



Unity Acres

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October 21, 2019

Let the trumpet sound,  
and let the Fiftieth Year  
be hallowed;  
Let freedom be proclaimed,  
and let this Jubilee Year  
be a Holy Year....

*Lv 25, 9.10*

Dear Friends of Unity Acres,

Here we are the morning of October 21, 2019, the 24<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the passing of our Kate Stanton and the day after our annual “picnic.” This year rather than organizing a picnic for the third Sunday in August, we celebrated instead a Fall Fest on the third Sunday in October. And instead of a stifling hot summer day, we enjoyed a beautiful and cool autumn day, alive with all the colors of Autumn, and for our guests the pleasure of a lovely fall drive in the country.

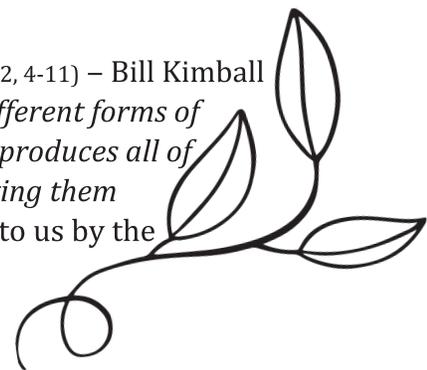
***If the Lord does not build a house, then in vain do the builders labor...***

This is the refrain of our opening hymn at Mass, our Eucharistic Celebration, and the culmination of our Jubilee Year, the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Unity Acres. Sixty-five or more people gathered in our Sacred Heart Chapel marking this blessed event. Father Paul Mathis, longtime friend of Father Bob Jones, and of many of us here at the Acres, presided and celebrated this holy Mass, along with altar server Frank Ellinger.

Steve prefaced the first reading from Exodus with a “Reading from ‘Saint’ Raymond McVey”:  
*“On March 3, 1969, we arrived in Northern Oswego County in the unheard-of Hamlet of Orwell. Five very trusting men accompanied me on the journey ... This move was something like the Israelites leaving Egypt. The city was slavery, the streets, depression, alcohol, drugs, jail and the endless cycle would start again. A trap, a web from which there was no escape for so many hurting people.”* And so from Holy Scriptures, Exodus in the twelfth chapter: *“The Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying: “This day shall be for you a day of remembrance, a festival, which all your generations shall celebrate with pilgrimage to the Lord: Let it be your custom forever.”* (Ex 12, 1. 14)

Then Frank Ellinger leads us in the Responsorial Psalm: ***“How very good and pleasant it is when Brothers dwell together in Unity.*** It is like precious oil on the head, oil flowing down upon the beard of Aaron....like the dew of Hermon which falls on the mountains of Zion, for there the Lord ordained His blessing, Life forevermore!” (Ps 133)

Next, the second reading from Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor 12, 4-11) – Bill Kimball is the lector: *“There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit...different forms of service but the same Lord ... there are different workings but the same God who produces all of them in everyone... But one and the same Spirit produces all of these, distributing them individually to each person as he wishes.”* All of us – with the many gifts given to us by the same Spirit, the same Lord – answer: ***The Word of the Lord.***



**Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, sing His message loud and clear, Alleluia.  
Jesus Christ the Lord is near ...**

Jim and family lead us in singing the Gospel Acclamation as Father Paul prepares to proclaim the Holy Gospel from Matthew 25. This Gospel reading is a powerful one, and it is one that Unity Acres is based on. *"Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me.' ... But when did we feed you, give you a drink, and when did we welcome you?' ... 'Whenever you did this for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it for me.'"* (Mt 25, 31-40) **The Gospel of the Lord.**

Afterwards, in his homily, Father Paul related stories from when he was a young and newly ordained how he Father Ray's care for people who needed food, clothing, shelter and how Father Ray addresses these difficulties with his first houses of hospitality which proceed the founding of Unity Acres; and how Father Ray & Kate Stanton and others who have followed in their footsteps, including Father Bob Jones and those serving the Acres at present, are following the message of Matthew 25. Father Paul also refers to the Gospel of the 29<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary time which calls for perseverance. And so we try to persevere in the footsteps of Father Ray McVey and Kate Stanton, and those who have followed, and the strong message Matthew gives us in his 25<sup>th</sup> Chapter.

Following the Apostles Creed, Deb Carnes steps forward to lead us in the Prayer of the Faithful: *"All powerful, ever-loving God, we thank-you for Your love and Your providential care which have sustained the Unity Acres Community for fifty years, and in Jesus' name we pray: Lord, hear our prayer."* This prayer continues thanking God for so many Blessings, and for friend past and present who have been a forceful part of the formation and continuation of Unity Acres. For our supporters and benefactors, and the happy repose of the souls of those gone before us including those buried in our St. Martin de Porres Cemetery. Our prayers continue for those struggling with homelessness and addiction and for those suffering from ill health, especially we pray for Brendan, Bear Foote's six-year-old grandson who is not feeling so well this week and *"Lord we ask you to give Your help to all who call on You in faith. May the power of Your Word and Sacraments bring strength to the people gathered here today. Amen."*

In asking the Bishop to begin our first little house on Chester Street, only one year before our Exodus, I had no plan but to be 'one with' as Jesus asks us.... I wanted to respond to Jesus' call. - I just wanted to be with Jesus in His hidden disguise.

Within six months the house [on Chester Street] could not hold us [and] we moved to 109 Huron Street hoping to buy it. The fun days on Chester Street were over and life at Huron Street rapidly became unbearable. The supportive community grew in size and dedication, but ... violence was common, stealing was more than common; life was plain and simply inhuman.

