



Excitement at Manresa

Manresa is described in our brochure as a place of Peace and Tranquility. It is place that men and women come away from the hustle and bustle of everyday business life. Well they say that “March comes in like a lion, and goes out like a lamb” – that refers to the weather. Little did the retreatants expect an apparent DUI driver would come in through the gates of Manresa roaring like a lion in an SUV. Providentially he hit the front gate and brought it down. If not he would have come crashing into one of the rooms of Fleming Hall. That retreatant would certainly have had a “moving experience” which he would not have expected or appreciated.

It was interesting to listen to all the speculations that various persons proferred for this incident. I will not repeat them, so as not to prejudice the reader’s fertile imagination to picture the scenario. I will simply include the pictures that our erstwhile Br. Bob took of the scene.

By the way, after the SUV hit and knocked down the right gate, the car continued to come hobbling down the driveway and it turned and ran out of energy around the circular flower garden, as reported by Br. Bob.



The Scholastics from Cardoner House presented a retreat to Men at Manresa. The following pages are their reflections.

Carlos Chuquihuara SJ

Reflections

*"I am called to speak to people of the things of God in an informal manner. This is what Ignatius said to the Dominican Inquisitor as he was being accused of being an *alumbrado* (i.e. a heretic) This innate desire to communicate the Christian mystery in an accessible manner summarises my experience as part of the coordinating team for the Men's Retreat at Manresa, Pickering.*

Though the weather was not very favourable for outdoor meditation, the retreatants were pleasantly committed to the contemplative silence that the retreat required. To me, it seems that they got a lot out of it! And so did I! In the spiritual accompaniment sessions I was assigned, I met a kaleidoscope of masculine spiritual journeys. Listening to these men of faith reassured me in the strength and "malleability" that the Spiritual Exercises have to reach the human heart.

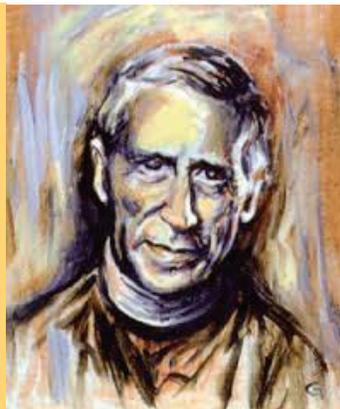
From young parents, to those more experienced in life, the gift of discernment revealed through scripture and personal reflection allow these men to discover / rediscover / refresh the paradigm of the Christian faithful: a sinner loved by a merciful God. My hope is that these 40 men went home with this reassurance: that of the unconditional love that God offers to each of us in Jesus and the Church."



The malleability that the Spiritual Exercises have to reach the human heart

Born in Lima, Peru, Carlos joined the British Jesuits in 2012. He is currently reading Philosophy at Regis College in Toronto.

Prior to his entrance, Carlos was studied Biomedical Science at the University of Sheffield and work as a caregiver for people with disabilities.



His spiritual interests included: pastoral liturgy, Lectio Divina and the cosmic spirituality of the French Jesuit Fr. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin.

Aside from praying and studying, Carlos is a swimming aficionado and baking enthusiast.

Chris Farrell SJ



As our retreat began and I looked out at the men around me, I couldn't help but feel a little anxious. I noticed that we were speaking to men twice or---in a few remarkable cases--nearly three times our age! What did I have to offer to a group of husbands, fathers, business and community leaders with so much life experience?

Up to this point in my life as a Jesuit, most of my ministry had involved contact with people my own age or younger, a population I've felt fairly comfortable offering spiritual advice to. This was uncharted territory.

Over the weekend two passages from the scriptures came to my mind. The first is from the Book of Job. In it, a young man responds to Job's suffering, saying "I am young and you are very old; therefore I held back and was afraid to declare to you my knowledge...but it is not many days that make a man wise. Rather, it is the spirit of the Almighty." (Job 32:6-8)

This helped me to remember that the most important thing in the spiritual life isn't having all the answers. The most important thing is about being authentic in our relationship with ourselves, with God, and with others. Not too bad an insight to have, considering the theme of our retreat was **"Being Holy or Faking It."**

The second passage comes from the Book of Sirach. Hands down, it is my favorite image in all of scripture: "If you find a wise man, let your feet wear away his doorstep!" Just as I had something to share with these men, I had much to learn from them as well. Engaging in spiritual conversations and even the quiet order of the days allowed each of us to learn from one another.

