



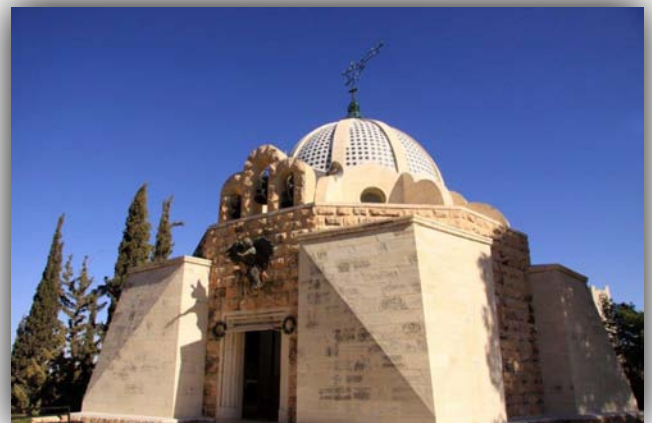
The Manresa Staff wish you a Happy and Peaceful Christmas



While we were in Rome, the big buzz was the audience with Pope Francis. The expectation was that we would meet with a group of some 100 others. The reality was there were 60,000 others. We filled the big circle in front of the Basilica. Most of the group tried to get to the front with the hope of a close-up with the Pope.

Little did they realize that the Pope would be driven in an open car, and those who were close to the barriers would be the ones with the "close-up" view, as you can see.

Our group visited the Basilica of the Nativity. It was a very emotional experience for some. The churches are close together and each emphasizes with its name, an important part of the story of Jesus. We visited the Church of the Shepherd's Field, where they saw Star of Nativity. It was restored by Berluzzi with the sponsorship of Canadian funds.

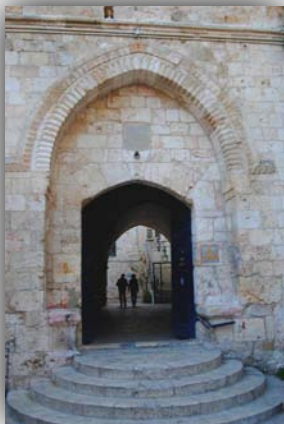




Our next stop was Mt. Zion – where we visited four holy spots: First, the Dormition Abbey.



We then moved to the Cenacle, where Jesus had the Last Supper.



...followed by a visit to King David's tomb. We ended the four-church tour with St. Peter in Gallicantu, when the cock crowed, Peter denied Jesus three times.



One of the highlights of the trips to Israel was the renewal of our Baptismal vows in the River Jordan. Several of the pilgrims decided to go the “whole hog”. They rented the white baptismal gowns, immersed themselves in the Jordan River. They tried to imagine themselves 2000 years ago, as John the Baptist worked at the River Jordan.



Mondays in Advent.

For the last two years, Fr. Michael has been presenting a reflection on a week night in Advent to help prepare for the Christmas season. This is the third year, and the theme is Christmas through the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. We have finished three sessions at the time this newsletter goes to the press. There is an avid hunger for some spiritual input to counteract the commercialism at this time. 70 people have been attending these meetings. They are fascinated with the fresh look at the Christmas Story. It is the same Mary, Joseph and Jesus in swaddling clothes. But they are looking at the story with fresh eyes. The prophecy of Isaiah 29 is being enacted in a new way even now. "the deaf shall hear the words of a scroll and the eyes of the blind shall see."



We have finished one third of the retreats scheduled for the years 2016-2017. The retreatants seem satisfied. We have had one new retreat master, Fr. Paul Robson and by common acclaim, they want him back.

We have lost Fr. Michael Rosinski since he has been posted in British Columbia, but as he makes trips often to Toronto, we hope we can coordinate a weekend to share his talent and spirituality.



Roaming Catholic

Fr. Michael was off to Rome together with the Parish Priest, Fr. Paul Dobson of St. Isaac Joques Parish. We were accompanied by 42 other pilgrims. The trip was a roaring success including a close encounter with Pope Francis in the General Audience. Fr. Michael also had the opportunity to have a good Italian dinner with Fr. Provincial Peter Bisson. The Provincial told him that Chairman of the Board of Trustees has stepped down and Kathy Dempsey will be the Chairman elect. This has taken place at next board meeting.



In Israel we stayed in Palestinian quarters, first in Nazareth and then in Bethlehem to show support for the Catholics in that area. The hotels were four star and very comfortable, but unfortunately too far from the places we wanted to visit and as a result, we spent a lot of time on the buses to get to places of interest. However, all in all, the pilgrims were very satisfied with the tour. The places that really touched us besides the important places in Jerusalem, were: the Church of the Annunciation and Mary's Well in Nazareth, the boat ride on the Sea of Galilee, where we were introduced by having the Canadian Flag hoisted on the boat and singing the anthem. Then there was the Church of Mt. Carmel in Haifa and driving down south, past Caesarea, we visited Jaffa where Peter had his vision of the "unclean animals" lowered from Heaven. Acts C.10

The Mice are at play

While the Director was away, the furnace in Fleming Hall broke down and a new one was installed. Unfortunately it was right during the weekend.

This upset some of the retreatants who had Fr. Con Mulvihill S.J. as Retreat Master. Fr. Con spoke on the Ignatian theme of Discernment. Br. Bob claims it was the best he has heard on discernment. This is not surprising because Fr. Con is not only logical in thought but he is known to be articulate in proclaiming the message. It is for this reason it is so hard to get him for more than one retreat. The cottage also received a new roof at the cost of \$6000+ while the director was away. It could have been done for two thirds that price!





Leaving on a Jet Plane...



Fr. Philip Chircop is one of our more popular retreat Masters. There is a constant waiting list for his retreats. Fiona tells me the way, bookings for Fr. Philip's retreats go, is as follow. In **first** place, those who were on that particular weekend last year, get the assured places. **Next** on the list are those who inquire to make retreats for the first time. **Third** on the list are those who have not been on a "PC Retreat" during the current year – and PC does not stand for President's Choice.

However, we will not have a "PC" retreat during 2017-2018. Fr. Philip will be taking a sabbatical. Once more he will leave on a Jet Plane but hopefully, and unlike John Denver, we will know when he's coming back again. Currently he is working on a retreat with some of the spiritual ideas of Leonard Cohen. But he assures us that he will not sing: "Hallelujah".

La Cuenta, por favor..

When we made our last trip to Spain, our Manresa staff soon learnt the phrase, "La Cuenta, por favor" – which meant, "The bill please." It has cost us \$185 per retreatant to put on the weekends. During the directorship of Fr. Scott Lewis, which was six years and the last two year, we managed with an unchanged donation. This year, we have asked for \$10 per person. It does not seem like much because we tip the waiters more than that when we go to restaurants. However with 30 or more retreatants each week giving that extra ten, that addition does make a difference. It helped to offset the \$26,000 bill for putting a new roof on Fleming Hall. Our Insurance Agents refused to cover us, if it was not done by the end of June. However it was only completed by the second week of August.





The Manresa Staff



A Merry Christmas to All, and to all a Good Night

