

November 23, 2025



WEEKLY LETTER FROM MONSIGNOR KEN

42 Fulton Ave., West Long Branch, NJ. I have been blessed to visit many wonderful places in this world, holy sites, shrines, historic landmarks, beautiful parks, different schools and mountain heights, to name just some. However, out of all of them, as wonderful as they are and as great as my experiences have been, none can ever quite compare with 42 Fulton. I can honestly say that I would not be who I am without it. While I have lived in a number of places and rectories over the years, that will always be home, with a capital H.

How about you? What is your 42 Fulton? I loved every inch of that yard, every room in the house, every corner of the basement, and even the occasional trip to the attic. My memories could fill the volumes of an Encyclopedia Britannica. The kitchen where Mom cooked our simple but great meals and we often gathered; the small dining room where we ate together every day with a lot of noise; the single bathroom that was shared by all seven of us!; the living room where we sat together to watch TV or put our Christmas tree, or even played sports (to the detriment of the rugs and furniture!); the bedrooms that were as much as a den or playroom as a place to sleep; and the basement where Dad had his workroom and bench saw, where we had a pool table and ping pong table, and shuffle board court our dad painted on the floor (I remember one time of friend of mine came to visit and was so overwhelmed with all the stuff we had in the basement that he showed up again the next day, unannounced, because he just had to come back!); and the yard that was our playground from playing “trucks” in the big dirt pile, our above-ground swimming pool, an 18-hole golf course, and, of course, the grass that we cut, and loved!

If you haven't figured it out, that's my childhood home. Besides growing up there, it has always been my anchor, either physically, being able to return there, or spiritually, returning there in my mind and memory. I'm blessed that we still have the house and, one day, I plan to live there when I have to retire (which won't be for a while, because I plan on working for as long as the bishop lets me!).

What is your 42 Fulton? I'm sure you have that same sense of gratitude and precious memories. In fact, I have often preached about just that at funeral liturgies. I share how important it is to have a home, the home in which the family has shared with the loved one who died. I then remind them that our faith tells us that when we die, we believe we are going “home.” Don't we often say just that? So and so has gone home. What a beautiful way to understand heaven. When fully in the presence of God, we can experience totally all those good feelings and times we have shared, in our earthly home.

In addition, we have started our important outreach to the homeless, St. Mary's PATH. We should always remember that the tragedy of homelessness is far more than just a lack of shelter. Home is where we are formed and shaped. It is our anchor, our refuge in the world. It's the place where memories are created and holidays celebrated. It's the place of laughter, tears, lessons and meals. It's one of our greatest blessings in this world.

This Thanksgiving, along with the many, many blessings for which I am grateful, I am again grateful for 42 Fulton Ave. For me, as Dorothy learned in the Wizard of Oz, there's no place like home!

Happy Thanksgiving!

“And He came to Nazareth, where He had grown up.” (Luke 4:16)