



UNITY ACRES
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August 2004

Dear Friends of Unity Acres:

Father McVey's idea of Unity Acres was clearly inspired by the example of early Christian communities. His Spirit-filled, egalitarian vision is one which we are still trying to live up to in our humble way. His inspiration from Scripture is clear in a quote from one of his 1983 newsletters: "We all have different roles, different ministries, different functions, and yet through the Spirit we form the one Body of Christ." Indeed, Unity Acres is a place where one's individual gifts are allowed to shine through for the benefit of the larger community. From staff member to newest resident, all of us are encouraged to share our God-granted talents. We are called to recognize each other as members of Christ's Triumphant Body on this earth. Our values act as a counter balance to society's current obsession with individual self-promotion.

The Spirit seems to have blessed our efforts by sending us exceptional men and women to continue on our mission. One of the residents, Bill Bogart, has taken up new responsibilities here at the Acres, and has joined the staff recently to make fuller use of his many gifts. An indefatigable worker, he is a great asset to us. On a similarly joyful note, John Lusby and Mark Baker have both decided to return to the Acres staff. These selfless and compassionate individuals have been sorely missed during their respective absences, and we could not be happier to have them back. If that weren't enough, Mary Lou, our part time nurse is also back; her patient care for the men is a constant blessing. These individuals are just some of the reasons why Unity Acres still stands, 35 years after Father McVey stepped out in faith. We would like to thank them, all of those who have contributed to the community, and our friends all over the country who make this attempt at Christian community possible. May God bless each and every one of you.

Aly Wane

What a Blessing

*Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden,
and I will give you rest. Matt 11:28*

What a blessing it is to be a part of Unity Acres, a mission of faith and hope and rest. To see the movement of God's spirit, how his very hand rest here twenty-four hours a day. The goodness of his love and peace, the grace and the tenderness, how blessed we are to have such a place.

The giving of the friends of the Acres, all the volunteers, board members and staff. The willingness of the men themselves who willingly do all they are able to give themselves, and one another, a good home. From the kitchen help, to the men who work in the clothing room; from the men who keep the animals, and do the laundry, to the fix-it men who keep things running around here, to the men who take out the trash; from the drivers, and all the others who make a best effort to keep the Acres clean and running. The effort and the concern shared for the good of all. I am blessed and proud to call these men my friends and to have a family again.

God has been good to all of us and as the 35th anniversary is upon us, we should all take a moment to show our thanks and gratitude for all the blessings God has poured down on us; to thank God for Father McVey, and the calling God placed on him, of concern for the good of his fellow man. I see clearly that it is only by the good grace of God that this place has lasted as long as it has. And I pray that God will continue to bless Unity Acres long after God has moved me in to my ministry, of being a Methodist pastor.

I just want to offer my thanks to everyone who does their best to keep the Acres going, and to all the men who do what they do so we all have a nice place to live.

May God continue to bless and keep you all till we see him face to face in his glory,
your brother in Christ,

Robert Koos

August 2004 Prayer-Thanksgiving-35 Years

How can we repay the Lord for his goodness to us?

We will raise the cup of salvation, and call on the Lord.

—Psalm 116

"There is a boy here with five loaves and two fish. But they will certainly not be enough for all these people.... They all had as much as they wanted. When they were all filled, He said to His disciples, 'Gather the pieces left over, let us not waste a bit.' So they gathered them and filled twelve baskets..."

—John 6: 9, 10-13

How can we thank you, Lord, for your goodness to us? For 35 years, you have multiplied the loaves and fishes to feed to the full, countless hungry men, and many baskets were left over. You have multiplied among us your love, compassion, your presence, your Spirit. The human hunger for acceptance, understanding, sharing you have satisfied.

You have fed us, o God, through the goodness and generosity of people who care. Their sharing of what you gave them with us has been the means of continuing the miracle.

We thank you, God, for all who have helped us in so many ways: time, effort, support, encouragement, prayer. How can we repay you?

We will raise the cup of salvation and call upon your name!

Father Robert Jones

Please pray for the repose of the souls of FATHER JOHN GODFREY, JOHN H SMITH, and LAWRENCE MARTIN, all of whom died since our last newsletter. John Godfrey was a resigned priest who came to the Acres in June of 2000, and remained here for approximately 3 years, until relocating to Oswego last summer. Some time afterwards, he moved again to Rosewood Home for Adults in Fulton, where he remained until his last illness. He died on July 10, at the age of 62. John H Smith died the following day, July 11, in Oswego. John (whom we knew as Jack) first came to the Acres in January 1996, and remained here continuously until the latter part of 2003, when he went to Sunrise Nursing Home, due to ill health. John had spent many years here serving the Unity Acres community as a dedicated night watchman. The Mass of the Resurrection was concelebrated here at the Acres, in our Sacred Heart Chapel on July 15 for Father John Godfrey and John Smith. Many thanks to Fathers Arthur Hapanowicz, Moritz Fuchs, Daniel Heinz, Monsignors Francis Willenburg, and Al Kantor for their presence and for offering celebrating Mass with our own Father Jones. Larry Martin died on July 30 in Oswego; he too having been a resident at Sunrise Nursing Home for the past several months, again due to failing health. Larry has been remembered as 'Mayor of Unity Acres', and as a source of wisdom and advice for many of the younger men. He first came to the Acres in 1974, and truly made the Acres his home and family for many years. Larry's funeral was also held in Sacred Heart Chapel, on August 3. Larry and John Smith were buried in St Martin de Porres Cemetery here at the Acres; Father John Godfrey was buried in Utica, next to the graves of his parents. Please remember these three men, and us who lived with them, and their families, in your prayers.