



JESUIT SPIRITUAL RENEWAL CENTRE IN PICKERING

March 01, 2022

News Letter No. 35

## GREETINGS FROM THE DIRECTOR OF MANRESA



Dear friends,

Blessings on you and your families as we prepare to move to the sacred season of Lent! May this season be one of grace, as you prepare for the celebration of Easter!

I am writing you towards the completion of an eight-day directed retreat for nine seminarians from Saint Augustine's in Toronto. They were also here early in the fall, for a five-day retreat. Manresa is grateful that we are playing a role in the spiritual formation of men considering ordination to the priesthood. It is a gift to all of us, to witness the prayerfulness of these young men.

I think that we are slowly turning a corner from the impact of COVID on our programs. We are not welcoming capacity 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.

I know that some of our friends have a desire to donate for specific projects. For instance, we are raising funds for an upgraded outdoor set of Stations of the Cross. Thanks to generous donors, we have raised \$25,000 thus far. We are hoping to raise \$200,000 for the complete project. It will be created in harmony with our grounds. We are accepting donations through CanadaHelps. You will notice that our donation page lists three categories for you to help Manresa: General, Building Renewal Project, and the Stations of the Cross renewal project. We are grateful for every donation we receive, regardless of the size.

As you may know, this part of the country is receiving plenty of snow this season. That means that our new snow removal equipment is getting plenty of use. So are those who operate it! Kyle is the main person. I occasionally go outside and keep up my snow clearance skills. We are getting creative about where to store the growing piles of snow. Manresa and the Jesuits are saving plenty of money by taking care of our own snow clearance needs.

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. We've listed a few upcoming programs below. Finally, Fr. Philip Shano offers some nourishment for our souls, especially as we move toward Lent.

I offer my prayers for you and your family. Manresa is honoured to be connected with your life. I remember you daily at the celebration of the Eucharist. Please remember Manresa and our retreatants in your prayer.

In Christ Jesus,

Fr. Henk

**Please note that Manresa is now fully open for in person retreats. We look forward to all our retreatants returning once again to Manresa. Return and make the most of the peace of our grounds and the entire centre. Effective March 1, we no longer require proof of vaccination, but masks continue to be mandatory. We follow all guidelines provided by the Ministry of Health, including the end of vaccine proof.**



**Collage of Manresa Winter Pictures 2022**

## 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](mailto:registration@manresa.ca)

### **“FINDING GOD IN CONFUSING AND CHALLENGING TIMES.”**

**Friday, March 11 – 7 p.m. to Sunday, March 13 - 1 p.m.**

A silent Ignatian weekend retreat in the Jesuit Tradition for **WOMEN**. Fr Kevin Kelly, SJ, Director of Villa St. Martin, the Jesuit Retreat Centre in Montreal, will facilitate the weekend. His theme, “Finding God in Confusing and Challenging Times.”

### **“THE EXODUS EXPERIENCE AND OUR PANDEMIC: THE NEW NORMAL.”**

**Friday, March 18 – 7 p.m. to Sunday, March 20 - 1 p.m.**

A silent Ignatian weekend retreat in the Jesuit Tradition for **MEN**. Fr. Michael Coutts, SJ will facilitate the weekend. His theme, “The Exodus Experience and Our Pandemic: the new normal.”

### **“THE ANIMA CHRISTI: AN INTIMATE JOURNEY WITH JESUS CHRIST.”**

**Friday, March 25 – 7 p.m. to Sunday, March 27 - 1 p.m.**

A silent Ignatian weekend retreat for **MEN and WOMEN**. Fr. Michael Knox, SJ, Director of Martyrs’ Shrine in Midland will facilitate the weekend. His theme, “The Anima Christi: An Intimate Journey with Jesus Christ.”

### **“A LOOK AT OUR INDIVIDUAL FAITH JOURNEY WITH GOD.”**

**Monday, March 28 – 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.**

A day of reflection for men and women. This one-day retreat is about locating ourselves along our ever-changing faith journey with God. Human relationships change over time, they either become more profound or they slowly diminish; likewise, our vocation as a baptised person changes over time. A teenager has a different call from God than a senior.

This day will include talks given by Fr. Henk van Meijel, SJ, Reconciliation Service, confessions available and plenty of time for private prayer and to walk our grounds. Included is lunch and break. The day ends with Mass.

Facilitated by Fr. Henk van Meijel, SJ. A suggested offering of \$50 pp.

## Food for your Soul: What is Lent (from Fr. Philip Shano, S.J.)

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 few years ago I came across a prayer in the Scarboro Foreign Mission magazine: A Lenten Litany on Fasting and Feasting. It is often 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 is challenging us to a positive approach to the Season of Lent.

[http://www.gloriadeihudson.org/documents/Fasting\\_and\\_Feasting.pdf](http://www.gloriadeihudson.org/documents/Fasting_and_Feasting.pdf)

Can we resolve to see Lent as a positive season? We are well-aware of the ways in which this season challenges us. Let's discover how it can enhance our interior lives.