I remembered the old abandoned TB Sanatorium so peacefully situated in the countryside in Orwell. Peter McCole, Cornelius Hurley, Kate Stanton & I trekked to take a look. Without doubt we knew this must become our new home.

The problem was that we had no deed .... And no idea when we would have the right to [go]. We bought the mortgage for \$7000, and Frank Woolever, simply on faith, took out a bank loan for us. We were still in the process of negotiating the property and no right to move in until this was accomplished.

It is only in feeling the pain fully that we can be driven to do justice and in the process the established order of legalities takes a back seat. Things had gotten so bad at Huron Street that I announced to everyone that we were moving in one week and that all were welcome to make the Exodus.

We moved in as scheduled without a deed and two weeks later a state trooper came to the door and told us to be out by morning or we were all going to jail...

Father Raymond McVey, Newsletter-March 1989

During the Offertory the McCarthys lead us in a Hymn to our Blessed Mother, *Hail Mary, Gentle Woman*, as a tribute to, and in Loving Memory of, our beloved Kate Stanton who passed on to her eternal reward twenty-four years ago today.

As we approach the Altar and receive Christ's Body we hear the strains of Weston Priory's *Come to Me*, a favorite hymn of Father Jones', and so in loving memory of Father J. who served the men of Unity Acres for over twenty-five years.

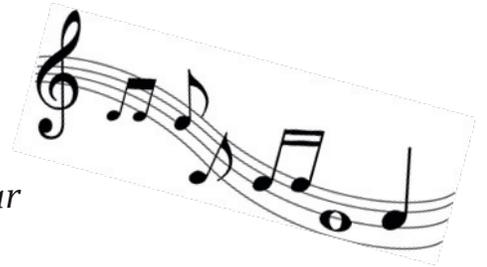
*Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy burdened, and I shall give you rest. Yes my yoke is easy and my burden light.*

After receiving Father Mathis' blessing, all gathered join with Jim, Deirdre, Cian and Shane and sing out the theme song of our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary:



Sacred Heart Chapel  
October 20, 2019

*Jubilee! The Lord provided for a time for the slaves to be set free, for debts to all be cancelled, so His chosen ones could see. His deep desire was for forgiveness, He longed to see their liberty, and His yearning was embodied in the Year of Jubilee. Jubilee, Jubilee, Jesus is our Jubilee, Debts forgiven, Slaves set free, Jesus is our Jubilee.*



### Our celebration continues....

Mass is now over and our congregation makes its way over to the STAR Building where our Autumn decorated Dining Room awaits with a sumptuous Fall Dinner of delicious baked ziti, green beans and winter squash from our garden and a green salad all prepared by our gifted kitchen crew under Loretta's able direction. This wonderful meal was topped with a choice of pumpkin pie with whipped cream or apple pie and ice cream or a piece of cake specially decorated for the occasion. The tables were set with Italian bread and



Dining Room, Star Building

nicely formed butters and bottled water. Waiters (and waitresses) came around offering cups of cider and taking orders for hot coffee. We especially miss Gary Christie who had done our annual picnic and other events and holidays for many, many years, but his brothers stepped forward and we are most grateful to everyone who helped decorate, serve, wait tables and clean up after. I would like to name each and every one who helped with this wonderful meal; who helped in any way in decorating the dining room which greeted us as though it were an expensive restaurant, but would be afraid to leave off someone's name inadvertently. Besides the men and Loretta, help came from Deb Carnes and Meghann Hunt. God has blessed Unity Acres during these 50 years and we are most grateful.

The sun came out during Mass and shined on us for the rest of the day. The colors of the leaves, the blue sky, the beautiful Chapel and Dining Room reflect God's many years of blessings. Very often when sitting down to one of our meals, I have said, "we are spoiled". That we are and a day like yesterday puts into the light those blessings. The men put in much time and effort in making a day like yesterday happen.

### Many gifts...

As our second reading from Saint Paul tells us, *there are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit gives them. Each of us has been given gifts that are different from each other.* To some the gift of cooking, to others the gift of decorating, to others gifts of cleaning, polishing and waxing. To others the gift of organizing, of washing dishes, pots & pans.

The grounds were groomed due to the gifts of some of the men, and decorated with pumpkins and corn stalks. The phone room is in the capable hands of two of the men, the mail is picked up and distributed by two others; laundry done by another and night watch by four or five others. Three men do the shopping each week. Each floor has a houseman who keeps the bathrooms clean and the hall ways swept and mopped. The 'dungeon master' cares for the dorm and welcomes the newly arrived members of our community who live there during their first two to three weeks here. Three men are drivers, one man operates our water system, assuring that our drinking water meets all relevant health standards. One of our men keeps an eagle eye on our boilers as well as some of the plumbing. The clothing room and garden are cared for by another. Another has taken on the responsibilities of our hog-raising operation. And during the upcoming winter season, the snow blowers and hand shovels will be taken up by still others. I feel like I left out some of the many gifts that we are blessed with in this Home for otherwise homeless men. We are all here together as one family and together we collaborate and use our many gifts for the good of all.

We thank those who came yesterday and joined with us in our celebration. Whether a Picnic in August or Fall Festival, our gatherings each year are intended as a way of thanking our many supporters, without whom Unity Acres could not exist. We sincerely thank you most again in our year of And we look forward to next year when we will assemble Sacred Heart Chapel and the STAR Building Dining Room for another thanksgiving and celebration.

God Bless You,  
Peg McCarthy  
For the UNITY ACRES COMMUNITY

