



Church of Our Lady of Mount Carmel
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FROM THE DESK OF FATHER JONATHAN

October 7, 2018

As many of you know, last weekend I was away on vacation in the Colorado mountains. When I wasn't camping in the woods I stayed at a small cabin loaned to me by a family friend.

In these occasions, when a priest is on vacation and traveling, the Church allows us to celebrate mass privately. I used a small mass "kit" and set up a provisional altar on a large wooden desk in the cabin.

Aware that there may be need for a priest for Sunday masses in the nearby town, I called the parish office and offered to help. The parish "director" is a deacon, and he covers two parishes. There is no pastor of either parish. In fact, there is no priest assigned to either parish. On an average Sunday, the Liturgy of the Word and communion service (not mass) is presided by the deacon, or a lay person when the deacon is unavailable.

The deacon was thrilled that I was able to come and celebrate the mass for his people. He was on his way to the big city for surgery and nobody else was able to fill in for him. The lay people would have been on their own.

That Sunday this little church was packed. The people greeted me so warmly and were so appreciative that they were able to attend a mass!

One woman told me she recently had moved to Colorado. When she discovered there was no priest in the parish she got a team of people together, went and spoke to the bishop's office to plead for a priest, any priest!!! The answer was that the bishop would love to send one, but he simply didn't have anyone. "Pray to God that one will fall out of the sky!", they were told.

This experience was a blessing for me. It made me appreciate the mass and sacraments even more. I counted the masses we have each week at Mt Carmel: twenty-three (23)!! That's a lot of grace. That's a lot of God's presence among us.

It made me reflect: wherever we live, whether in the mountains or in the Bronx, God gives us challenges and blessings. Let's take advantage of the blessings God has given to us, aware that they are truly unique.

God bless, Father Jonathan

P.S. with your prayers, I avoided the bears!!