Dear Parishioners,

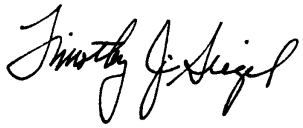
As strange as this may sound, I am still writing and sending Christmas cards. Of course I am a procrastinator, that's the heart of the problem. I am also good at rationalizing my faults and so it's easy to say there is no problem because it is still the Christmas season and so there is time to finish the task. Hopefully today it will be done.

It is sad to note, however, that Wal-Mart and Target have already taken down all the Christmas stuff and now the Valentines candy is on display (it's only two days after Christmas! We haven't even celebrated the New Year yet!) The light of Christmas joy has vanished from the market place, but I hope it still shines brightly in our own hearts.

Christmas is not just one 24 hour period; it is a season that lasts for a few weeks that includes many powerful feasts and celebrations. Today is the feast of St. John the Evangelist who is known to be the beloved disciple. On this day our focus moves from the crib to the empty tomb which reveals the truth of Jesus' resurrection from the dead; it reveals the truth of our salvation. Tomorrow, December 28, is the feast of the Holy Innocents who lost their lives as Herod sought to kill the Christ Child. Of course, by the time you read this letter these feasts will have past already.

This weekend we celebrate the Feast of the Holy Family, a celebration so important it has been placed on a Sunday within the Octave (8 days) of Christmas to reveal the love of Mary, Joseph, and the Christ Child. January 1 is the feast of the Blessed Virgin Mary and while it is not a holy day of obligation because it falls on a Monday, it is still a very important Christmas celebration to be celebrated with the same joy and reverence as the birthday of Jesus. We will also celebrate the feast of the Epiphany, when the Magi find the newborn king of the Jews. The star which guided them revealed the truth that God has come into the world as a human being. The Christmas season closes with the Baptism of the Lord which is actually the beginning of his public ministry.

So, even though our secular culture tells us Christmas is over, it's time to put the tree by the curb, take down the lights, and get ready for Valentines Day, we who are people of faith are still celebrating the incarnation of the

Lord who, in his infinite love for all humanity, brings the gift of eternal salvation to the world. Which is more important to you right now, getting your Valentines candy or celebrating Christmas? May the Prince of Peace and the Lord of Life continue to bless you with joy this Christmas season.

In joyful hope,