

Dear Parishioners,

As I write this letter our nation is still in shock over what happened at Virginia Tech on Monday morning, April 16. We struggle to make sense out of something that makes no sense at all. We do believe, though, that every human life is given a sacred dignity that nothing in this world – not even death – can ever destroy because our dignity is eternal, just as God is eternal.

While we will always remain baffled by moments like this, an important lesson about life must be learned – if not now, then perhaps the next time something like this happens. The lesson is this: **God calls us to be people of peace.** It is clear that we live in an angry, war-torn culture. History records that on every continent war, murder, violence and death have plagued human life. I do not know if this reality is simply human nature; if it is, then there is not much reason to find hope in the human condition. Violence cannot be such a natural response to our human emotions because, if it were, we would kill each other without any concern at all for the consequences of our actions.

I contend that violence is not natural. We never resort to violence as a natural act; we always choose it. Whether the violence done is as mundane as an angry look or as devastating as a declaration of war, it is a choice that is made. This means there is always another option. That option is peace.

God created us to be peaceful people called to dwell in the kingdom of peace. This dwelling place is here; it is now. Peace is our salvation. Peace is our liberation from sin. Peace is what unites us to God and to each other. We must do more than simply choose peace as another option. Rather, we must make a commitment to being true to ourselves by striving to be peaceful people.

In joyful hope,  
Fr. Tim Seigel