

May, 1989

Dear Friends of Unity Acres,

In this month's letter I will continue to ramble on about our 20 years at Unity Acres. It was in the early 1970's that Hercules Thebault came to Unity Acres after selling his little store in East Syracuse. He came to "be one with" and gave his all for the next 16 years. He set up our cozy little canteen where men can enjoy a bite to eat in a quiet setting. He also shared much in driving men to Pulaski and wherever during these years. He has had a small heart problem so he now lives with his brothers in Syracuse but still comes to "be with" us a few days each week.

Last night the phone rang and it was Dan Parotte calling from Ann Arbor, Michigan where he lives with his wife and two children. Dan was here in the early 70's and gave his all in hard physical labor together with much laughter and gave us a deep spirit of community. He said he really enjoyed the last two newsletters and was excitedly reading the April letter in which I mentioned, "Dan, our faithful workhorse..." So Dan said to himself "here is where I come in" only to find out I was speaking of Dan the horse and not Dan, the man who did help build the saw mill and a thousand and one other efforts. Sorry Dan and in our little remembering efforts there are so many left out but not really and I know they understand just as Dan did even though he wanted us to believe that he was crushed.

The March and April letters were recalling and praising and thanking God for the last 20 plus years. In March I shared the deep call I felt "to be one with" as Jesus asks of us. In April I reflected on all I received from others as I felt called to listen, to observe, to absorb as a disciple from other disciples in light of our call and to listen above all and within all to the word of God in prayer and quiet.

This month I would like to reflect on an important part of our lives as "listening, one-with", disciples. For the first time in my life I could see clearly some of the root causes of human suffering, poverty and isolation. It was not enough to listen and see and absorb and be one with. I realized clearly through the help of many faithful people that we must clearly stand against the powers of this world - yes, powers and principalities. We, as God's people, must confront the enemy in non-violent, loving ways and know clearly that the world will hate us for it.

While I was still at St. Lucy's realizing finally that all war and military efforts were contrary to the Gospel and Jesus' command to love our enemies unconditionally and that these very efforts were killing the poor of the Third World and robbing the poor in our own country and throughout the world of their basic human needs I decided I must act. I had a deferred clergy draft card so I burned it, and sent it in to the draft board. As a punishment they sent me a 1A classification so we had a march and a little demonstration as I refused to report on the day I should have.

Shortly after we came to the Acres Dick Keough, Bob Russell and I went to the Military exhibit at the State Fair armed with spray cans. We quietly sprayed the tanks and military implements with little Gospel messages of love and peace. We were given 15 days in Jamesville. Bob and Dick did their full time because we refused to pay bail because the bail system itself is oppressive to the poor. But I had to be bailed out after 3 days because there was a terrible drinking rampage going on at the Acres. I remember how terrible I felt trying to witness to Gospel peace and love and having to be bailed out and come back to the Acres and throw men out for drinking. It was the worst rampage we ever had. There were cases of alcohol all over the woods.

There were two more actions we planned but they never happened. One was to quietly go to heavy military of General Electric again armed with spray paint cans and proclaim the Gospel message trying to point out the connection between the military and industry and the craze for profits. Yes, the military industrial complex is bent on feeding itself. Wars and military build ups are promoted to increase the economy. The Church must speak out against this. The disciples of Christ must weigh their discipleship before joining the military or before working in military efforts with industries such as General Electric the same as they would if they were going to work in promoting abortions, or working in pornographic industries. We must weigh our work with the Way of Jesus. This message is still not clearly taught in our Churches today much to our shame. Yes as disciples of Jesus Christ the work that we perform must be the works of peace and the works of mercy. The young and all of us must know this clearly.

I must share too another action that we planned long and hard to organize, but it never came to fruition because we all received phone calls that we had better not do it because everyone knew in advance our intended action. Someone in our midst leaked out the information. At that time we felt we should speak to the Church itself about being one with the poor. Large saving accounts, drawing interest and investments in military related and other industrial efforts. Why? The Church should share it all and live from hand to mouth. We wanted to make the message clear and simple so we decided to go to 6 or 7 churches in

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suburban areas and non-violently take their collections and go and immediately distribute the money to the poor in the inner city. As it turned out every Church we planned to go to was prepared and plainclothes police were awaiting our arrival. The action never took place.

Withholding Federal excise tax from telephone bills is a small but important way to say no to military efforts. Two agents came to see me once to see if I was getting a salary so they could recoup the payments for these telephone taxes. I received no salary so they left empty-handed.

In all of these little actions, little pebbles on the water the aim is to be faithful as we "listen and are one-with". To be faithful is to bear with love all the opposition and even hatred that may be leveled at us even by other disciples and of course by the world and those who espouse its values. If we do not take a stand we risk being swallowed up in the wet and we become very shallow. If we are really listening to the word of God and believe that Jesus has indeed risen and we are striving to be one with Him and with His little ones then our lives are pitted against the ways of the world. We are called by Jesus, given eternal life and love. We are His beloved, His faithful. He is our Lord and Savior. Yes, we are called to be faithful. He is our Lord and Savior. Yes, we are called to be uneasy in this world, at odds with the world. This is not the be all and the end all for us. We all know with sorrow what it means to be unfaithful to allow our lives to be shallow and to be swallowed up in the web of this world. Pleasure becomes important, self becomes important, health becomes a great concern personal prosperity, ease, competition and sports worship security and self-protection. All substitutes for the real thing. All showing our complicity with the way of the world and opposed to the Way of Jesus Christ. Jesus is either the rock and foundation of our lives or He is a stumbling stone and rejected by us. We, as Church, still claim Him as our rock and yet we are unwilling to stand in Him and thus be at odds with the way of the world.

Next month perhaps we can reflect again for one final time on our 20 year journey of love. I feel I need to speak too about our many sins and failures, our falling short, our hypocrisy, our need for mercy, our need for change.

In His Faithful Love,

Father McVey

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PLEASE PRAY FOR THE HAPPY REPOSE OF THE SOUL OF BILL COSGROVE WHO DIED RECENTLY
AFTER A SHORT ILLNESS WITH CANCER. BILL SUFFERED MUCH THROUGHOUT HIS LIFE AND
FOUND VERY LITTLE PEACE IN THIS WORLD. MAY GOD NOW GRANT BILL HIS ETERNAL PEACE
AND LOVE THROUGH THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB IN WHOM BILL BELIEVED VERY STRONGLY.
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PLEASE PRAY TOO FOR ALL OUR FRIENDS IN HOSPITALS AND NURSING HOMES:
WILLIE COOK, HILLCREST NURSING HOME, ELLEN ST., OSWEGO, N.Y., 13126
ARTHUR FRANCE, HARWOOD NURSING HOME, SUNRISE DRIVE, OSWEGO, N.Y.,
13126
JESSEE WOODALL, VALE HAVEN ADULT HOME, E. 2ND ST., SYRACUSE, N.Y.,
13126
JOSEPH GARRETT, MICHAUD NURSING HOME, S. 4TH ST., FULTON, N.Y., 13069
WILLIE MOORE, SYRACUSE VETERAN'S HOSPITAL, 800 IRVING AVE., SYR., N.Y.
13210
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