



## **Most Reverend Raymond J. Boland**

**Bishop Emeritus**

Diocese of Kansas City ~ St. Joseph

### **The Catholic Church in the 21st Century Suffering in Christian Life and Experience**

INVOCATION

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Avila University

Good and Gracious God  
author of all our lives and the freedoms  
with which they are endowed  
when the dream of Eden was shattered  
suffering became our unwanted companion  
and in its myriad manifestations  
it sought to  
cripple our bodies  
paralyze our minds  
and  
disrupt our emotions  
and  
sometimes in anger  
but more often in frustration  
we cried out for explanations  
wondering why a God who loved us so much  
would allow the  
**FOUR HORSEMEN OF THE APOCALYPSE** ①  
ride roughshod over our  
dreams and our aspirations and our ambitions  
finding it inconvenient to remember  
that  
**PAIN AND SUFFERING**  
is but the residue of our refusal to accept  
your proffered partnership  
and the penalty for our dalliance with evil

and so, as the poet sees it,  
“...we are born in other’s pain,  
and perish in our own” ②  
but lest we drown in a sea of pessimism  
your Son, the Lord Jesus  
in the fullness of time  
came among us  
not as a conquering hero impervious to the ills of humanity  
but as a Suffering Servant  
laying aside the trappings of divinity  
he became a man like us in all things, sin alone excepted,  
a man with a sympathetic heart  
a healer who understood the mysteries of pain and rejection  
a man who personally embraced indescribable suffering  
allowing us to affiliate our pains and agonies with his sacrifice  
and as his disciples, to share in that heroic act of redemption  
which restores the  
original promise and the unimaginable vision of creation  
and bolsters our conviction  
that we are born to inherit far more than a transitory  
world of pain and desperation  
destined,  
as we truly are,  
for an eternity with you, our God, who loves us in so many ways  
and praying as we do when entrusting our  
loved ones to your care that  
“there we hope to share in your glory  
when every tear will be wiped away.”  
and  
“on that day we shall see you, our God,  
as you are.  
We shall become like you  
and praise you forever through Christ our Lord,  
from whom all good things come.”③

This we believe.

AMEN

## Footnotes

- ① Pestilence, War, Famine, Death
- ② Francis Thompson, *Daisy*, 1893, st. 15
- ③ Eucharistic Prayer, III