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December, 2011

Dear Friend of Mount Manresa,

As I am writing this letter to you our facilities staff is completing preparations for the annual celebration of *Wreaths and Trees* and *Breakfast with Santa* weekend. Mount Manresa will be alive with activity ringing in the holiday season. These past few months have seen a whirlwind of activity here. Our *Centennial Speakers* series brought university presidents and spiritual masters to Manresa for an opportunity to share their wisdom. Our Centennial Committee welcomed guests to the Great Hall at Snug Harbor for a spectacular evening of celebration as we toasted our first hundred years and began to dream about the next hundred.

Major renovations are almost complete in the newly renamed Madden Lounge which will make this space a state of the art facility for conferences. Our ministry team has extended its outreach further and continues to bring the riches of Ignatian spirituality to the local community with a series of Advent retreats. Mount Manresa has entered into a partnership with MillionTreesNYC which has brought 26 new trees to our beautiful property free of cost with the hope of more to come in the spring.

All of these efforts are a part of our response to the ever-increasing demand for the kinds of services which only a retreat house like Mount Manresa can provide. In the past year we have seen an increase of more than 10% in attendance at all of our programs. That demand continues to grow. Recently the newspaper *Catholic New York* published an article on a number of retreat centers that were closing their doors and contrasted this with the dramatic growth in our outreach here at Mount Manresa.

In short, the dream which Fr. Terence Shealy SJ had for this place, the birthplace of the lay retreat movement in the United States, is alive and flourishing more than one hundred years later. Now more than ever we need your help and support as the winter months approach with the promise of snow and ever-increasing heating costs.

This evening when we gather in Sacred Heart Chapel to bless the Advent wreath, we will recall these lines from Howard Thurman:

"When the star in the sky is gone, when the Kings and Princes are gone,
When the shepherds are back in their flocks, the work of Christmas begins.
To find the lost, to heal the broken, to feed the hungry,
To release the prisoner, to teach the nations, to bring Christ to all..."

Please consider a gift now to help us continue this important work. Be assured that you are always in our prayers and always welcome here at Mount Manresa.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Fred Herron', written over a horizontal line.

Fred Herron
Executive Director