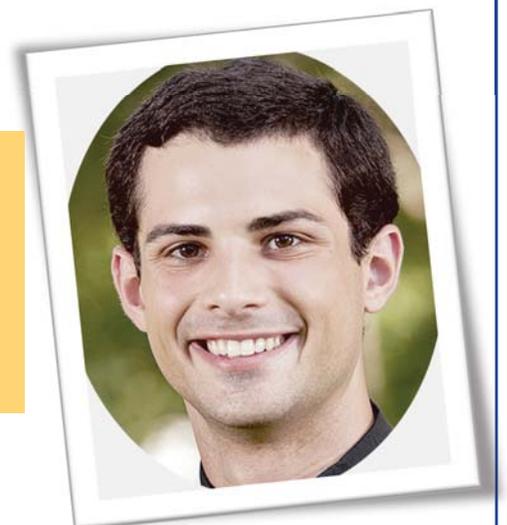
On our final day of retreat, I looked around at the crowd and noticed that there were many wise figures present, a majority with the grey hair to prove it. But there were also two or three young men in their twenties. This led me to think about how much hunger I see among my fellow university students for spiritual nourishment and to go on retreat.

Sadly, most of them don't have the financial resources to make it happen. But a thought occurred to me: maybe the men who were here and had experienced God's nearness would be moved to desire the same kind of experience for a young man. To support a "spiritual son" if you will, by helping to finance his retreat. A unique way to support one's own growth in charity and the spark of God's love in another at the same time.

And who knows? By putting the two men in contact, both might just be able to draw some wisdom from each other...

Chris Farrell was born and raised in New Orleans, Louisiana. He joined the Jesuits in 2011 after completing a degree in public accounting and working for a short time.

When he's not studying philosophy and theology at Regis College in Toronto, Chris enjoys physical fitness and exploring the Canadian outdoors.



Peter O'Sullivan SJ

"I have been thinking about how to get younger people to know about Manresa at Pickering and the retreats we offer. To do this, I think that the best way is to look at places where younger Catholics are. This means university chaplaincies. We need to get posters and people in those places.

My feelings on the retreat were very positive. It was great to see a very mixed group of men openly pray and talk about their faith. My little bit over the weekend was the film night.

I heard many of the retreatants say that they would have preferred something to eat during the film (preferably something that is easy to clear up afterwards) and a small discussion (just 5 minutes) after the film to go over it. It was too sudden for the film to end and then they had to leave.

They liked (loved!) the food, but would have preferred the meal time to be later, because they were hungry again around 9-10pm - again a reason for snacks at the film. Also, perhaps less singing in morning prayer - many were not ready for it that early in the day."



Peter O'Sullivan is from the United Kingdom and entered the Society of Jesus in Birmingham, England, in 2011. Prior to that, he studied history and taught English as a foreign language in Greece for two years.

He is at Regis College in Toronto to study philosophy and is happily getting to know as much of the cultural and social heritage of Canada while being here.

Erik Sorenson SJ



Erik Sorenson is originally from Red Deer, Alberta and completed a degree in Aerospace Engineering before entering the Society of Jesus.

He is currently studying philosophy and theology at Regis College in Toronto. Outside of school Erik is interested in martial arts and pursuing his love for all things aviation.

"I had an incredibly positive experience on the retreat, it was really a blessing for me. Initially I was a little worried about what can we possibly say to men who have been coming on retreat longer than I have been alive. In some ways I felt like I should have been the one on retreat listening to the wisdom of the person that had been doing an annual retreat for 60 years.

However, when it came to giving my talk and to meeting with a couple of the men one on one, the Spirit provided. I found that I had something beneficial to share. It is amazing how the Spirit works. For myself, this was a great experience of the retreat ministry at Manresa and I can't wait until the next opportunity to assist at another retreat."

Your comments are appreciated to
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