



**Most Reverend Raymond J. Boland**  
**Bishop Emeritus**  
**Diocese Kansas City ~ St. Joseph**

**Catholic Charities USA**  
**Assistance for Victims of Terrorist Attacks**  
November 4, 2001

My Dear Friends in Christ,

As it began, Tuesday, September 11 was a very ordinary day. I was in Independence, attending an early morning board meeting for The Central City School Fund, when a note was passed to me. Apparently, a plane had been hijacked in Boston. That was just the beginning. Within an hour or so, thousands of our citizens were dead. The murderers did not discriminate: there were husbands and wives, parents and children, police and firefighters, executives and janitors, tourists and sightseers.

By noontime at a special Mass in Our Lady of Sorrows Church, I saw grief, confusion and fear reflected on the faces of those who gathered to pray and to ask God for understanding and for answers. This scene replayed itself over and over again in our parishes, our schools and our homes.

By nightfall, numbness settled in like a paralysis. It was difficult to sleep: the images were too vivid. Despite constant monitoring of the news, the answers still did not come. In the darkness of that night, did you ask yourself if the awful events of the day had really happened?

Did you wonder if the horror was over?

Did you ask God why so many innocent people could be killed with such wanton disregard of life?

Did you feel anguish for the families of the missing – the firefighters, the police officers and countless Good Samaritans who laid down their lives for others?

Did you grapple with fears for your own family, for children and grandchildren, and for our country?

And even today, do you still feel helpless in the face of evil of such magnitude?

If you've asked any of these questions, then you've come to the right place. Today, in God's house, He invites you, "Come, all you who labor and are heavily burdened . . . I will give you rest."

In this hour, in this Mass, God will hear us as we pray to be delivered from evil and to be freed from every anxiety.

Here, in the presence of the Prince of Peace, be reminded that, "If two of you agree to ask your Father in heaven for anything, it will be granted to you. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in their midst."

And still we wonder, "What can we do to right this horrible wrong?"

Only time and patience will bring any comfort to the families of the victims. We know that God can draw forth good from evil and life from death. We confidently commend to the mercy of God all the innocent people killed by this misguided zeal. We also must pledge to do everything possible to surround the other victims – families and friends of the deceased – with compassion and support.

I take great comfort in knowing that in New York and Washington, the communities most deeply affected by these tragedies, Catholic Charities will be there long after most of the disaster relief agencies leave. Like our local Catholic Charities, they offer counseling for the broken-hearted, emergency assistance for those who lost jobs and homes, and food for those who are hungry.

As the largest non-governmental provider of human and social services in this country, in ordinary and extra-ordinary times, Catholic Charities is the hands of Christ, for you and me.

During the days and weeks since September 11, I've been considering the timeliness of our annual diocesan stewardship appeal, **Together We Can**. I know we must go on. We must continue God's work. So, today, on Commitment Sunday, while we ask you to support the needs of our diocese, it is important that we also consider the tragedies beyond our boundaries.

For this reason, we will send \$50,000 from **Together We Can** – in your name – to assist Catholic Charities USA in their efforts to mend the gaping wounds of September 11. It is truly in times like these that working together we can be Christ for others.

I invite you to read more about how your support provides for the charitable, educational and ministerial needs of others. You can learn all about **Together We Can** in this Sunday's edition of The Catholic Key.

Thank you and may God bless you all.