



JESUIT SPIRITUAL RENEWAL CENTRE IN PICKERING

OCTOBER 2020
NO. 30

NEWS LETTER

GREETINGS FROM THE DIRECTOR OF MANRESA



Dear friends,

I want to keep you informed about Manresa's efforts to welcome people to our retreats, so that we keep both you and our team safe during your stay with us. These trying times in our world are the very situation in which we need to experience the peace and renewal of a *time apart*, and to know the Lord's presence. I want to assure you that Manresa can once again safely offer the gift of peace.

Since reopening our doors late September, we have offered several programs. They have gone well and show that the hard work of our staff paid off. Our safety protocols are working. A few people told us that they came here with safety worries, but they ended up feeling safe and cared for. Just below, you will find a summary of the protocols. You will receive the complete list when you come for a retreat.

Good news for those who enjoy trekking down the valley to the creek: The salmon are running these days.

Fr. Philip Shano offers a piece to nourish your souls at this point. He provides a few reflections on the coming Feasts of All Saints and All Souls.

Even in the emerging *new normal* of our unpredictable and ever-shifting world, Manresa continues to offer peace. Come visit us!

The Manresa community remains in my prayer each day. Stay safe and healthy. God bless! I look forward to welcoming you this fall.

Fr. Henk

UPCOMING RETREATS

All retreats are a suggested offering of \$ 225.00. You may now register online at: manresa-canada.ca, email: registration@manresa.ca or call us at 905-839-2864

November 6 at 7:00 pm to November 8 at 1:00 pm "From Religion to Relationship: A Personal Experience of God." -- Facilitated by Fr. Michael Rosinski, SJ

MEN IGNATIAN -- Learn the basics of praying in the Jesuit tradition. Understand the essential elements of Jesuit spirituality, a spirituality for busy, active people. St. Ignatius Loyola wanted Jesuits to be "contemplatives in action" but the busyness of our lives is often the thing that distracts us most from God. Learn to develop your awareness of God's presence in your life. Develop the tools for deepening your relationship with God while maintaining all your usual commitments to family and work.

November 27 at 7 pm to November 29 at 1:00 pm "In Expectation & Hope: Ignatian Reflections for Advent." -- Facilitated by Sr. Mary Rowell, csj

MEN & WOMEN IGNATIAN -- In our preparations for Christmas we can sometimes forget the power and joy of the Advent season with all of its opportunities for renewal and promise. This weekend retreat invites us into stillness to deepen our Advent experience with the gifts of Ignatian spirituality as a guide. As we prepare to journey through this season, Ignatian contemplation, reflection and prayer will be our light for the way. Together we will enter into the Ignatian gifts of presence, freedom, unbinding and gratitude as we wait in hope for the coming of Christ anew in our lives and in the world at Christmas.

We want you to have a safe environment so you can relax and enjoy your retreat.



New registration table with plexiglass divider

NEW COVID-19 SAFETY PROTOCOLS

Visitors to Manresa receive a detailed list of new safety protocols. The list begins with this statement: *Your health and safety are of the utmost importance to us. The following are new procedures we have implemented to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission.*



Lay out of the chapel – chairs 6 feet apart

Then the list provides detailed instructions about masks, hand sanitizer stations, the washrooms and showers, physical distancing, plexiglass dividers in the dining room and at check in, and so on. There are also instructions for seating in Fleming Hall, the Manor and Ignatius Chapel. As Fr Henk suggests, these new practices are proving effective. We are providing safety even before your arrival, by limiting the number of retreatants. You are also protected in all spaces for assemblies, counseling and confessions. The instructions are detailed and easy to follow. Our staff has tried to anticipate every concern. You will also see a list of the practices our staff is using to sanitize the various spaces.



Lay out of dining room – with plexiglass dividers – sits 4 people in their own cubicle

Food for your Soul: A Month of Remembrance

November is approaching. Of course, most of us probably want to avoid that month and its grey skies. November begins with two significant Feast Days. We celebrate All Saints Day and All Souls Day. We are enjoying a time of remembrance in our church. It always strikes me as appropriate for late autumn, as the days get darker, we start to look toward the end of the calendar year and tend to be more melancholic. Most, if not all, will say, thank God that 2020 is going to come to an end. An *annus horribilis* if ever there was one!

With these popular Feasts, we give thanks for those who have gone before us, whether saintly or not. The Feast of All Saints is the day on which we celebrate all the saints, known and unknown. It was Pope Gregory III (731-741) who named November 1 as the common date to celebrate the saints. This is a day to celebrate all holy men and women, and ask for their prayers and intercession. We honour those who are known and recognized as enlightened souls, but also the unknowns and the misfits.

Robert Ellsberg, a Catholic writer and associate of Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker movement, says about saints, *Each saint offers a unique glimpse of the face of God; each enlarges our moral imagination; each offers new insights into the meaning and possibilities of human life.* George Bernanos, the author of *The Diary of a Country Priest*, says, *a saint doesn't live on the interest of his income, or even on his income; he lives on his capital, he gives all his soul.* In other words, a saint shows total dedication to God. It is because of their imperfections, searching, struggles, doubts, unique personalities, and daily efforts that we can relate to certain saints. That is why so many of us think of certain saints as our patrons, asking them to intercede on our behalf. Whatever their quirks or oddities, it is helpful for us to know that there is a special saint who knows precisely what we struggle with.

Then we have the Commemoration of all the Faithful Departed. Commonly referred to as All Souls' Day, it is an invitation for us to prayerfully remember those who have passed away. We pray that the faithful departed may enter the full beatific vision of union with God.

The first historical evidence for a celebration such as All Souls Day comes from St. Isidore of Seville, who died in 636. It gradually spread until Rome accepted it in the 13th century. However, the practice of praying for the dead goes back to St. Paul and the early church. Tertullian, one of the Church Fathers, is the first to mention prayers for the dead: *The widow who does not pray for her dead husband has as good as divorced him.* Subsequent writers similarly make mention of the practice as prevalent. The most famous instance is Saint Augustine's prayer for his mother, Monica, at the end of the 9th book of his *Confessions*, written around 398.

Many parish communities have a practice in November to remember the dead. Parishioners are invited to place at the altar lists of names of those to be remembered at the daily Mass. In Latin America, it has become customary to call the word *presente* after the recitation of the name of someone who has died in the struggle for peace and justice. It is a way of honouring and calling forth the persons, in a sense indicating that they are still present with us. By commemorating our faithful departed at the daily Mass, we are acknowledging the same thing – that they are present to us, in a new way. We recognize that presence each time we remember and live out of all that they taught us and passed on to us. We celebrate those who have preceded us in death. We can take time to recall the many gifts they gave us. In that, they play a role similar to the saints. With both saints and the deceased, we have women and men who can intercede for us.

Philip Shano, S.J.