



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

**Prayer for All Souls Day**  
1974\*

Edward died last night  
His gnarled knuckles turned white and  
an ashen hue crept across his face soon  
after the breathing stopped  
He had a peaceful death  
his loved ones gathered round his hospital bed  
keeping vigil as his life of eighty years waned into  
a great silence  
Lord, welcome him home.

They were too young to understand  
two tousled headed youngsters  
playing hide and seek in a neighbor's house  
while across the park their mother,  
so young to die, the mourners said,  
casket clad was borne down the steps of  
old St. Mary's  
followed by a husband torn in two  
by a parting never contemplated when  
in love he held her close  
Lord, welcome her home.

Huddled in the corner he found them  
four children seeking the scant comfort of community  
in their final hours  
distended stomachs telling the story of starvation  
while outside the rude tent  
an unabating wind relentlessly polished the parched  
sandy floor as the seasons came and went  
but the rain never returned –  
they would be buried here and soon forgotten  
Lord, welcome them home.

And we go about our daily chores  
Remembering and forgetting  
but dying a little every day  
Lord, welcome us home  
When the day ends

And the lights go out  
And all is still.

*\*Original composition by the Reverend Msgr. Raymond J. Boland in 1974.  
At that time, Bishop Boland was pastor of St. Michael Parish, Silver Spring, Maryland.*