



JESUIT SPIRITUAL RENEWAL CENTRE IN PICKERING

NOVEMBER 2019

NEWS LETTER NO. 24

ADVENT GREETINGS FROM THE DIRECTOR OF MANRESA



I told you in our last Newsletter about a promotional video that Salt and Life TV helped us prepare in September. The video is available on You Tube. Check it out if you haven't yet seen it. It is very

attractive and shows some of the beauty and the peace of Manresa. Tell your friends about it.

To view video click on the link below

[Manresa in Pickering Video 2019](#)

The various buildings at Manresa are no different from our bodies – both need constant care and attention. Something always seems to be creaking or malfunctioning. Manresa is fortunate to have an excellent team for making sure things work. It's all aimed at creating an environment that is conducive to peaceful retreats. It's definitely an aging building, but we are making sure it works and is welcoming. It doesn't matter whether it is the regular inspection of the fire alarm equipment, a broken handle on a toilet, cleaning and waxing floors, repairing equipment for inside or outside, repairing or updating signage on the property, installing a new furnace or circulating pump, or any of 1001 never-ending maintenance needs. Visitors who rely on the internet will discover that our Wifi capabilities have been improved.

While we are maintaining our aging building as best as possible, a team of people with professional God-given gifts have come forward with a desire to replace our aging facility in order to propel Manresa into the future, so new generations of retreatants can experience the healing tranquility of our facility and grounds. We hope that they can benefit from our various programs in the same way as all those who volunteer on our board and building committee.

We continue to invite volunteers who bring unique skills for the many specialized sub-committees we are forming – skills in communications, fundraising, capital campaign, website IT skills, architecture, construction, finance, etc. In other words, if you feel God is calling you to express your gifts, then please contact either Fr. Henk at director@manresa.ca or Mike Hyland, chair of our building committee, at mikehyland@bell.net

As a Church community, we are quickly approaching the beautiful season of Advent. Our Newsletter includes a short reflection to help with your own prayer.

I am grateful for our Board, our staff and each of you. We are working together to strengthen the ministry of Manresa. Be assured of my personal prayer for you and your families as we approach Advent and start our preparations for Christmas.

God bless!
Fr. Henk

**LET US KNOW IF YOU ARE INTERESTED
IN ONE OF THE UPCOMING WEEKENDS
THAT STILL ARE AVAILABLE.**

*January 10-12, 2020 Men Ignatian -
"Songs of Praise, Lament and
Thanksgiving: The Psalms help us follow
and pray with Jesus."
Facilitator: Fr. Joseph Schner, S.J.*

*January 24 - 26, 2020 Men Ignatian -
"What is Pope Francis saying to me?"
Facilitator: Fr. Robert Foliot, S.J.*

*January 31 - February 2, 2020 Women
Ignatian "Our Lady: Mary in Landscape
of the Spiritual Exercises."
Facilitator: Fr. Michael Knox, S.J.*

ADVENT: STAY AWAKE! A SPIRITUAL REFLECTION

Advent begins on Sunday, December 1. The four Sundays of Advent help us to prepare for Christmas, for the celebration of the birth of Christ into the reality of our personal lives and the



life of the world. Each of these Sundays has something important to offer for our spiritual life. You are probably asking yourself whether you have a spiritual life. I'm not talking about how often you go to Mass or Reconciliation. I'm not referring to how often you pray the Rosary or sit in a church, or even how often you come to Manresa. One of the constants of the interior spiritual life is *movement*. Saint Ignatius and many saints tell us that that movement is at the heart of the spiritual life. I'm not referring to physical or geographic movement. It is the kind of movement that we see so often in scripture, in the lives of the saints, and within our own hearts. One of my personal favourite movements in the Gospel is in the account of the Road to Emmaus. The disciples walk along, feeling dejected because of the death of Jesus. He comes alongside, and by the end of the story, we hear the disciples say, *were not our hearts burning within, as he talked to us on the road*. Movements like that are a dime a dozen in both Testaments of Scripture. Ordinary women and men have epiphanies, ways – simple and complex – in which something moves within their heart.

Guess what! Those kind of spiritual movements are also a dime a dozen in the spiritual life of each one of us. It might be at a moment in Adoration. But it might also be in being moved by the example and the challenging words/actions of Greta Thunberg and the way in which she is inspiring so many in our world and is fearless

about challenging the proud and mighty regarding the state of the Earth.

that movement could be in the meeting of a parish committee. But it could also be in the way in which my heart was moved when I saw the homeless in our streets. We cannot place limits of what will cause that movement. Quite simply, where is my heart moving within? We need eyes and ears to grow in awareness of what is before us. Is it in the beautiful colours of Autumn? Am I moved by a beautiful piece of music? Does the daily news speak to me?

So, what reminder is being offered as we move into Advent. Keep awake, you must be ready. The time has come for us to rise from a spiritual slumber and keep your eyes and ears open. We never know when we will have those opportunities for spiritual movements. What does it mean for us to stay spiritually alert? We know how easy it is to fall into a routine, thereby taking for granted spiritual awakenings that confront us on a regular basis. We are prey to the trap of stumbling through life and not having the keen inner eyes or ears to be attentive to what is being offered to us. Advent invites us to open our ears and eyes.

By Philip Shano, S.J.

