



JESUIT SPIRITUAL RENEWAL CENTRE IN PICKERING

MAY 2020

NEWS LETTER NO. 28

GREETINGS FROM THE DIRECTOR OF MANRESA



This brief newsletter tells you the sad news of the death on April 30 of Fr. Michael (Mike) Hawkins, S.J. This offers a timely reason to connect with our Manresa community. We have provided a few words below. No doubt there will be more information later on. We also mention the example of a few people who have been helping out in this difficult time, at René Goupil House, our Jesuit Infirmary.

You likely have extra time on your hands. This is a good time to check out our new website. It allows online bookings for retreats, online donations, and other important features.

<https://manresa-canada.ca/>

Fr. Philip Shano offers a piece to nourish your souls at this point. He offers a few reflections on Psalm 23, quite likely the world's favourite Psalm.

The Manresa community remains in my prayer each day. Stay safe and healthy. God bless!

Fr. Henk

FR. MICHAEL (MIKE) HAWKINS, S.J. DECEMBER 19, 1936 TO APRIL 30, 2020



The global pandemic of COVID-19 hit home to the Manresa retreat team with the death on April 30 of Fr. Mike Hawkins. He lived at René Goupil House, our Jesuit infirmary just a few hundred meters from Fleming Hall. The virus slipped in to that building. Fr. Mike and others were affected. Until he moved there for health reasons, he lived at La Storta, the Jesuit residence next door to the Manor. Even after his move to René Goupil, Fr. Mike continued to help with weekend retreats, with counseling and confessions. Many retreatants at Manresa were grateful for his pastoral compassion and his life experience, which he relied upon in offering spiritual direction. There are staff members at Manresa, René Goupil and La Storta who are heartbroken by his passing. No

doubt that this will also be true of many of those who were helped by his compassion. His death brings home to the Pickering Jesuits the reality of the pandemic.

Fr. Mike spent many years of his Jesuit life working in the Darjeeling region of India. He went there in 1963 and returned to Canada in 2007. He is still remembered there with fondness and gratitude. He did tremendous work for high school education, parish life and other forms of pastoral work and Jesuit leadership. The Provincial Superior in the Province of Darjeeling sent this short statement to our Canadian Provincial: *"I am sending you the condolences of four Bishops - Clement Tirkey, Bishop of Jalpaiguri, Vincent Aind, Bishop of Bagdogra, Stephen Lepcha, Bishop of Darjeeling and Thomas D'Souza, Arch Bishop of Calcutta. They have written as follows: Fr Mike Hawkins served the people of Darjeeling as a great Jesuit Missionary. We remain ever grateful to him. Kindly convey our sincere condolences to the Provincial of Canada and all the Jesuits in his community. May his soul rest in peace."*

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Arrangements have not been finalized. Meanwhile, let us pray in gratitude for how Fr. Mike was able to share his ministry with so many at Manresa. May he rest in peace!

Author: Philip Shano, S.J.

A FEW JESUIT VOLUNTEERS AT RENÉ GOUPIL HOUSE

René Goupil House has been short-staffed in these difficult days. When our Jesuit province heard and saw what was happening to our confrères at René Goupil House, a number of Jesuits volunteered to come forward. Four are Jesuit scholastics, young men who are still in formation. They help with as many needs of the house and the men as they can, including keeping vigil with them as they live their final hours. The sister of one of them is a registered nurse and has come here as well. Her gifts are appreciated right now. Finally, Fr. Gilles Mongeau, the Socius (assistant) to the Provincial Superior, is also lending a hand. It was Fr. Mongeau who was with Fr. Mike when he went home to God. Fr. Mongeau is not afraid to get his hands dirty and help with menial tasks. Our Jesuit priests and brothers at the infirmary are grateful for this service in a time of crisis.



Photo by Bro. Bob

These generous volunteers are living at Fleming Hall. Jesuits who hear of their presence immediately think of Saint Aloysius Gonzaga. St. Aloysius was an Italian aristocrat who was born in 1568 and joined the Jesuits. Like our young men helping out these days, he was in studies when a plague took place in Rome. He died in 1591 from contracting the plague when he interrupted his studies to care for victims. He was in his early twenties. For his compassion and courage in the face of an incurable disease, Aloysius has become the patron both of AIDS sufferers and their caregivers. We pray that this young saint may look over and protect our volunteers and all who are risking their lives to care for people in this pandemic. Manresa is grateful that we can at least provide accommodations.

Author: Philip Shano, S.J.

FOOD FOR YOUR SOUL: PSALM 23



Photo by Bro. Bob

Psalm 23 may very well be the most beloved Psalm. It's generally associated with funerals, but its words go well beyond death. *The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.* I would love to quiz people on why this psalm is so loved. Is it because of its promise of not wanting, the promise of green pastures and still waters, or the assurance of dwelling in the house of the Lord? Perhaps Psalm 23 is a good piece to reflect on in these strange days. *Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil.* Our global pandemic certainly qualifies as a dark valley. The psalm reminds us that God is with us. God has not abandoned us.

One of my isolation time projects has been cleaning up the basement of my Jesuit residence. A lot of stuff has accumulated over the years. Several of the owners have been dead for a while. There are the usual things that people store in basements – luggage, files, photo albums, winter coats, and so on. Things that are not necessary in the immediate moment. There are a lot of books down there. A lot! I've been enjoying sorting and discovering and exploring. It's like a used bookstore where I determine the hours. A few days ago, I came across a book from 1970 – *A Shepherd Looks at Psalm 23*. The author is Phillip Keller. He was born in East Africa and studied and worked in Canada.

Keller does exactly what the title states. He invites us to see with the shepherd's eyes, touch with his hands, and feel with his heart. He describes the 23rd Psalm as David's hymn of praise to divine diligence, meaning that the entire poem recounts the manner in which the Good Shepherd spares no pains for the welfare of his sheep. God will do anything to be with us. I shall flourish and thrive no matter what life may bring to me, even COVID-19. Along the way, Keller offers plenty of reflection questions, such as, do I really belong to the Good Shepherd, or do I sense a purpose and contentment that I am under God's care?

The author recognizes that David, the author of the Psalm, was aware of his own brokenness and sense of dejection. David knew defeat and sin; he knew what it was to feel hopeless. If we are honest, we all know that sense of personal defeat and a lack of hope. Keller reminds us that the person with a powerful confidence in God knows that God has been with him or her in adversity. That is the one who can walk through life's dark valleys without fear. Many storms confront us. COVID-19 is certainly such a storm. Can I truly believe that God is with me, as this Psalm promises?

Author: Fr. Philip Shano
Compiled by Br. Bob