



Church of Our Lady of Mount Carmel
627 East 187th Street
Bronx, New York 10458
718.295.3770

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Happy Easter! Jesus has risen from the dead and has given us, in his resurrection, the ultimate evidence that God has conquered sin and death forever!!

You all have inspired me so much this Lent. I have been moved by how many of you have shared with me your Lenten commitments. In fact, after the first week of Lent, having heard so many of your commitments, I had to re-evaluate my own Lenten commitments and step up my plans in order to meet the standard that many of you set.

I generally **don't share publicly what I do for Lent so as to keep it between me and the Lord, but** I can tell you that some of you encouraged me, by your personal example, to focus my Lenten commitments on doing good for people rather than on simply giving up things. **This wasn't easy** for me. When I give something up my Lent can still be mostly about me and my spiritual growth. Since you helped me to focus my love for God on loving others I had to leave myself and my spiritual goals on the side.

This new focus on others made for a great Lent! I am so grateful to God for his resurrection and his new mandate to us to repent and live for him and for others.

If Christ has risen from the dead—something no human can do on his own power—then his message to us of repentance and salvation is true.

This resurrection invites me to say over and over again a prayer that my dad taught me as a kid, **the "Jesus Prayer"**. **"Lord Jesus Christ, son of the living God, have mercy on me, a sinner"**.

And this is exactly what Jesus does; he has mercy on us, he forgives us, and never tires of forgiving us.

Thank you for being such wonderful examples to me of Christian living. Thank you for teaching me, your shepherd in this parish, how to be a better follower of Jesus, the only truly Good Shepherd, who laid down his life so that we could live forever!

Happy Easter!!

Fr. Jonathan