



*Church of Our Lady of Mount Carmel*  
*627 East 187<sup>th</sup> Street*  
*Bronx, New York 10458*  
*718.295.3770*

**FROM THE DESK OF FATHER JONATHAN**

**December 2, 2018**

There are very few things I remember from my first year of seminary. It was a time of great change and strong emotions. I was only twenty-one years old. I had just left my home and university in Ohio, broke up a long-term relationship with my girlfriend, and was embarking on a new life and mission that I had never imagined I would ever live. Thank God I made it through that first year and, thank God too, I don't remember too many of the details, except that it was hard!

One thing I do remember, however, was my first Christmas away from home.....and in a good way. The director of the first-year seminarians encouraged us to live Advent like we had never lived it before. That was easy for me because I don't think I really lived Advent before I joined the seminary. The seminarian director told us that if we lived Advent conscientiously as preparation for Jesus' birth, we would have our best Christmas ever. He encouraged us to pray more fervently, to make sacrifices out of love for The Baby Jesus, to love everyone around us as Jesus loves us, etc.

And can I tell you.... it worked!! When I woke up on Christmas Day, I was excited. Not for the presents (there were none) but because I was excited to celebrate the birth of Jesus!!

So now it is my turn to encourage you to live Advent as you never lived it before! Prepare your heart to receive the King of King's born in a manger!! Practice humility, kindness, love, fasting, sacrifice, patience, and prayer.

I promise you, if you do it, it will work!!

Blessed Advent!! We are on this road together.

God bless, Father Jonathan