

**REMARKS
BY ADAM CARDINAL MAIDA
ISLAMIC CENTER OF AMERICA
DEARBORN
SEPTEMBER 28, 2006**

Dear Friends of the Muslim Community of Metro Detroit:

Imam Qazwini, I thank you for the privileged opportunity to visit with you and other Imams and members of the Muslim community here at your mosque. I am here today to reaffirm, strengthen, and renew the long-standing positive rapport we have enjoyed over the years. Through our time together this day, I hope to renew our friendships and strengthen our bonds of respect and collaboration.

I am especially grateful for this opportunity since it falls during the month of Ramadan as you and your community are engaged in your annual month-long fast. Many aspects of your traditions resemble elements of our own Catholic practices, especially the importance of daily prayer, fasting, and pilgrimage. As the Council Fathers of Vatican II stated, and as the Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI re-affirmed recently, *“The Church looks upon Muslims with respect. They worship the one God living and subsistent, merciful and almighty, Creator of heaven and earth...”* (Declaration *Nostra Aetate*, 3).

We are all aware of the controversy surrounding a quotation used by the Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI recently at a scholarly address in Regensburg,

Germany. These comments were later clarified by the Holy Father himself, including earlier this week as he met with Muslim leaders.

Our meeting here today should not be seen solely as a reaction to the events surrounding Pope Benedict's remarks. Rather, it is one more opportunity to affirm our friendship and commitment to dialogue. Here in Metro Detroit, on a number of occasions, we have engaged in respectful and positive dialogue between our communities and have collaborated closely in efforts to assure peace, tranquility, and mutual respect between the faithful of our religions.

Building on the example and tradition of his predecessor, Pope John Paul II, and using the teachings of Vatican II affirming the dignity and respect given to adherents of non-Christian religions, Pope Benedict XVI has encouraged inter-religious and inter-cultural dialogue. Note the two terms: we are talking not just about two religions but also two cultures. Such dialogue and collaboration requires from all of us a commitment to guard against any form of intolerance or any form of violence.

Certainly, here in the Archdiocese of Detroit and across the United States, we have been able to engage in dialogue between our faiths in a fashion that is deeply respectful of our diversity and with genuine reciprocity of spirit and action. For over a decade, I have been meeting with Muslim leaders and leaders of other faiths through the Religious Leaders Forum. Catholics and Muslims have stood in

solidarity to promote issues concerning the dignity of the human person. Our meeting here today is one more sign that lines of communication are open from all sides. For my part, I pledge to continue to strengthen all efforts at such dialogue and I trust in our continuing close collaboration as we work together to build a society with justice and peace for all.