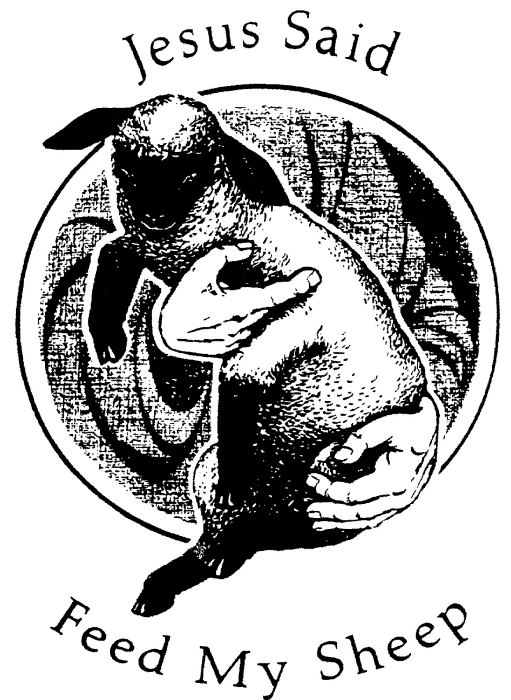


Unity Acres

P. O. Box 153
Orwell, NY 13426



April 30, 2007

Dear Friends of Unity Acres,

At the moment of this writing, it is the late evening of the last Monday in April. We are nine days past the twelfth anniversary of the death of Father Ray McVey, the founder of Unity Acres. It is just after 10.00 PM. Although I can hear someone walking around upstairs just now, it is startlingly quiet. Especially when you consider that between 20 and 25 men regularly live in this building alone. The early mornings are, if anything, even more peaceful.

After the several false starts of the last few weeks, we have been enjoying a string of warm sunny days, finally! After a winter that seemed too long, really, the improvement in the weather is most welcome. *As the earth brings forth its plants, and a garden makes its growth spring up...* One of the life's little pleasures at Unity Acres is the enjoyment of seeing the flower gardens in front of the Main Building spring into new life each April. The earliest spring flowers, the crocuses, have already come and gone -- withered during one unusually hot day. Daffodils are the flower that is most prevalent at this moment. As of a few days ago, the dog-tooth lilies which are common throughout our wooded land have begun blooming, while the trilliums in our woods have sprouted, but no blooms so far! The hayfields in the surrounding area have turned green as the grass plants have started their new growth.

With the retreat of the snows during the past weeks, several of the men here at the Acres have been involved in preparing this year's vegetable garden, repairs to the roadways (patching the new potholes), reseeding the lawns where necessary, and so on. The men have begun collecting firewood for the new wood boiler that was put into service last fall. New chains for the chainsaws, repair links and so on, have been acquired; two teams of wood cutters have been designated, and these men have begun

bringing in firewood from our land. During the day, you can see the tractors and utility wagons making their way across the little bridge over our branch of Trout Brook, and up the hill, and past the cemetery.

The new boiler has been able to keep up with the heating of the Star Building (our kitchen, dining hall and recreation room facility), and it makes the domestic hot water for that building as well. We anticipated savings in our fuel and electric bills as a result of the wood boiler and have not been disappointed.

Last we received a visit from representatives of the Lemoyne College Campus Ministry. As is often the case when we have visitors, and the weather is decent, we took a leisurely stroll up to Saint Martin de Porres Cemetery, the final resting place of these and over 180 men and women, former residents and volunteers of Unity Acres. It is a quiet, serene, peaceful place. The wind blows gently through the pine and hemlock trees, and the big maples -- now barren of their leaves -- that line the brow of the hill on which the cemetery is located, and which overlooks the branch of Trout Brook that flows through our property.

Saint Martin's is the place that we reverently bring the bodies of our brothers and sisters for their final commendation and burial in the earth. In consecrated ground. In another few weeks, we will be bringing the bodies of our former residents, our friends and community members, for burial. The hearse will bring their bodies back to Unity Acres from the vault at the Pulaski Cemetery where they have rested since their funeral services. (We are unable to open graves in our cemetery during the winter months.) Father Jones will again bless the bodies of Larry Oakes, Larry McCue, Steve Stratton and now Jimmie Roberts. We will pray for the repose of their souls: May God grant them a merciful judgment and give them eternal rest.

