



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

Retirement Statement
of Most Reverend Raymond J. Boland, DD
Retired Bishop of Kansas City ~ St. Joseph
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The time has come to say good bye. Fifty-six years after I volunteered to become a seminarian for the Archdiocese of Washington, 48 years of priesthood and over 17 years as a bishop, Pope Benedict XVI this week accepted my retirement as the fifth Bishop of Kansas City-St. Joseph. Bishop Robert Finn, as coadjutor, automatically becomes my successor.

A diocese is not well served by a bishop whose energy is compromised by ailments too boring to enumerate. This realization tempers the impact of leaving but it also accentuates the implications of mortality.

Being bishop of Kansas City-St. Joseph has been a wonderful experience and I've enjoyed almost every moment of it. Some dreams were not fulfilled, but in twelve years I have witnessed many magnificent accomplishments crafted by the dedicated and hardworking priests, religious and lay people whom it has been my privilege to lead and to serve.

God has truly blessed us in many ways. When this emigrant priest sailed out of Cork Harbor in August of 1957 his most creative imaginings could not have foreseen that God's providence would engraft him into three vastly different dioceses and enrich his days with wondrous experiences far too generous for any one lifetime. Nothing is idyllic and conscience would demand some changes but, should you ask, I would gladly do it all over again.

Today I lay aside the crozier but not the priesthood. God alone knows how many days are mine before aging beckons me into eternity. Relieved of the worries and challenges of administration, I pray it will be less distracting to find the Lord in the breaking of the bread and to hear his voice more clearly in the echoes of his word. There are grandnieces and grandnephews whom I have yet to meet, and long-neglected friends to be visited. And there are poems to be read, sunsets to be savored, hobbies to be rekindled and maybe the Grand Canyon to be seen! These matter less than the conviction that the twilight of our lives is really our advent to the endless grandeur of God.

Concerned that I may be completely unemployed, my friends have suggested ways to make my life "useful" after retirement. I am aware that many decades of pastoral experience ranging from the pre-Vatican II Church through the challenges and turmoil of the Council and its aftermath to the dawning years of the new millennium are a decided asset. Within certain limitations I intend, God willing, to be as responsive as possible to those who believe I can still make a positive contribution where needs exist.

And to all who have sustained me along the way -family, friends, and even those whose names I never knew but whose smiles brightened the day, I say thanks and, in the wisdom of

the old Gaelic prayer, "May the good Lord take a liking to you, but not too soon!" Good bye and God bless you.

Raymond J. Boland