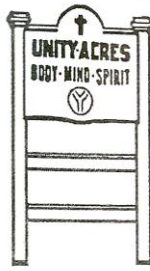


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December 1, 2013

Ring the bells that still can ring
Forget your perfect offering
There is a crack, a crack in everything
That's how the light gets in.
--Leonard Cohen, *Anthem*

Dear Friends of Unity Acres,

The First Sunday in Advent. A damp and overcast, gloomy day. A coat of slushy snow thinly covers the ground. In the chapel a small group have gathered, people having journeyed from near and far to join together in the divine worship. After the reading of the Gospel, and Father Jones' homily, the Advent wreath is again blessed, the first purple candle lit. In the weeks to come, the three remaining candles will likewise be lit. The imminence of the Kingdom of Heaven, incarnate in the person of the infant Jesus, is symbolized by light.

"The Kingdom of God is at hand", announces John the Baptist in his preaching in the deserts of Judea (Matthew 3, 2 – Second Sunday in Advent). This is the message of the season of Advent.

As of today's date, we are one week past the great celebration of the Feast of Christ the King. The reading last Sunday, from Paul's letter to the Colossians (1, 12f), makes it clear that the Kingdom is in the here and now: "Thanks be to God for having made you worthy to share in the lot of the Saints in Light. He rescued us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the Kingdom of his beloved son."

The Kingdom is a present reality. Its sign is light. The Kingdom is a new creation, but a creation that is dependent upon the free and willing participation of Mary, whose 'be it done unto me' allowed Christ to be born in the manger of Bethlehem. It continues to be manifested in acts of love toward the poor of every kind.

With great humility, and deep gratitude, we thank all those who have supported, materially and spiritually, our humble works and small efforts, through these many years, and caused our community to prosper, even as we stumble and sometimes fall. The powers of the world remain strong, but the Kingdom is a present reality, and the present is a time of grace.

"If God can enter even one place – in a human heart anywhere – it is like the opening of a door. If the door to a room is opened even a little, light can come in." (J. Heinrich Arnold) The Kingdom is a present reality, but one which has not yet reached its ultimate fulfilment. The Kingdom of Heaven is peace and joy. It resides in the hearts of all those whose willing participation, whose acts of generosity and sharing, allow the light of Christ to enter.

May you enjoy a blessed Christmas, may the birth of Christ bring you light, and His blessing bring you peace.

Stephen Dickhout,
For the UNITY ACRES Community



UNITY - ACRES

Advent/Christmas Prayer

“Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of everlasting life...” –John 6: 68

Gentle Jesus, we give thanks as we celebrate your birthday, a wondrous gift of your love.

We ask – and we answer –

as did Peter: “Lord, to whom shall we go?” In a torn and confused world, do we go to:

--Military might?

--The rich and powerful?

--High tech means of destruction?

--A culture that leads to death?

And we pray – to none of these do we go. Instead we go to You, who have the words of everlasting life.

We turn to You, a helpless infant, yet (the Christmas miracle) King of all the universe.

We thank you and praise you. Amen.

Father Robert Jones