



**WEEKLY LETTER FROM MONSIGNOR KEN**

**USA  250**

There’s something about hearing an orchestra perform Stars and Stripes Forever, as fireworks burst in the sky and Old Glory proudly waves in the wind. While evoking a different spirit, as I look forward to all the traditions and trimmings of Christmas, I joyfully embrace all the trappings of July 4th patriotism and pride, especially this year. It is an incredible milestone. The American experiment, while not perfect, created an amazing idea among nations. The promise of freedom and a representative government was the blossoming of ideas that up until then were mostly theoretical. Who would have thought?

While many of the great nations and civilizations of history were empires, committed to conquering and power, ours was mostly the promotion and defense of an idea, freedom. Many countries throughout history, and even today, struggle. They are not an inferior people, and Americans are not innately smarter or better. It is the system. I look at the fate of many nations, some the recipients of immense charity, and yet they still struggle. The difference is corruption of a government that is self-seeking, and not serving. No government or nation is without flaws, but ours is far better than those whose leadership is inherited, imposed, or won at gun point. We have many problems, perhaps as many as any nation, but we are far better than those whose people have little or no chance of changing their lot. I will gladly live under the banner of our flag than that of any other.

To me, one of the great blessings of our nation is our faith. We live in a land founded on religious freedom, so much so that people are even free to live without faith. Individuals may be tyrants in their belief, but there is no public policy of coercion to force someone into a house of worship. While polls show many claiming no religion, we have many who do. I have personally witnessed and talked to others who have visited other countries, only to discover empty churches. In some places, buildings once used for worship, are now museums or monuments. In many parts of this land, places of worship are filled with people who freely choose to come and pray. As it says on our money, “In God we trust,” and in our pledge of allegiance to this nation, “under God.”

In that spirit, I approach this milestone anniversary with gratitude and prayer. I pray that God will continue to guide us and bless us. I pray that we may be more united, more committed to helping our neighbor, and more devoted to the ideals on which we were founded, life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

I love the hymn, God Bless America. It is always emotional to me, and I know this year it will be even more so. Along with the emotions it stirs up, it is also a prayer, a very fitting prayer for our nation on the occasion of our 250th.

**God bless American, land that Love,  
Stand beside her and guide her  
Through the night with the light from above;  
From the mountains, to the prairies,  
To the oceans white with foam,  
God bless America, my home, sweet home,  
God bless America, my home, sweet home.**

***“You shall treat this fiftieth year as sacred. You shall proclaim liberty in the land for all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you...” (Leviticus 25:10)***