

MAYOR'S NOTES

On Sunday, October 18th, the Village held a program in Village Hall to kick off the 125th Anniversary of the founding of the Village of Altamont.

The event was a public reception to celebrate the kickoff of the Quasquicentennial Year of the founding of the village of Altamont. As we look back on 125 years of history and the history of the founders of the village, we spent time reflecting as well as celebrating what endowed the sense of community to thrive in Altamont which lasts until the present time.

Often times it was the churches, which were founded by citizens of purpose and strength. And in these churches, lies their story, in the stained glass memorial windows within. This is the core upon which our kickoff celebration was built. An exhibition, curated from the collections in our archives, is on view in the Hallway Gallery located in village hall, and continues the story.

Along with the exhibition there is a 56 page published catalog, "Remembrances," which contains not only the history and photos of selected Altamont churches' memorial windows but essays and memorial messages from various dignitaries. The catalogue is available for a \$10 nominal fee at Village Hall.

Many state, federal and local dignitaries were present to congratulate Altamont. Geoffrey Brown, CEO of Sundown Lawn and Landscaping, presented the leaders of the Altamont Reformed, St. John's Lutheran, and St Lucy's/St Berndette with 50 copies each of the "Remembrance" Catalogue. Also attending was Bishop Emeritus Howard Hubbard who delivered a moving homily. Many in attendance asked if I could attain the text of his remarks which I have reproduced here with the permission of Bishop Hubbard.

Be on the lookout for other events and ceremonies and events to commemorate the Village's 125th. Looking forward to another successful 125 years !

125th Anniversary of the Village of Altamont

Sunday, October 18th, 2015

Remarks by Bishop Howard J. Hubbard

"I am honored and privileged to participate in the celebration of the 125th anniversary of the Incorporation of the Village of Altamont which has truly been a beacon of light, an anchor of hope and an instrument for promoting the common good in the shadow of the Helderbergs.

Several years ago the distinguished sociologist Robert Putnam authored a book entitled Bowling Alone in which he pointed out that while more Americans bowl today, fewer participate in bowling leagues. This phenomenon was presented by Dr. Putnam as an evidence of the decline in the sense of community within our nation.

There used to be a time in this country of ours when a sense of community did not need to be fostered. It was part of a lifestyle that was at once warm, loving and mutually stimulating.

If problems arose in local communities people would get together and resolve them themselves. Family members, neighbors, friends, coworkers and members of one's faith community would band together, pull together and respond to the need.

However, within the past half century or so, with the rise of big government and big business, with their emphasis on centralization, specialization and top down decision making, so often human persons and

human values have become lost in a maze of computer cards and number systems to the extent that there are literally millions of our fellow Americans today who live side by side without knowing one another's name or without caring about what is happening on the other side of the street.

Let's face it, the successful person within our nation today, supposedly, is the one who can wall himself or herself off from the rest of human kind. The one who can protect himself or herself to a greater degree from the invasions and problems of others. The one with the greater acreage around his or her home. The one that belongs to the more exclusive club, etc. etc.

The bitter fruits of this self-centered approach to the so called "Good Life" is far too evident for all to behold. For in our society of affluence and resources unparalleled in the history of humankind, we have allowed apathy, indifference and social alienation to breed society of rat infested ghettos and pill sustained suburbs and to create a generation gap that threatens to tear our nation asunder.

Crime, juvenile delinquency, family breakdown and addiction to alcohol and drugs have risen astronomically just within the past decade. The response to the needs of our nation's growing aging population has been woefully inadequate. Nearly one third of our nation's people, that is, 47 million men, women and children are living in poverty. Why? Because,

I believe, we have lost or perhaps never found that sense of caring and sharing which should be at the heart of the sense of community.

Fortunately, this reality is not to be found in the Village of Altamont because of the network of strong faith groups, civic organizations and responsive governmental leadership who have not allowed the malaise of individualism, narcissism and isolation to set in and to erode the sense of community which has prevailed in Altamont since its inception.

In this age of growing secularization I am especially grateful to the Mayor Gaughan and the Village Trustees for honoring the faith communities of the Reformed, Lutheran and Roman Catholic Churches which have played such a vital role in helping to promote and keep alive a vibrant sense of community in the Village.

I pray, then, that God will continue to shower choicest blessings upon this special Village, that it might continue to be in the future as it has been since 1890, such a beautiful and effective instrument for fostering love, service and care for others, especially the least among us.

Congratulations, happy anniversary and God's speed always."