At Mass a week ago Sunday, the Gospel reading was from John; Jesus asks Peter three times, Do you love me? And instructs him to feed my sheep, tend my sheep, feed my lambs. We are a little flock at Unity Acres. There have been many men and women, who over the years have enacted Jesus' instructions to Peter to 'feed my sheep' through their faithful commitment to this little flock at Unity Acres. Equally, there have been and are dozens and dozens of men living here at the Acres who are enacting this mandate to 'feed my sheep' in many and various ways: in the most literal sense of preparing and serving of meals, and by serving and meeting one another's needs and concerns.

Ed Loring of the Open Door Community in Atlanta writes that 'justice is important, but supper is essential!' (I might add a working furnace, at least during the winter months in Orwell, is just as essential.) Therefore when things sometimes have a way of not going as well as we might like, we try to put it all in perspective by knowing that food is on the table (*he has filled the hungry with good things*), and that we are managing to stay warm and dry and protected from the elements, as God is providing the necessities. We have an excellent source of clean drinking water. We have clothing in abundance. We have food. We are staying warm.

Wishing the grace, peace and joy of this season of Easter to all.

Steve Dickhout

Prayer – Easter Season 2007

“The Apostles said to the Lord,
‘Increase our faith.’” – Lk 17: 5

“Blessed are they who have not seen, but have believed.”
– John 20: 29, Second Sunday of Easter

O Risen Jesus, we praise You and thank You for
Your dying and rising for all of us.

During this glorious Easter season, we, like Your first disciples, ask You: “Lord, increase our faith.” We live in a world and time which is rampant with evil, and it seems that Satan is more and more in control. The worst of fallen nature is seen daily, in our nation and throughout the world. War continues daily with its deadly consequences. The worship of wealth, power, sinful pleasure, and instant gratification seems ever more dominant. And so we pray to You, for our faith is challenged ever more.

And yet, we even now hear Your reply: Blessed are you who have not seen – enough signs of My presence and My love, My triumph over all this— My Resurrection. Help us then to see You through this shroud of evil. Help us to know and be strengthened in faith by the many good works and strong faith. Help us to hear Your voice, reassuring, yet challenging: “Blessed are they who have not seen, but believe.”

All praise and thanks to You, O Risen Lord. Alleluia!

Father Robert Jones

A TRIBUTE AND MEDITATION: JIMMIE ROBERTS

In 1999, a delightful man, Jimmie Roberts, joined our Unity Acres family. His speech was a bit limited, but his eyes said a lot. He enjoyed being at the Acres. But his health and strength greatly diminished and he required more care. He went to Pontiac Nursing Home in Oswego where he received good care. I had the joy of visiting him and his face would light up with a welcome smile. Yet he longed to return 'home'.

He next went to Sunrise Nursing Home across town. Again he received good care, but his physical weakness continued. (A great comfort: in his final days, Jimmie's roommate was our Henry Ferrell, one of our finest men. We feel comforted that Henry's presence was a comfort to Jimmie.)

On April 12, 2007, -- Easter Thursday -- God called him home. On Monday, April 16, we celebrated a Mass of the Resurrection. His body will be laid to rest -- awaiting Resurrection -- at our Saint Martin de Porres Cemetery, here at Unity Acres.

Reflection: Sunday, 8:30 PM, April 15: I sit in the sanctuary as darkness descends. Jimmie lies at rest in the casket. There is no one else in the chapel. But there is! Another few feet in the Tabernacle -- is the Risen Jesus, alive and present in the sacramental form. We have just finished Easter week. How wonderful the connection: the Risen Lord; Jimmie called to eternal life, and all of us who still walk this earth. Easter means that one day we will all be united.

May Jimmie's mortality in this Easter season help us all to hope in our immortality in the Risen Christ.

Father Robert Jones