

December 21, 2025



WEEKLY LETTER FROM MONSIGNOR KEN

I did not want to go. I still don't know why, but that year our dad decided that we were going to Florida for Christmas. For me, Christmas was being home. I liked a cold Christmas, the Christmas scene our dad painted on the big picture window, the tree in the living room, all the usual things we did...at home! In other words, I wanted Christmas to be the way I always knew it. I just couldn't wrap my head around, 1. Being away from home for Christmas, and 2. Being in a place where it was warm. Guess what? I was only a kid, and it wasn't up to me! So, that year we went to Florida.

As with so many things in life, my negative expectations were not met. It turned out to be a special and memorable Christmas. The first take-a-way, and probably the most important lesson, was that Christmas was not about my expectations, my plans, and my traditions. It's about the birth of Jesus. The normal trappings and customs are nice, but, in the end, that's not what it's about. It is too easy to focus on the externals, and not the real meaning. It's easy to pay lip service to the saying that "Jesus is the Reason for the Season," but do we really believe that and practice that?

The second gift of that Christmas was that it gave me one of the most profound experiences of my life. One night, and I can't remember now if it was Christmas Eve, or another day during that trip, but we made a night visit to the local beach. As a kid I never really thought about ground light and had no idea how much light there is around us, from streets lamps, to house lights, and beyond. Well, by the beach, we were away from all of that, and so it happened. We walked out on to the beach, and I looked up. I could only say, "Wow!" I had heard and read about the Milky Way, but there it was. I actually saw it for the first time, in person, not in a book. There were so many stars, not just the normal dots of lights that I was used to seeing. There were literally countless stars, and they formed a path, yes, a way, in the night sky. I looked up with my mouth open. It was a moment of wonder. I felt the glory of God, the awesomeness of life, and my insignificance. It's about as close to a mystical experience as I have ever had.

Part of the Christmas story, is looking up at the night sky and seeing the star that announced the birth of our Savior, and brought the shepherds and kings to adore. The magic and wonder of that star is an important part of Christmas, a part that we too easily lose. We, too often, are only focusing on the earth below. Yes, we need to do that, but we also need to look up in wonder and awe.

Too many, have either forgotten, or they never noticed the magic of the Season. This Christmas, I invite you to look up. You may not see the Milky Way, and there may be too many lights around to fully realize the true glory of the night sky, but imagine. Be a shepherd; be a king. Look up. Hear the angels. Feel the wonder. Then, come and adore! Merry Christmas!

"When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of King Herod, behold, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying, 'Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We saw His star at its rising have come to do Him homage.'" (Matthew 2:1-2)