



JESUIT SPIRITUAL RENEWAL CENTRE IN PICKERING

December 2021

News Letter No. 34

GREETINGS FROM THE DIRECTOR OF MANRESA



Dear Friends,

Blessings on you and your families in the beautiful season of Advent! May this season be one of grace, as you prepare for the Birth of Christ.

I am writing you just a day after a meeting of our Board of Trustees. I was grateful for the gifts of energy, creativity and generosity. There was a conversation about new programs that could further enhance the spiritual life of our visitors. Manresa is truly fortunate to count on so many committed staff, volunteers, and friends. This ministry is only possible because so many give so much.

We are slowly turning a corner from the impact of COVID on our programs. We are welcoming smaller crowds, but the numbers are certainly encouraging. People are grateful to once again benefit from our place of peace. People are being respectful of one another in this COVID environment.

Sometimes good news takes mundane forms. We have a brand new tractor and snow plow.

It will get plenty of use this winter. As you probably know, contracting snow clearance can get expensive. We realized that it was more reasonable for us to take care of our property, including Rene Goupil (the Jesuit Infirmary). I hope that I get a chance to do some snow-clearing this winter!

If you have not had a chance, I would recommend that you check our website for this retreat season's offerings. There is a wide variety of retreats to help you.

Finally, I offer my prayers for you and your family. Manresa is honoured to be connected with your life. May the season of Christmas be marked by peace and joy!

In Christ Jesus,
Fr. Henk





Collage of Manresa Christmas tree lights 2021

UPCOMING IGNATIAN RETREATS:

All our retreats are a suggested offering of \$235 pp. Includes 2 nights accommodation, meals, program and spiritual direction.

You can register online at: <https://manresa-canada.ca/events/>

Or send us an email at: registration@manresa.ca

“On the Road to Union with God.”

Friday, January 7 – 7 p.m. to Sunday, January 9 - 1 p.m.

A silent Ignatian weekend retreat for MEN. Generally, there are three broad recognizable stages as we grow closer to God: the Purgative stage, the Illuminative stage, and the Unitive stage. We will explore this journey with the help of the life of the saint who were persons like you and me who had to get in touch with their own human frailty along their own unique life-journey. The hope is that the retreatant comes to a higher understanding of self in relation to our infinite loving and merciful God in the context of their own earthly life-journey.

Facilitated by Fr. Henk van Meijel, S.J.

Spirituality of the 12 Steps for Men.
January 21 - 7:00 p.m. - January 23 - 1:00 p.m.

A spiritual retreat for MEN 12 STEP - Come and join us for a journey that will take you through the 12 Steps of recovery (AA) allowing you to strengthen a deeper spirituality within yourself. This retreat tends to be ecumenical with many non-Catholics in attendance. This is truly a spiritual approach for everyone.

Facilitated by Kathy Dempsey and our Retreat Team.

“Openness to Christ’ Words: A Path of Encounter and Conversion.”
Friday, January 28 – 7 p.m. to Sunday, January 30 - 1 p.m.

A silent Ignatian weekend retreat for MEN. During 3 days of retreat, we will focus on the Ignatian method of contemplation that suggests the use of our senses (SE 106), to contemplate together some of the significant moments of Jesus’ encounter with His audience and the healing and transformative process that followed as a result of these encounters. Fundamental to this, is the role of the Holy Spirit that allows people to open their hearts to the Divine Grace which transforms, restores and re-creates.

Facilitated by Fr. Jean Francky Guerrier, S.J .

FOOD FOR YOUR SOUL

A Light to Others

"The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it."

We hear plenty in the Christmas scripture readings about light and how it casts out darkness. With Christmas Day, we move to a celebration of the light that has come into the world with the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem. Regardless of whether you celebrate at Midnight Mass, the Mass at Dawn, or Mass During the Day, you will encounter images of light. Isaiah speaks of how, "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light: those who lived in a land of deep darkness - on them light has shone." Luke's proclamation of the birth of Jesus features the glory of the Lord shining around the shepherds. Psalm 97 reminds us, "A light will shine on us this day: The Lord is born for us." John's Gospel proclaims the life of God that is the light of the human race. John the Baptist comes to testify to the true light.

Jesus is that light who shines in the dark corners of our personal lives and the world. Often the darkness surrounding us may seem much more powerful than the light in our world. However, as we hear in the beautiful opening of John’s Gospel, the light shines in the darkness and that light is much more powerful than the darkness. There is a challenge in receiving the light of Christ. We cannot be mere passive recipients of that light. We are called to become light for others. Alone, we each may be only a single light. Joined together in the light of Christ, we can illuminate and transform our world.

How much we need that transformation in our world! There are far too many areas of darkness and they are not friendly or safe. They are places of fear and suspicion. Those corners may be in those secret places in our own hearts, corners that we ourselves may be unaware of. They may be in our

personal, family or social history - corners that we know about but are reluctant to speak about. The darkness is in some business and political leaders. There are dark and fearful global issues that seem so insurmountable to us. Whatever the dark corners, the Light of Christ can shed new life. It starts with us.

Saint Oscar Romero wrote beautiful pastoral letters when he was Archbishop of San Salvador. One letter includes a strong quote for Christmas.

*No one can celebrate
a genuine Christmas
without being truly poor.
The self-sufficient, the proud,
those who, because they have
everything, look down on others,
those who have no need
even of God – for them there
will be no Christmas.
Only the poor, the hungry,
those who need someone
to come on their behalf,
will have that someone.
That someone is God.
Emmanuel. God-with-us.
Without poverty of spirit
there can be no abundance of God.*

Have a Merry and Blessed Christmas!

By Fr. Phil Shano, S.J.