



Unity Acres

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He fed them with the finest wheat,  
and satisfied them with honey from the rock.  
—*Psalm 81, 17*

Dear Friends of Unity Acres,

After a long, cold and wet spring, a rainy May and June, the fine weather seems at last to have arrived: our men have been busy with mowing lawns, planting the vegetable garden, tidying up the cemetery, filling in pot-holes in the driveways, hauling away branches that had broken off trees during last winter's windstorms and heavy snows.... With the improved weather we've had a few cook-outs already, first over the Memorial Day holiday, and again last evening. Members of the Agape Fellowship Church, of Lafargeville, organized a hot dog barbeque for the men, along with a musical program. We all had a fun time together, and a nice occasion to visit between our men and the thirty or so members of the church who attended the event.

In the meanwhile though, it's been some time since our last newsletter, and so we will try to give an update on the events of the last four months.

We celebrated the date of Unity Acres' 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, March 3, with a Mass in our Sacred Heart Chapel. That was the last Sunday before Lent, and our Chapel had been carefully prepared for our celebration. By 3:30, residents and visitors were beginning to arrive and at 4:00 we are standing to greet our Presider, Father Jim Schultz. The first reading is from Leviticus: "Set the fiftieth year apart and proclaim freedom to all the inhabitants of the land... the whole year shall be sacred for you..." And so the theme for our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Year is one of Jubilee. For 50 years men have come to the Acres, and can leave behind their addiction to alcohol and drugs, and are set free. And from Matthew's Gospel, the miracle of the Loaves and Fishes: "He took five loaves and two fish and giving thanks to God, blessed and broke the loaves and gave them to the Disciples to distribute to the crowd and after everyone ate and had enough, twelve baskets were left over."

Following Mass, our visitors and residents proceed to the Dining Room in the Star Building where Roger and the kitchen staff has prepared a beautiful meal. The Dining Room is soon filled with a happy, noisy crowd. The tables have been set with green napkins and gold-foil covered treats at each place setting. After everyone has found a place to sit, Father Schultz says the grace in which we all join. Our sincere thanks to all present for taking part in our celebration—It was great seeing you here! And a big thanks especially to Father Schultz for leading us at Mass and in our prayer on our Jubilee day. *[Visit our website, for a slightly more detailed account of the day, along with photos.]*

The season of Lent found us in the Chapel on Fridays for Stations of the Cross and on Good Friday in the Dining Hall, along with Helen Clark. Easter Sunday greeted us with songs of Resurrection in our beautiful Liturgy in our Sacred Heart Chapel followed by a dinner with all the trimmings and 'fit for a king' which it was. It wasn't long after Easter that we were readying for and enjoying our annual 'Friend-Raiser' dinner at All Saints Parish Hall, where there's singing 'Jubilee, let the trumpet sound.' We are most grateful to the many who joined us for the celebration of our Jubilee Anniversary. The Dinner at All Saints was a beautiful event enjoyed by all. We thank Dave Pasinski, Nick Orth, Father Fred Daley and All Saints Parish, the McCarthys and all who contributed to make this a special event, marking an era in the history of Unity Acres.

On April 7 we joined many at St. Lucy's Church to celebrate Bill Cuddy's retirement from Jail Ministry. Bill's ministry to those in the jail goes back almost to the beginning of his priestly career and up to the present. Words cannot express what Bill has done for men and women incarcerated first in the Public Safety Building, and then later in the Justice Center in Syracuse, and to the families of those incarcerated. Bill and his lovely wife Pat deserve some retirement years. Congratulations, Bill!

But it has not been all celebration and parties during the last months. On May 13, Roger, Lou, Bill, Loretta, Peg, and Steve gathered at Assumption Cemetery: Gary Christie, our long-time 'head cook' was buried alongside his parents. The graveside service was led by Sister Monica Nortz, former president of our board, and a friend of Gary. Thank-you Sister, all of us who attended were comforted by your thoughtfulness and your presence with us that day. Rest in Peace Gary, we miss you. A week later, on May 20, we buried Joe Cardone at Saint Martin de Porres Cemetery. (Gary and Joe's deaths were announced in the February newsletter.)

On Sunday May 26 just after our Liturgy we received word that Bud Cashion was near death in Crouse Hospital where he succumbed to his illness a few hours later. Bud has been part of our Chapel Community for many years, always sitting in the back pew in the main section of the Chapel. He had been here the Sunday before but took a turn the next day and struggled during the week but seemed to be improving and then on Friday he took a turn for the worse and was taken to Crouse by Ambulance. Bud was a lovely man who lived in Lacona and was with us every Sunday and when Father Jones was here celebrating week day Masses, Bud was right there in his pew. We can still hear the hearty *Hi Father* and *Hi Bud* greetings loud and clear, as Father sometimes forgot that his microphone was on. Bud is missed by all. Rest in Peace Bud.

On June 1 we joined friends at St. Margaret's in Mattydale for a Memorial Mass celebrating the life of Sue Heinley who passed away on March 11. Sue and her husband Barney befriended Unity Acres many years ago, befriending Kate Stanton especially, delivering at least weekly donations of food, clothing and other donations that they gathered from friends and churches and agencies in and around Syracuse, organizing and coordinating the men's Christmas stockings, as well as writing and mailing thousands of donation acknowledgements. They are missed.

To all of you who look forward to the Annual Picnic every August, we are announcing a change from our usual practice. We are not scheduling a Picnic this summer, but are planning for Fall Fest in October on Sunday the 20<sup>th</sup>. All are welcome. Hope to see you then! Exact particulars of the celebration to be included in an upcoming mailing, and also on the website.

Peg McCarthy

*For the Unity Acres Community*