

UNITY ACRES, P O Box 153, Orwell, NY 13426

JULY 2004

We recently received word from Ann O'Connor and Peter King of Unity Kitchen in response to our April Newsletter. They offered the following clarification of events surrounding the beginnings of both Unity Acres and of Unity Kitchen. We offer this additional history to you.

Thanks, Ann and Peter, for your clarification, and contribution to our history as we celebrate our 35th year!

For those who are perhaps unaware of Unity Kitchen, we are including the mailing address for the Kitchen.

Dear Members of Unity Acres,

We would like to bring to your attention some errors in your newsletter dated, April, 2004, in Bob Belge's piece which concern Unity Kitchen and which we would like to clarify for the sake of the historical accuracy of both Unity Kitchen and Unity Acres.

Unity Kitchen came out of the Viet Nam war era as an expression of the lay apostolate, just as the Catholic Worker is a lay movement. We have always been a lay group except for about two years early on. Unity Kitchen opened 34 years ago on or about September 1, 1970: not on N. Salina Street, but at 564 S. Salina Street as a soup kitchen. Soon after, it attempted some night sheltering for "street men." It was a small storefront marked for demolition in a year and leased to Unity Kitchen that year for a dollar by Urban Renewal. We moved out, Sept. '71, to 243 W. Adams Street and moved from there in 1985 to its present location.

Unity Kitchen was started by Bob Russell. Fr. Ted Sizing, then pastor at St. Lucy's, was the promoter of Unity Kitchen. He wanted to see a soup kitchen in Syracuse and Bob was staying at St. Lucy's rectory as a conscientious objector during the Viet Ham war doing community service. Fr. Sizing urged Bob to start a soup kitchen, and as Bob tells it: "I was handed a storefront and told to do a soup kitchen. I was into draft counseling and I saw it as a place where I could do that, so I said. 'Okay.'" At that time Fr. McVey was well ensconced at Unity Acres which he opened in spring, 1969. He had opened Unity Corner, at the corner of West and Seymour Streets, in early 1968, as an after school drop-in for neighborhood children, but closed it early summer that year because the men drop ping in off the street for coffee didn't mix with the children. . He then obtained the Chester Street house that summer for the Street men followed that fall by the Huron Street house during the winter of 1965—1969. It was that spring, 1969, that he moved them all to Unity Acres at Orwell where he remained, more or less, until he died in 1995.

When Bob opened the Kitchen in very early September of 1970, Fr. Sizing provided them with food, money and moral support. He gave Simon House on E. Raynor Avenue to the full-time workers, on December 1, that year as a place to live. Fr. Dick Keough and Henry Nicolella moved in there January 1971. Eddie Whiteside was already living there. Other volunteers were gathering around the work to help when they could Bob left Unity Kitchen that spring. Ann became involved at the same time and Fr. Dick Keough left the work in 1973. It was September, 1972, that Peter King became a full-time worker and moved into Simon House. The history of the Kitchen went on with full-time workers coming for various terms of involvement and leaving. We (Ann and Peter) were married in 1980. We have been part of Unity Kitchen for most of its 34 year history. We have seen it through its history and extraordinary development. (Cf. The Unity Grapevine. Unity Kitchen Community newsletter, summer 2002 ([From Soup Line to Soup Tureen](#)))

We extend the peace of Christ to you all,

Ann O'Connor and Peter King
UNITY KITCHEN COMMUNITY of the
Catholic Worker
385 W. Onondaga St. P.O. Box 650
Syracuse, NY 13201

July 2004 Prayer: True Freedom

Brothers and Sisters:

For freedom from Christ set us free;
so stand firm and do not submit again to the yoke of slavery.
For you were called for freedom, brothers and sisters.
But do not use this freedom
as an opportunity for the flesh;
rather, serve one another through love
For the whole law is fulfilled in one statement,
namely, *You shall love your neighbor as yourself.*
(13th Sunday of Ordinary Time, June 27, Galatians 5:1, 13-18)

God of love, giver of true freedom, we thank you for the freedoms you give us; our free will -- yet a great responsibility, the freedoms in our nation, yet not license.

Forgive us, God, for any way in which we have abused your precious gift: For any way in which, by greed, bigotry, vindictiveness, indifference, we have denied others their freedom, their basic rights. Forgive us whenever we have stretched our freedoms into license.

We pray o God, for all those imprisoned, especially those unjustly held captive. We pray for those bound by addictions, mental or physical illness, or the cycle of poverty. Grant true freedom, O God, to all nations; free all who are oppressed.

May true freedom, that only your peace, justice and love can bring, prevail in our land, our world, all of creation. As Jesus, your Son, taught us to pray: "Deliver us from evil."

AMEN.

Father Bob Jones