

Dear Parishioners,

All the marvels of technology have made global communication accessible to everyone. The newest Smart Phones (I-Phones, Blackberries and similar products from all the big manufacturers) enable users to use the internet, do on-line banking and stock market trades, buy airline tickets, concert tickets, order food at a favorite restaurant, run businesses, keep the calendar, tell you how to get anywhere you need to go anywhere in the world, and yes, you can even call home to say you're going to be a few minutes late, please keep the food warm. We have instant messaging, e-mail, fax machines (real dinosaurs but still being used), the telephone and yes people still write letters and mail them with the new 44 cent stamps. We have so many ways to communicate so many different and important messages. We can tell the people we love the most, exactly what is going on in our lives in almost countless different ways. Yet, in so many ways we are woefully uninformed about what is going on in peoples' lives.

This week I received the news that a friend of mine died in his trailer in Sycamore. The only reason anyone found out about it was because another friend had been trying to contact him. Nobody could reach him. His boss couldn't reach him, his family couldn't reach him. Friends hadn't seen him around for a few weeks and were concerned about him. All weekend long, people tried to get in touch with Jeff and no one could. So a friend went to his trailer and found him in his bedroom. I feel bad because Jeff was my friend. He moved away a couple of years ago and we lost contact. He stopped calling me for help, and I stopped reaching out to him. For some reason he stopped reaching out to everyone, and no one could prevent his death. It was a terrible tragedy.

We can order 17 tons of toys from china from a cell-phone, but we still have not found the technology to be able to ask for help when we are troubled, or to say, "It looks like you need a friend, how can I help you?" Those kinds of messages still need personal, one to one conversation, they need human contact, human touch, human compassion that can be seen eye-to-eye, arm-to-arm, and most of all heart-to-heart. There is nothing convenient about crying out for help. There

are no quick and easy ways to respond to the cries of those who are in pain. We have to be present to one another.

At the same time, all the communication technology is not all that effective in helping us to work on how we talk to God; or how we listen to God. How we pray is all about how present we are to God. God has the power to utilize any kind of communication device this universe has to offer, but if we are not willing to be present to God, the message goes unheard. And we are left to wonder about how much God really loves us, because we never hear what God has to say.

Communication is hard work. It is necessary work. It demands time, effort and tremendous energy. But if we do not work at it, we will miss the most important message that we need to hear like: help me, I'm sad, I'm afraid, I'm lost in my pain; or, I love you spoken from the voice of a child; or, "can we just sit down together and talk?" I think God says that to us all the time.

In joyful hope,

Fr. Tim Seigel