



JESUIT SPIRITUAL RENEWAL CENTRE IN PICKERING

October 2021

News Letter No. 33

GREETINGS FROM THE DIRECTOR OF MANRESA



Dear Friends,

Happy Thanksgiving! We give thanks at this time of year, for the ministry of Manresa and everyone who makes it possible, in so many ways. I hope that you have enjoyed in-person visits with family and friends.

It's been a long time of the pandemic isolation. People were deprived of the peaceful experience of being at Manresa for a valued time of retreat. We are finally back in operation. If the attendance at our programs since September is any indication, the experience of being physically present was missed by many of you. We are back! And so are you. Retreatants have been enjoying the place and its silence and beauty.

We try to ensure that interactive programs take place at a time different from silent retreats. There was an example on a recent beautiful fall weekend. There were two different "talking" retreats taking place. The weather was so perfect that various sessions of the programs took place on the lawn. It's always good to see people enjoying the silence, but it's also good to see how our place can provide a setting for community.

Several members of the Jesuit community have commented how good it is to see our parking lot filled, a clear indication that people are finally returning for retreats.

Our Board had an in-person retreat for an afternoon. We started with Mass and ended with a meal together. People were very happy to connect with one another and with the basic values of Manresa's mission and vision. We are already planning our next meeting. Having looked at the deeper values of what is crucial about Manresa, we will get down to business matters.

Finally, I offer my prayers for you and your family. Manresa is honoured to be connected with your life.

In Christ Jesus,

Fr. Henk



Collage of Manresa flowers 2021

IMPORTANT COVID REMINDER

In our following of procedures from the Province of Ontario, and for our mutual safety, Manresa is requiring that all retreatants/guests be fully vaccinated. We are asking for proof of vaccination. Manresa has very clear protocols in this time of COVID. If you are in doubt, please check our website at: <https://manresa-canada.ca/faqs-covid19/>

UPCOMING IGNATIAN RETREATS:

“They Hummed of Mystery: Re-enchantment of Nature as the Word and Beauty of God.” Friday, October 29 – 7 p.m. to Sunday, October 31 - 1 p.m.

A silent Ignatian weekend retreat for **WOMEN**. Pope Francis’ encyclical *Laudato Si’*, uses the wisdom language of the Christian Trinity to attempt a “re-enchantment” of the natural world. The Trinitarian mystery can instill a spirit of awe, wonder, contemplation, reverence and praise before the word and the beauty of God in all creation. We will explore this deep well of meaning and mystery that we call creation or nature. From this well may flow a deep-rooted care for our common home and a call to action.

Facilitated by Fr. John McCarthy, SJ.

“Seeking Spiritual Healing the Ignatian Way.”
Friday, November 5 – 7 p.m. to Sunday, November 7 - 1 p.m.

A silent Ignatian weekend retreat for MEN. This weekend retreat is based on the Ignatian way of Contemplation in Action, that is, to find God in all things. The retreat is designed to assist each retreatant to come to a higher understanding of their own vocation (God’s calling) in the context of their personal contemporary life journey.

Facilitated by Fr. Henk van Meijel, SJ

“In Expectation and Hope: Ignatian Reflections for Advent.”
Friday, November 26 – 7 p.m. to Sunday, November 28 - 1 p.m.

A silent Ignatian weekend retreat for MEN/WOMEN. 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 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 in to 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.

Facilitated by Sr. Mary Rowell, csj

All retreats are a suggested offering of \$235 pp. Includes 2 nights accommodation, meals, program and spiritual direction. To register see below:

WEBSITE ONLINE REGISTRATION: <https://manresa-canada.ca/events/>

CONTACT: registration@manresa.ca

PHONE: 905-839-2864

FOOD FOR YOUR SOUL

WHERE DO I FIT? – THANKSGIVING

I've just re-read my Jesuit Province blog posts for Thanksgiving from the past several years. I have opted to use parts of an older post from me. I have written of our need to grow in gratitude, not just on Thanksgiving Day, but throughout the entire year. This is always true, but especially for Canadians who have been so blessed. I've written before about being part of the two percent. I'm not part of the global elite that composes the one percent. Nor am I part of the vast majority of people around the world who live in poverty, hunger, the lack of a secure homeland, fear, violence war or powerlessness. No, I am definitely somewhere near the top of the pile. So, I coined the term two percent. I used it because I live in one of the safest, wealthiest, healthiest nations on the face of the earth. Canada always places very high on global rankings of livability.

However, since using the term, I've had to admit that I'm even better off than the majority of Canadians. I'm a white male. I'm highly unlikely to be "carded" by the police. I'll never know the experience of women who experience sexism or discrimination in the workplace. Regardless of how

sympathetic I am to First Nations issues, I'll never really know what it's like to survive the residential schools or to live the hardships of a remote northern community. I can understand the situation of survivors of childhood abuse, but that understanding is pretty limited. I can pass by the homeless man panhandling and not understand his situation. I will never have to worry about having meaningful labour. I don't know what it is to stand in line at a soup kitchen or at a food bank. I can't imagine the constant chronic pain experienced by many people every waking hour. And, I am reluctant to mention this, but as a Jesuit living in community, I do not have to concern myself with mortgages or living from pay cheque to pay cheque or carrying a debt. So, I'm no longer certain where I rank. If it's not the one percent, it's somewhere not too far from it. I may not have a personal jet, but I can find a welcome in Jesuit communities throughout the world.

That situation, and re-reading my older posts, heightens in me a sense of humility. I have so much and my life is so incredibly blessed, almost charmed. Why can't I be more grateful for what I have! I'm sure there are many others of you who can share personal accounts such as this. It's Thanksgiving Day. What would it look like if a stance of gratitude became the manner by which we started each day? I suspect that it would change the way we look at and treat others. It would change how we see our family and friends. We'd be more grateful for them. It might even change how we relate to the poor in our midst or to the refugee in Syria.

Some years ago, as I recovered from a major illness, I lamented that so much had been taken from me. I said that all I had left was God, family and friends. A wise friend replied, "And what is wrong with that?" Wise words! I wish I could live with that gratitude each day. And, of course, the truth is that the illness and my journey since then has ironically given me so much more to be grateful for in my life. Why can't I just be better at being more grateful to God, not to mention to those around me? That's why we need holidays like this, days to remind us to be thankful.

By Fr. Phil Shano, S.J.