



JESUIT SPIRITUAL RENEWAL CENTRE IN PICKERING

MARCH 2020

NEWS LETTER NO. 26

LENTEN GREETINGS FROM THE DIRECTOR OF MANRESA



As I take my daily walk, I'm struck by how dormant things seem under all the snow we have on these beautiful grounds. However, I know that there is plenty happening even under the cold and snow. In a similar way, Manresa has plenty of life going on, even in the midst of winter months. The usual weekend retreats take place.

Our staff and board are also far from dormant. The staff continues to care for the visitors and buildings, sometimes relying on professionals from outside. A major maintenance project was completed in St. Ignatius chapel. All caulking was removed from the outside of the windows and replaced with new caulking and paint. In the interior of the chapel, patchwork was done to the ceiling and in the main hallway leading to the chapel. As well, all the windowsills were repaired. Elsewhere in Fleming Hall, the main heating and cooling system for the conference hall was repaired. The major project outside the building was the carpenter shop behind the Manor. Junk from as far back as the 1950s was removed and the structure is being prepared as the new storage area for the grounds keeping equipment. (Chapel hallway: before and after.)



Our board is actively engaged in the oversight of Manresa. I mentioned in my last letter that an active and professional committee has been working at the possibility of a new building to replace the aging Fleming Hall. Currently we have about forty professionals, divided into a number of sub-committees, who each freely donated their God-given talents to the proposed facilities' renewal project. This means that several groups work on a dedicated new building website, procurement, stakeholders, finance, communications etc.

Also, we are now at the point where we have started the process of acquiring the right architect who can translate all our building requirements into an attractive design that feels welcoming to the 6,000 individuals who visit Manresa annually for either day or overnight retreats. Please contact us if you want add your own expertise.

We are missing the sounds of youth this winter. Many of the programs for students have been cancelled this year, because of the ongoing labour disputes with the school boards.

As a Church community, we have just started the season of Lent. Our Newsletter includes a short reflection to help with your own prayer.

As ever, 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. I remember our Manresa family each day in my celebration of the Eucharist.

God bless!
Fr. Henk

ALICE QUIGLEY



Alice Quigley passed away February 16. Alice was the secretary at Manresa for more than twenty years, a long time Captain for retreats, and a member of CLC. Her funeral will be at St. Isaac Jogues Parish on Friday, March 6. May she rest in peace and see God face to face!

COMING UP – SPACES STILL AVAILABLE FOR A FEW RETREATS

APRIL 3 - 5

SILENT RETREAT FOR WOMEN

A silent retreat in the Jesuit Tradition facilitated by Fr. Joseph Schnier, S.J. His theme for the weekend is, "Songs of Praise, Lament and Thanksgiving: The Psalms help us follow and pray with Jesus." Suggested offering of \$220 per person. Contact: 905-839-2864 or registration@manresa.ca

APRIL 9 - 12

EASTER TRIDUUM RETREAT FOR MEN AND WOMEN

A silent retreat being facilitated by Fr. Henk van Meijel, S.J. His theme, "Pausing with Jesus Before the Resurrection". These days of retreat provide silence and solitude for entering more deeply into the mystery of Jesus' Passion, Death and Resurrection. Suggested offering of \$280 per person. Contact: 905-839-2864 or registration@manresa.ca

APRIL 24 - 26

SILENT RETREAT FOR MEN AND WOMEN

A silent retreat being facilitated by Fr. Con Mulvihill, S.J. His theme for the weekend, "Responding to the Graces of Christ's Resurrection." Suggested offering of \$220 per person. Contact: 905-839-2864 or registration@manresa.ca

FOOD FOR YOUR SOUL: WHAT IS LENT?

Judaism has Yom Kippur. Islam has Ramadan. For Christianity, the primary season of penitential practice is Lent. Important elements of the season are prayer, penance, almsgiving and self-denial. There are many ways to live out these practices: opting out of participating in personal vices, giving energy and resources to charitable works, taking prayer more seriously, and so on. Many people choose to refrain from chocolate or alcohol or social media. Areas that I know will offer a particular spiritual challenge to me should help determine what I do or don't do. The choices should be helps to foster self-control and simplicity. The choice of external practice is unique to each of us. I shouldn't refrain from chocolate because someone else is doing it. Rather, my external choice should be a reflection of *my* spiritual need and a way of increasing solidarity with the needs of others.

As we know, the Season of Lent runs from Ash Wednesday to the Sacred Triduum before Easter Sunday. It is forty days long, with several Sundays as feast days. Forty is a significant biblical number, in both Old and New Testaments. However, the most significant use of forty in this particular situation is the forty days that Jesus spent in the wilderness before he embarked on his public ministry.

The name *Lent* is a shortened form of the Old English word *len(c)ten*, meaning spring season. The Oxford English Dictionary also suggests that there may be a connection with the lengthening of the days at this time of the year.

Lent likely has been observed since apostolic times, though the practice was not formalized until the First Council of Nicaea in 325. It was a time of preparation of candidates for baptism and a time of penance for sinners. In the early centuries fasting rules were strict, as they still are in Eastern churches. In the West these fasting rules have gradually been relaxed.

A Lenten Litany on Fasting and Feasting is sometimes used at Ash Wednesday prayer services. It is attributed to William Arthur Ward, an American author, teacher and pastor. It has lines such as, "Fast from discontent; Feast on gratitude." It is readily available online and challenges us to a positive approach to the Season of Lent.

http://www.gloriadeihudson.org/documents/Fasting_and_Feasting.pdf

By Philip Shano, S.J.