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For Immediate Release

Bishop Paul J. Swain, eighth Bishop of Sioux Falls, dies at the age of 79

(Sioux Falls, SD) The Diocese of Madison, with sorrow, shares the news of the death of Most Reverend Paul J. Swain, Bishop Emeritus of the Diocese of Sioux Falls, ordained a priest of the Diocese of Madison in 1988. Bishop Swain died on Saturday, November 26, at the age of 79, in hospice care after suffering significant medical complications in recent weeks. In recent days, Catholics in the Dioceses of Sioux Falls and Madison were asked to pray for Bishop Swain, as his condition worsened. Funeral arrangements in Sioux Falls are pending.

Bishop Swain was born on September 12, 1943 in Newark, New York, located between Rochester and Syracuse. He attended elementary and high school in Newark, graduating in 1961. He went on to attend Ohio Northern University in Ada, OH, where he graduated in 1965 with a degree in History. In 1967 he earned a Masters in Political Science from the University of Wisconsin.

From 1967 through 1972 he served in the United States Air Force as an Intelligence Officer, including service in Vietnam where he earned a Bronze Star. After military service, he returned to Madison and the University of Wisconsin to complete his studies in law. After earning his law degree in 1975, he practiced law in Madison until becoming involved in the campaign and administration of Wisconsin's Governor Lee Sherman Dreyfus, who served from 1979 to 1983. Bishop Swain served during those years as legal counsel and director of policy. At the completion of Governor Dreyfus' term, he returned briefly to private practice.

It was near the end of his service to Governor Dreyfus that the first thoughts of a vocation to the priesthood came to him. Since he was not Catholic this seemed unusual, but he took it as a prompting to take his faith more seriously. Private reading and studying and attendance at Mass led to more formal instruction and entrance into the Catholic faith in 1983. This proved not enough to dismiss the thought of priesthood and he began studying at Blessed John XXIII National Seminary, Weston, Massachusetts. He completed his Master of Divinity and was ordained as a priest of the Diocese of Madison on May 27, 1988.

His pastoral work began as associate pastor of Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, Sun Prairie. Over the years he also served as pastor of St. Mary of Pine Bluff, Cross Plains and St. Bernard Parish, Middleton, as rector/pastor of St. Raphael Cathedral, St. Patrick Parish, and Holy Redeemer Parish in Madison. His Madison diocesan appointments included service as Assistant to the Bishop, Vice Chancellor, Moderator of the Curia and Vocations Director. He was appointed Vicar General by Most Reverend William H. Bullock in October of 1996 and by the Most Reverend Robert C. Morlino upon his arrival as Bishop of Madison in August of 2003.

Pope Benedict XVI appointed Paul J. Swain as the eighth bishop of Sioux Falls on August 31, 2006 and he was consecrated as Bishop of Sioux Falls on October 26, 2006

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