

Dear Parishioners,

It is still appropriate to say, one last time, Merry Christmas! On Monday, January 9 we celebrate the baptism of the Lord, and then the Christmas season is over. It has been a wonderful celebration. People have made so many comments on how the church was decorated, the music, and how nice it was to celebrate Midnight Mass again. I was deeply moved by the spirit of joy in which we celebrated Jesus' birth. Christmas this year was beautiful.

Some time during the next few days I will send out thank you notes to those who gave me cards and gifts. I am truly grateful for all the kindness you have shown, and for the generous way you have all shared your gifts with me and with the parish. What a blessing it is to be here. I also feel a great sense of humility at being the recipient of so many acts of kindness. I know you care for your parish, and for me; for all you do I can only say thank you. I am so grateful and happy to be here.

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Early on Wednesday morning I was watching CNN and they were reporting on the Saga Mine tragedy. The announcer spoke briefly about the sole survivor, Randall McLoy, who at the age of 27 is a married man with two young children. While he was searching for other employment because he knew the mine was too dangerous each day he went to the mine because the job pays well, and he could provide for his family. Before he went into work he would kiss his wife and children and tell them not to worry because Jesus Christ was with him, and his co-workers.

On Thursday the news media began to share the fact that the trapped miners wrote notes saying they didn't suffer, that it would be like falling asleep, that they would see their families and loved ones on the other side. Even as they were dying these men of faith tried their best to provide comfort for their families who are now grieving.

In the darkness of that mine shaft the coal miners could see with the eyes of faith that God was with them, and they have shared the light of God's love with the world. That is what Epiphany is all about.

Epiphany is a celebration of how God is revealed to the world through life of Jesus Christ. The Magi saw the light from far away in the night sky, and they saw him as a powerless child and they knew he was the king of the Jews. God's presence was made known to them in the Christ child and they believed.

As we look at our own lives today we have to ask ourselves how God has made his presence known to us. It is so easy for us to look at the world and to see so much darkness, suffering, and inconsolable pain. But, if we can look into the eyes of the ones we love and tell them, Jesus Christ is with us then no matter what happens the light of his love will guide us deeper to his heart. That light has shone in the night sky, from the manger, the temple, the cross, and the tomb; that light has shone in the Saga mine shaft two mile into that West Virginia mountain. Have you seen it? If you have that's great, and the only thing you can do is give it away to someone else who is still living in darkness.

In joyful hope,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Timothy J. Seigel". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Fr. Tim Seigel,  
Pastor