Beck) emeritus bishop of the Diocese of Grand Rapids and former auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Detroit.

Bishop Breitenbeck, 90, died peacefully Saturday evening at St. Ann's Home in Grand Rapids. He had served as the eighth bishop of the Diocese of Grand Rapids from 1969–1989 and as an auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Detroit from 1965–1969.

“Bishop Breitenbeck served the Church of Detroit and Grand Rapids in many significant ways and has shaped clergy, religious, and lay faithful over the six-and-a-half decades of loving service as a priest and bishop,” said Cardinal Adam Maida, archbishop of Detroit and apostolic administrator for the Diocese of Grand Rapids.

“With his quick wit and sharp mind, he was always an engaging speaker, getting right to the point of the issue at hand. Practical and compassionate, Bishop Breitenbeck had an understanding heart and generous spirit.

“He was very committed to priestly continuing education and even was one of the founders of the program in Rome. During his years as Cardinal Mooney's secretary, Bishop Breitenbeck was a great personal support and friend for the cardinal and came to know and understand the clergy of the archdiocese. He was an important bridge between the cardinal and the priests.

“While in his later years after retirement, he had to curtail his schedule, nonetheless, he eagerly followed Church events, as much as he could. We will miss Bishop Breitenbeck as a good friend and a loving shepherd,” Cardinal Maida concluded.

Funeral arrangements for Bishop Breitenbeck at the Cathedral of St. Andrew, 27 Sheldon Boulevard, S.E., Grand Rapids, are as follows:

Tuesday, March 15

4:30 p.m. – 6 p.m. and 8 p.m. – 9 p.m. Public Viewing

Wednesday, March 16

1 p.m. – 7 p.m. Public Viewing | 7 p.m. Vigil for the Deceased

Thursday, March 17

9:30 a.m. – 11 a.m. Public Viewing | 11 a.m. Mass of Christian Burial
Immediately following the funeral:

- Rite of Committal Service, Resurrection Cemetery, Clyde Park, Wyoming, Michigan
- Reception, Catholic Central High School Gym, Sheldon, Grand Rapids

The family has requested, in lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to St. Ann's Home, 2161 Leonard N.W., Grand Rapids, Michigan 49504.

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