



UNITY ACRES
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March 2, 2008

Dear Friends of Unity Acres,

Greetings from frozen, snowy Orwell on a bright, sunny, but cold Sunday afternoon. We have seen a good deal of snowfall during the past several days and some exceptionally cold temperatures as well -- both of which are causing some passing difficulties, as is the case most years.

When the temperatures drop below 0° Fahrenheit, at times the furnaces are not able to keep up with the demand for heat in our large, drafty buildings which are not particularly well insulated. And when snow falls at a rate of two, three or four inches an hour, which is not uncommon during one of our north country lake effect blizzards, it is not always possible to keep the driveways and paths through the Unity Acres property open for vehicle traffic, nor for pedestrians. Even more so when the plow truck is inoperable, and the snow-blowers require repairs.

But these are passing difficulties. The very cold weather is succeeded by the merely quite chilly; John Coyne is completing necessary repairs to the vehicle and snow removal equipment. Once the plow truck is up and running, Jim Fuller will again be able to push snow. In the meanwhile, snowblowers and tractors will suffice.

Roger Irwin has been in touch on an almost daily basis with the Town of Orwell Highway Department, and we have received a great deal of assistance from the Town's road crews as they bring their plows, sanders and pay loaders through the Unity Acres property on a regular basis to help with snow removal.

Still and for the most part, we are able to keep warm, there is sufficient food in the pantry, the basic needs of the men are being met. So we will try not to worry too much about the small inconveniences of the past few days.

On Friday, February 29, we received word that one of our former residents, RAYMOND PETRIE, died in Syracuse. He had been living at the Loretto Nursing Home on Brighton Avenue since May or June 1996. Ray had come up to Unity Acres in October 1981. He stayed in the building known as the North Ray was a considerate man, thoughtful about the well-being of others,

and maintained a practice of sending note and greeting cards to men who were themselves in institutions of one kind or another, such as nursing homes.

Father Jones has been asked to conduct Ray's funeral here at Unity Acres, and has of course agreed. Ray will be buried in the spring at our Saint Martin de Porres Cemetery. Please pray for his eternal repose.

Steve Dickhout

February Prayer: Holy Season of Lent

"Father, through our observance of Lent, help us to *understand* the *meaning* of Your Son's death and resurrection.... Teach us to reflect it in our *lives*." —Prayer, 1st Sunday of Lent

"This, rather is the fasting that I wish: releasing those bound unjustly ... setting free the oppressed ... sharing your bread with the hungry ... sheltering the oppressed and the homeless ... not turning your back on your own."

—Isaiah 58: 6-7 (Friday after Ash Wednesday)

O God, our Lenten Season rushes toward the Cross and Resurrection of Jesus. Help us to learn its meaning: our sins, your love. May we reflect in our lives, at Unity Acres, and everywhere may we do the works of 'fasting' that you wish:

- To speak and act for those bound unjustly;
- To advocate for the oppressed;
- To share our bread, physically and spiritually, with those hungry, in body, mind or spirit;
- To shelter the oppressed and homeless, to clothe the naked, to love and attend to our own.

Holy Spirit, rush upon us, empower us to fast: from our greed, arrogance, selfishness, laziness, cynicism, and wastefulness. Teach us to replace these with works of compassion, self-giving, peace and justice. In this time of Grace, O God, may we not "receive it in vain."

—2nd Corinthians 6:1, Ash Wednesday)

Amen.

Father Robert Jones