

Unity Acres
2290 Co. Rte. 2
P. O. Box 153
Orwell NY 13426



Phone: (315) 298-6215
Fax: (315)-298-5356
unityacres@msn.com
www.unityacres.org

Holy Week/Easter
April 8, 2010

“This is the day that the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad.” –*Psalm 118: 24*

Dear Friends of Unity Acres,

It is Thursday of Easter Week. I sit facing the brook, the already green lawns, and our community campus. In back of me is our cemetery, where so many who have shared life here are at rest. They await their resurrection. It is a beautiful spring day. The brook is flowing freely. I hear its gentle sound in unison with the birds' song in praise of the Creator. I ask, “What can I give the Lord for all that He has given us” at Unity Acres? It is in this context that I share with you our Holy Week and Easter.

PALM SUNDAY

Our beloved Sacred Heart Chapel had undergone much wear and tear through the years. Several of our men started its renovation in February, just as the Lenten Season – a time of renewal – began. The conclusion of our 40th Anniversary year (March 3) saw the work continue in earnest. By Palm Sunday, the “South” wing had been transformed, fit and ready to accommodate worshippers. How providential! Its first liturgy started the holiest week of the Church year! We blessed and shared the palms and recalled Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Community had been growing among our men and friends from the area. It was deepened and underscored by the efforts of the workers and the beauty of the work.

HOLY THURSDAY'S MASS OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

The Scriptures this evening told of the Passover (*Ex. 12*) and the institution of the Eucharist (*1 Cor. 11*). Then came John's Gospel: Jesus washes the Apostles' feet. We re-enacted the symbolic ritual: eleven of our people received the washing. It enabled all of us to reflect on Christ's insistence on humility and service. “If I have washed your feet, you must wash one another's” (*Jn. 13:14*). It is an essential element of Eucharist, an essential element of life at Unity Acres. We see daily the ‘Washing of the Feet’ here: countless acts of humble service, in a myriad of ways. The vital connection between Eucharist, humble service, and our community was never more clear.

We transferred the Blessed Sacrament to a place of repose. It symbolized the going forth of Jesus from the Supper to His saving sacrifice on the Cross.

GOOD FRIDAY: "IT IS FINISHED" –JOHN 19:30

The tabernacle is empty, the altar bare, the sanctuary lamp moved. A Cross, at the altar, is our focus. Our people gather this evening to pray the Way of the Cross. The fourteen stations depict the passion and death of Jesus. We stop at each one. With prayer and scripture, we ponder the worst of human evil. Yet the Cross is our Salvation. Each one present venerates the Cross. But not so much the Cross as the One who hung on it for all of us. "We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You, because by Your Holy Cross You have redeemed the world."

HOLY SATURDAY

Our Easter Vigil is a simple service to prepare to celebrate the glory of tomorrow. The altar is beautifully adorned, the lilies in place. We light two Paschal (Easter) Candles. One, which has given us light, faces the "old" (North) wing. The new candle faces the "new" (South) wing. The flame of each signifies the Risen Christ, our light. Our scriptures today recall the story of creation (*Genesis 1*), the Israelites' passing through the Red Sea (*Ex. 14*), and the invitation to come to the waters of life (*Is. 55*). We have listened and prayed. The Chapel is ready for celebration – and so are we!

EASTER SUNDAY: CHRIST IS RISEN! ALLELUIA

The sun rose on Easter morning, as did the Son. The weather was perfect: bright and glorious. Filled with life and color. It all made the 'new' wing stand out still more. It fit perfectly with the beauty of the altar and its surroundings. But those who came and filled the Chapel best proclaimed the faith and hope that Easter brings. Frank rang the bell calling us to celebrate. Mary Agnes led us in Easter song. "Gloria" and "Alleluia" were on our lips and in our hearts. We renewed our baptismal promises and our faith. We were sprinkled with the newly blessed water. We shared Eucharist – Communion – the Risen Christ! Our joyful celebration of the Easter Liturgy bound us together.

EASTER DINNER

All shared a superb dinner in a spirit of celebration. The hall was beautiful, tables brightly adorned, a trail of candy on each one. The dessert table offered all kinds of goodies. But most delightful was to see the people celebrate. The kitchen crew had prepared a glorious feast – ham and all the trimmings. The serving team – our men, staff and friends – heaped our plates high, smiles all around.

I can only conclude with this prayer:

*This is the day that the Lord has made!
Let us rejoice and be glad!
Thank You Jesus, Risen Lord, Alleluia.*

Father Robert Jones