



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

The Catholic Church in the 21st Century
Spirituality and the Catholic Tradition
Invocation of the Most Reverend Raymond J. Boland, D.D. Bishop Emeritus
Diocese of Kansas City ~ St. Joseph
June 4, 2005

God, our Father,
you fashioned us in your own
image and likeness
but
hoodwinked by the lure of evil
and blinded by our own conceits
we “fled you down the
labyrinthine ways of our own minds.”
We gloried in the liberty of our ignorance
and frolicked in our sin
until the emptiness of our lives
hungered for your presence
and ached for your compassionate embrace.

Jesus,
Your Incarnate Son
walked among us and gently called
us back
enflaming our hearts with the promise of mercy
enlightening our future with the security of faith
and wooing us into a relationship
of love
beyond all human comprehension.
It is ours if ours we wish it to be.
He is knocking at the door
and patiently awaits a response.

The footprints of the saints
beckon us to follow
Each has championed a way
Each has opened a road
Augustine and Ignatius
a triad of Teresas
Francis and Dominic
all influenced by the chosen
mother
we embraced him in the intimacy
of his birth

and held him closely in the anguish
of his death
and others too who carved
a relationship with the Jesus man
by coming back
like the prodigal
by having pity
like the Samaritan
by climbing a sycamore tree
like the citizen of Jericho
by cooking a meal or listening to his voice
like the sisters of Bethany
by asking for a remembrance
like his fellow cross mate
or like the despised one who found peace
by nudging his way into the holy place
and raising his plaintive voice
"O God, be merciful to me, a sinner."

On this day,
O Lord,
we ask you to show us a way
which is as unique
as each one of us is unique
and then we ask you
to give us the courage to follow it
not tomorrow, but today
so that the fullness of the life
you gave us
may be absorbed into the fullness
of the life
for which you created us.
Amen

On Saturday, June 4, six of the country's most esteemed Catholic theologians came to Kansas City for the Catholic Community Foundation's annual "Catholic Church in the 21st Century" lecture series. With more than 400 people in attendance, they examined how the central mysteries of the Catholic faith inform and shape spirituality.

"Spirituality is a 'hot' issue today. A large number of Americans describe themselves as 'spiritual' but do not identify with any church or religious tradition," said the Reverend Michael Himes, professor of theology at Boston College. "For spirituality to be sane and firmly rooted and for the church's tradition to be vital and inspiring, it is crucial that the connection be made clear. We must see how our spirituality is grounded in the tradition of Catholic belief," said Father Himes.

Bishop Boland's invocation opened the daylong conference at Rockhurst High School, Kansas City, Missouri.

Presenters ~ 2005

- Dr. Colleen Griffith, The Institute for Religious Education & Pastoral Ministry ~ Boston College
- Rev. Michael J. Buckley, S.J. ~ Boston College
- Monsignor John J. Strykowski, formerly Executive Director of the Secretariat for Doctrine and Pastoral Practices ~ United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
- Rev. Kenan Osborne, OFM. ~ Franciscan School of Theology
- Rev. Michael J. Himes ~ Boston College
- Sister Mary Ann Hinsdale, IHM ~ Boston College